

WARRIOR

Spring 2010



CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATION

Celebrating the Naval Centennial

NOVA SCOTIA INTERNATIONAL AIR SHOW

**100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANADIAN NAVY...
CELEBRATE WITH US AT THE HOME OF CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATION!**

Crowd favourites including the CF-18 Hornet Demo, the CF Snowbirds Jet Team, the CF SkyHawks Parachute Team and a number of military performers will be in the air again. On the ground the show will feature static aircraft, the Canadian Army and a wide variety of Runway Market displays.

We have invited special guests where it is the 65th anniversary of Canadian Naval Aviation. Don't miss our rarely-seen naval aviation heritage aircraft, the Hawker Sea Fury FB11 and the Goodyear FG-1D Corsair in Hampton Gray commemorative markings!

The Air Show is a full day of affordable family fun. Watch for advance tickets, available for purchase from several locations in the Maritimes beginning in early summer.

Don't forget that Premium seating options will also be available!



**September 11 & 12, 2010
12 Wing Shearwater Airport**



"Live the Dream..."

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DND Photograph

" Some fields of human endeavour endure and become routine, while others are cut off before their time but live on in the memory to become legendary. Such was the fate of Canadian Carrier-bourne Aviation. In 25 years, aircraft of the Royal Canadian Navy reached their peak of efficiency, flying from HMCS BONAVENTURE. Their achievements were equaled by few, if any, Navies of the world."

Vice Admiral J.C. (Scruffy) O'Brien

Fledgling to World Recognition 13

A Miracle at Sea 40

The Banshee 58

RCN Aviation 1945 - 1970..... 72

Submissions: Text submissions can be either paper, email or electronically produced - Word Perfect (preferred) or Word. We will format the text for you. No need to centre headings, indent paras etc.

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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:

Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation or

SAM Foundation
PO Box 5000 Stn Main
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

Deadlines for receiving submissions are:

Spring 1 March
Summer 1 July
Winter 15 October

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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

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SAMF website: www.samfoundation.ca

From the Editor:

The Centennial of the Royal Canadian Navy - WOW! The Senior Service.

A huge part of the Navy during the Centennial years was the period of Naval Air - although some seem to have forgotten it. During the years spent at Shearwater, Naval Air has been the best for all of us. Keep in touch with each other. There was nothing like Naval Air and there never will be again.

This issue is a *very short* history lesson/blurb for some (even some military) regarding this very important period of the Naval Centennial - **Naval Aviation** - and hopefully fond memories of those remarkable years, for you.

It was noted at our AGM that this issue would be 'really big', in colour, something to be set up as a 'keeper' edition; gee - I thought all our issues were 'keepers'. Financially, to some degree, this wasn't reasonable. It would be easy to keep filling pages with what was - unfortunately we had to stop, for now.

We received many articles but we couldn't use them all in this issue - they will be used in following ones. Of course, there will be some repetition included - can't help it. *Better every time we do read it.*

For our efforts, the WARRIOR team members hope you will enjoy what is presented.

Kay Collacutt, WARRIOR Editor



This is a year of Naval Celebrations. Lets show our support at these events.

The SAM Foundation is progressing well. The next fund raising event will be the Annual Dinner/Auction to be held 12 Jun 10 in our own Museum. The viewing of auction items and bidding will begin at 6pm with dinner at

7pm. I encourage all local SAMF members, family and friends to attend and support this enjoyable fund raiser and view the Museum at your leisure.

Come out and enjoy an evening of fun, good food and meet other supporters. If you cannot attend in person, a donation or item for the auction would be appreciated - tickets are available through our Secretary, Kay Collacutt 462-0776 or email her at samfoundation@sympatico.ca

The Spring 2010 issue of the WARRIOR is centered around our great Canadian Naval Air. This our 65th year since Naval Air was formed in 1945. Many proud people have passed through and served in HMCS SHEARWATER, WARRIOR, MAGNIFICENT and

BONAVENTURE since then. I personally served in all the above except WARRIOR and was very proud and honoured to be part of the Commissioning Crew for BONAVENTURE; ending up serving a total of seven years in Bonnie and five years in Maggie.

We owe a debt of gratitude to past Naval Air personnel for keeping our heritage alive thru the Aviation Museum and Foundation - which all began in a small area housed in Warrior block.

Retired Naval Air personnel are still the major supporters of the Museum and SAMF keeping alive memories of the past. These former members are aging and therefore their children and grand-children must carry on the heritage. Please give us your support!

A new year has begun and its time to renew your membership - if you have done so already - Thanks! We are still asking for donations to the building fund - maybe you are considering becoming a Life Member of the Foundation or purchasing a tile on the Wall of Honour for yourself or in memory of a loved one.

2010 marks the Centennial year of the RCN 1910-2010. Of these 100 years, Naval Air has been alive and active for 65 years since its formation in 1945. In the early stages of planning for the Centennial Celebrations Naval Air was very much in the shadows or non existent; but, due to personal and organizational complaining, some changes have been made and Naval Air, we are told, will be included in some areas of the events. So make sure you attend and enjoy the celebrations - I will. I am very proud to have served 47 plus years in the Navy (Naval Air) and Reserves. It is an honour to be President of CNAG (Atlantic) and SAMF in 2010.

The Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG) will be hosting the annual CNAG Reunion on Thanksgiving weekend (8, 9 and 10th October 2010 at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Hope to see you there. For more info you may call me 1-902-765-3292 and look for more info in this issue of WARRIOR.

Did you know the Air Show will be held at Shearwater on 11 and 12th September 2010. Support and enjoy the celebrations for the Navy and Naval Air in your area.

It makes me proud to have known and served with Naval Air members. I have known a vast majority of you over the years and some have become great friends. As I look back, a lot of them have passed on - but I still remember them.

I want to thank the members of SAMF for their loyal support in the past and look forward to your continued support and new members in the future. Have a great, safe and enjoyable Spring and Summer.

Buck Rogers

CNAG REUNION8, 9, 10TH OCT 2010

MARRIOTT HALIFAX WATERFRONT HOTEL

BOOKING INFO

1-800-943-6760

LOCAL 1-902-421-2700

(MENTION CANADIAN NAVAL AIR GROUP - NOT CNAG)

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From the Curator's Desk

Your team at SAM has come back to work in 2010, charged after a successful year of activities supporting the Canadian Centennial of Flight, ready to celebrate again, even harder, this time the Canadian Naval Centennial. For those entering the museum who are not members of our Naval Air/Maritime Helicopter community, there has been much concern as to why we have a 16-

foot banner in the Atrium advertising the Canadian Naval Centennial, side by side with a showcase full of Naval Air memorabilia. It's our goal this year to promote Naval Air history to all visitors, to teach our visitors about the Golden Age of Naval Air and to connect it to those doing the job in its modern incarnation.

With the recent announcement of the return of the Nova Scotia International Air Show to 12 Wing Shearwater, the pressure is now on! For almost seventeen years, our Firefly Restoration Team has been labouring for a day coming in about eight month's time: the roll out and flight of PP462. The flight of the Firefly is, of course, SAM's largest contribution to the Canadian Naval Centennial celebrations. For a non-flying museum, this is truly a labour of love, and a huge commitment, one that has numerous supporters motivating the Team and contributing expertise, financial and moral support. 12 Wing Commander Col Sam Michaud and the entire Wing are firmly committed to the flight, and anxious to see "The Duchess" perform.

Major exhibit projects on the Swordfish and Firefly are under construction as I write, and a full schedule of events and reunions are already booked for the museum. We have also been asked to contribute a fair bit of art from our collection for two high profile shows at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia this year, and are working behind the scenes to collaborate with other "Friends of the Navy" on Centennial Projects. It is our pleasure to work hard to promote your history at every opportunity; it is after all, our favourite subject! The Team at SAM wish you a very happy year of celebrating your Royal Canadian Navy heritage, and hope you can join us this year for our celebratory activities. **Christine Hines**

**OUR NAVAL AIR CHIEFTAIN:
ANGUS L. MACDONALD**

Angus Lewis MacDonald was born in Dunvegan, Inverness County, Cape Breton, on August 10, 1890. By the time he was 30 years of age, he was well aware of the ravages of war and illness. He had lost his sister Margaret to the influenza epidemic. His brother John Colin had been killed in action, and Angus L. himself had been wounded having requested a demotion in rank to Lieutenant so as to be more involved in front line action during World War One.

Angus L. was familiar with the story of North Sydney's Naval Air Station and privy to information not generally known by the public. The Canadian Government had requested the USNAS to assign bigger flying boats to North Sydney by February 1919 and consequently had requested the Government of Newfoundland to permit the USNAS to build a refueling depot at Cape Broyle, some 60 miles south of St. John's. Aircraft with longer operating ranges flying out of North Sydney, and able to refuel at the southeastern tip of Newfoundland would be able to extend their convoy protection further into the Atlantic Ocean in 1919, although there would still be a considerable gap in convoy coverage in mid-Atlantic.

Angus L. who served as Premier of Nova Scotia throughout the 1930's was appointed Minister of Defence for Naval Services by Prime Minister King in July 1940. Angus L. was fully briefed about the progress of the war and quickly realized that despite having the use of aircraft from British aircraft carriers, and land based aircraft from Canada, Newfoundland, Ireland, Scotland, and England, there still existed a convoy coverage gap in mid-Atlantic, albeit smaller than in 1918. Moreover, adverse weather conditions meant that land-based aircraft could not always provide the necessary cover. Angus L. perceived then that the services of the RCN would eventually have to involve ships which carry aircraft.

By 1942, Angus L. had promoted among members of the Canadian government the concept that naval air services would be necessary in future and that now was the time to begin planning for that eventuality. Angus L. directed the

Chief of the Canadian Naval Staff (CNS), Vice-Admiral Nelles, to have Captain Horatio Nelson Lay, Director of Naval Operations study and report on the potential of a Canadian naval air arm. By August 1943, Captain Lay, who happened to be Prime Minister MacKenzie King's nephew, filed a report which recommended that a Canadian naval air service be established as soon as possible, modeled on the British Fleet Air Arm. It should concern itself with carrier operations only, leaving coastal surveillance to the shore-based RCAF aircraft. Angus L. was pleased with the report and certainly determined not to end the war with just a small-ship navy.

The RCN did not have experienced sailors capable of manning a large ship like an aircraft carrier. The RN inadvertently provided a solution because it had quickly become short of ship's crew to man the many new American-built escort aircraft carriers coming into service with the RN. Angus L. recommended to the Canadian Cabinet that RCN lower deck personnel be drafted to a few of these RN carriers to learn how to man them.

Angus L. asked Captain Lay to take charge of HMS Nabob which had commissioned in Seattle, Washington in November 1943. By the end of December Captain Lay had become Captain of HMS Nabob sitting alongside in Vancouver and a Canadian crew was manning the ship with RN assistance, and with the expectation that RN aircraft and air personnel would soon come aboard.

Despite all of these efforts, the Canadian Cabinet on January 5, 1944 turned down the whole idea of having RCN staff man American-built carriers for the RN. Angus L. was extremely upset with the decision but certainly not deterred. He spent the next week contacting every member of Cabinet and briefing them on the immediate and long range importance of the Canadian naval aviation plan. He made a second contact with each member of the War Committee of Cabinet to further ensure support. Thanks to his relentless and driving determination, by the end of the second week of January 1944, not only had Angus L. obtained Cabinet's approval to man HMS Nabob, but also to man a second escort aircraft carrier; HMS Puncher.

This change in the cabinet vote had been achieved by Angus L. despite the fact that Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King and the Minister of Defense for Air were both staunchly opposed to any project that might ultimately contribute in any way to the development of naval aviation in Canada!

Moreover, Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Nelles, who had not served at sea since 1934, and who had not met Angus L.'s communications expectations, was appointed to London as Overseas Attache, with functions that were neither clear, nor unique. Nelles was immediately replaced as CNS by Admiral G.C. Jones, an officer with more recent and extensive sea going experiences and one deemed to have greater potential to achieve goals and meet expectations that were under consideration by Angus L. and the War Cabinet, including those related to naval aviation.

HMS NABOB

HMS Nabob underwent minor modifications to meet British requirements while in Vancouver and proceeded to Victoria, and then to San Francisco to pick up the British Fleet Air Arm (FAA) 852 Squadron equipped with new Avenger dive-bombers. Then she sailed through the Panama Canal to Norfolk, Virginia all the while conducting flying trials. Having filled its flight deck with 45 Mustang aircraft, HMS Nabob proceeded to deliver these to Liverpool, England and by August 1, 1944 she became part of the British Home Fleet and started engaging in action.

Nabob was torpedoed three weeks later on August 22, 1944 with a loss of eleven RCN sailors. As many crew as could be spared were placed along the port edge of the flight deck and aircraft were pushed forward so that shoring up could be undertaken in an attempt to save Nabob. She had been torpedoed starboard side, aft, and had a gaping hole 50 feet in diameter. In fact Nabob was so badly damaged that she was paid off on September 30, 1944. The ship's complement of 840 included 504 RCN staff. They were returned to Canada.

HMS PUNCHER

HMS Puncher had been commissioned on February 5, 1944 and by mid-April was in Vancouver with a Canadian crew bolstered by some RN sailors, under command of Captain R.E.S. Bidwell, RCN. She then proceeded through the Panama Canal without a squadron aboard to make calls in New Orleans, Norfolk, and New York City where on July 24, forty US Army planes were loaded for delivery to Casablanca. Then Puncher crossed the Atlantic back to Norfolk to receive FAA 1845 Fighter Squadron equipped with 18 American-built Corsairs. There was great disappointment aboard when it was learned that there would be no flying trials since the whole flight deck was also to be loaded with Avengers, Corsairs, and Hellcats bound for Glasgow, Scotland. More disappointment followed when she was sent back from Glasgow to New York to pick up 78 more aircraft that she delivered in Liverpool on October 31, 1944.

By November 26, Puncher had received FAA 821 Torpedo-Bomber Squadron equipped with 12 Barracuda aircraft. Flying trials started early morning November 27 and ended that night when it was discovered that Puncher had a major engine problem. Engine spares were obtained from Nabob laying derelict at Rosyth.

821 Squadron re-embarked and flying resumed New Year's day 1945. Angus L. wanted to show his support for the crew of Puncher which had essentially been used as an aircraft transport ship the previous year. Angus L. asked CNS Jones to accompany him to England where they boarded Puncher and mingled with the ship's company thanking them for their effort and dedication. It was January 30, and two days later, Puncher joined the British Home Fleet with two squadrons aboard: 821 and also 881 Fighter Squadron. She saw action throughout the spring of 1945 and was placed in dry dock in Glasgow on May 8, the official ending date of the war in Europe.

She was used as a training ship for a few weeks, and then refitted as a troopship. She then headed for Halifax in late

June with the first contingent of some 500 returnees. Puncher's crew had been cut down to a minimum as she continued crossing the Atlantic to return troops and war brides and their children home to Canada. Her last crossing from the Clyde was on December 14. She ran into one of the worst storm in the history of the Atlantic and arrived in Halifax on December 23 with her flight deck buckled from the power of sea waves. In January 1946, Puncher was readied for immediate return to the USA for disposal.

DIRECTOR STEAD AT WORK

Angus L. had obtained Government approval to establish a RCN Air Directorate effective April 1, 1944. He soon called a meeting of CNS Jones, and the new Director Lieutenant Commander J.S. Stead (P) RCN to review progress to date, and future hopes for a RCNAS. Angus L. reaffirmed that the intent was to have two RCN aircraft carriers with a RCN manned fighter squadron and an anti-submarine squadron on each carrier by September, 1945, but that it had to be achieved within the current complement of the RCN.

Nabob and Puncher had begun to provide ship's crew training in handling an aircraft carrier. A two-fold objective was yet to be achieved: Get together four squadrons of RCN aircrew and also aircraft maintenance personnel to keep them flying. The bigger problem by far facing the new Director, Commander Stead was that of aircraft maintenance. With CNS Jones as facilitator, Acting Commander Stead embarked on a series of meetings and discussions with senior officers of the British Admiralty and by August 1, 1944 had achieved the following: The first draft of air mechanic trainees recruited from amongst the seaman and stoker branches of the RCN would begin to arrive for training in England immediately and by January 1945 their number would reach 480. Concurrent with this, some senior ratings of the RCN would be sent over to England for conversion to the air aspect of the specialization in their particular trade. Men who had joined the RCN with a civilian background in aircraft would immediately be put under instruction in England to qualify as petty officer mechanics in aircraft engines or aircraft frames.

To take charge of air maintenance parties, some RCN engineer officers interested in aviation would be appointed for training to the Royal Naval Engineering College in Keyham, England while others would be given a course in aeronautical engineering at the University of Toronto. The complicated radio maintenance required by squadrons would mean that interested RCN ratings would be sent to HMS Ariel in England for training and as the eight month course progressed, they would be split up for specialization also in air radio detection and ranging (Radar). Finally, safety equipment personnel would be sent to RNAS Eastleigh for instruction.

Angus L. along with the CNS and Commander Stead believed that obtaining Canadian-born aircrew would not be a problem. There were already hundreds of pilots, born in Canada, but flying with the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. Most of them had begun as RNVR officers but had transferred to the RCN Volunteer Reserve at a much higher rate of pay, yet still flew for the British Fleet Air Arm.

And by spring of 1945 there would also be an excess of RCAF pilots who had volunteered to join the RNVR to fight in the Pacific. In 1945, graduating RCAF pilots at British Commonwealth Air Training Plan bases in Canada, and their instructors, were often placed on the Reserve list with the end of the war in Europe so near. They were available as potential candidates as well. Moreover, once war had concluded in the Pacific theatre there would be Canadian aircrew serving aboard the six British carriers who would be returning to Canada and who could be screened for suitability in joining the RCNAS.

After much effort and negotiations with the Royal Navy involving a great deal of political maneuvering, it was finally arranged by late spring 1945 that four RN squadrons would be 'Canadianized' and two aircraft carriers would ultimately become RCN ships and be deployed to the Pacific theatre.

FINAL TRANSITION

Angus L.'s tenure as Minister of National Defense for Naval Services ended on April 18, 1945 with the dissolution of the MacKenzie King Government. A few days prior to his leaving the post, Angus L. called a meeting of the CNS and the Director of the Naval Air Division to review current progress and what lay in store for naval aviation in Canada. The information shared at that meeting can best be summarized as follows:

- There is approval in principle by Cabinet for the formation of a naval air component in the RCN by the end of 1945.

- Although there is currently extensive training of lower deck air personnel at twelve different bases in England and Scotland, staffing of four RCN air squadrons will depend greatly on the success of those on courses there.

- There will not be enough RCN observers to crew anti-submarine aircraft till mid-1946.

- Telegraphist-gunners in anti-submarine aircraft will have to be replaced by Canadians, once the war in the Pacific ends. There will then be a need to train aircrew as electronics equipment operators.

- All naval air pilots will have to constantly re-qualify in flying more advanced models of any of the aircraft.

- Immediate steps will have to be taken to secure space and accommodation from the RCAF at the Dartmouth Air Station in Halifax Harbor so as to have a shore base for the naval air squadrons when these are not aboard the carriers.

- It would be most likely that the naval air arm of the RCN would require at least 10% of the RCN's complement of staff.

- Additional leadership personnel at the naval directorate office will be needed to best coordinate the initial growth of the RCNAS in late 1945 and 1946.

- Commander (A) J.H. Arbick will be replacing Acting Commander Stead as Director of the Naval Air Division until the final pieces of the puzzle have fallen in place and Canada has an established RCNAS at which time an

officer of Captain rank should be appointed Director of the Naval Air Division, preferably one who had commanded an aircraft carrier in his career and ideally one who was an aviation enthusiast or perhaps a qualified aircrew, thus achieving a 'certain prominence' at naval headquarters in Ottawa for the new RCNAS.

-Acting Commander Stead will immediately become Naval Assistant for Air at HMCS Niobe to facilitate recruitment of personnel for the RCNAS.

It was with these anticipations in mind that Angus L. left Ottawa at the end of the school term in June to return to Nova Scotia.

BRAVO ZULU!

In cabinet discussions between 1940 and 1945, Angus L. had fought doggedly for the interest of naval aviation. He had made a very subtle decision which one must appreciate: Instead of evolving a RCNAS organization which would be parallel to that of the RCN as had been done in 1918, Angus L. was promoting the RCNAS as an arm of the RCN. Angus L. Macdonald was a man of considerable initiative and ability. As Minister of Defense for Naval Services, he put the war effort ahead of his political ambitions. Most importantly, his fortitude and foresight enabled a rebirth of the RCNAS.

Also, under his ministry, the Royal Canadian Navy itself had grown from 13 ships in 1939 to 402 ships and 501 auxiliary vessels in 1945 to become the third largest Allied navy. The personnel had gone from 1,800 to 96,500. His navy had grown more than 50 fold while navies like that of England and the United States of America had grown by a measly 8% and 20% respectively. New operational support bases had evolved and the one in Sydney, N.S. had become the third largest in the Country. Also in full operation was a new naval college; Royal Roads.

The RCN had gained its own set of rules and regulations under Angus L. thus eliminating such practices as inordinate corporal punishments employed by the Royal Navy, some of which dated back to the 1800's. More importantly, Angus L. had promoted and indeed anchored the RCN with its own naval traditions by war's end. He had obtained a new Naval Service Headquarters on Elgin Street in Ottawa in late 1942, and authorized the development of a library in each naval ship and establishment.

Angus L. had been ably assisted by his wife Agnes. Her personality, warmth, and sincerity made her a gracious hostess. Agnes would stand in for Angus L. if it were absolutely impossible for him to be at a very important function. She would often accompany him to major events. Angus L. would go on to become well known and respected. Today people talk of some of his achievements by referring to the Canso Causeway joining Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia as 'The Road to the Isle' and to the Macdonald bridge in Halifax as 'The Road in the Sky'. As a former naval aviator, I perceive the RCNAA as 'The Isle in the Sky' which is a reference to viewing a Canadian aircraft carrier at sea against a sunset sky with its flat surface broken only by the tall structure mid-ship on the starboard side of the carrier. That structure is called the

island, or 'The Isle in the sky'. The RCNAS might not have come to be, without Angus L. as its wartime chieftain.

On Sunday, March 31, 1946, both sides of the inner Halifax harbour were lined up with hundreds of people. Ships were also dressed in their finest, and sirens were blaring. HMCS Warrior angled towards jetty 3 at the Dockyard in Halifax where many dignitaries had gathered to welcome her home for the first time. Among them was the Premier of Nova Scotia, the Honourable Angus L. Macdonald who throughout the Second World War had served as Minister of Defence for Naval Services. In his brief remarks, Angus L. predicted that Warrior was like an iceberg since it represented no more than 30% of what the RCNAA could become by the end of Canada's first century in 1967.

Warrior's Captain F.L. Houghton took the opportunity later that day during a wardroom tea reception to thank Angus L. profusely for his unheralded role in the creation of the Royal Canadian Naval Air Arm (RCNAA), a title which was soon to be officially approved for the naval aviation segment of the RCN. Captain Houghton also expressed his condolences at the loss of Angus L.'s friend and colleague, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral George C. Jones who had passed away suddenly in his office in Ottawa a few weeks earlier.

In 1954, Angus L.'s funeral service was held at St. Mary's Cathedral in Halifax. A piper played the ancient traditional tune titled, 'The Flowers of the Forest' which is reserved exclusively in Scottish tradition for the most important of chieftains. During this anniversary year, as all of us bask in the sunlight of our careers in the Royal Canadian Naval Air Arm, let us each extend to Angus L., our chieftain, a bravo zulu, in our own particular way.



Captain Harry de Wolfe, RCN making a farewell presentation to Angus L. in May 1945.

EPILOGUE

This article prepared by Peter E. Lawson, Ph.D., CD, former Observer's Mate, RCNAA.

Canadian Naval Aces of the First World War – May to July 1917

After the Canadian Corps captured Vimy Ridge and the Battle of Arras ended in mid-May 1917, the Royal Naval Air Service had ten Canadian Aces. During the next two months thirteen names will be added to the growing list of North American naval aviators who have brought down five or more enemy aircraft. This is a brief history of that baker's dozen.

The RNAS at this juncture has five Scout Squadrons on loan to the Royal Flying Corps. Simply stated, the order to the RFC and RNAS units on the Western Front is now 'Keep the German Air Service away!' The British are now massing guns, troops and supplies to attack the Messines Ridge and do not want German High Command to have any reconnaissance reports of the buildup.

Flight Sub Lieutenant Raymond COLLISHAW (Nanaimo BC) is an Acting Flight Commander with 10 Naval and writes in his memoirs "The Squadron was pretty much a Canadian show... 13 of the 15 pilots being from the Dominion." He adds that it is "also more or less a Three Wing reunion for all but two of the Canadians had previously flown with the bombing force."

Collishaw, already an established Ace, leads B Flight of Naval 10 and his fighting team will each score five or more victories during the next eight weeks. They paint their Sopwith Triplane engine nacelles and wheel covers a distinctive black colour. Collishaw names his machine 'Black Maria' and his wingmen followed suit: 'Black Death' – FSLt John Sharman, DSC (Oak Lake MB); 'Black Prince' – FSLt Mel Alexander (Toronto); 'Black Roger' – FSLt Ellis Reid (Belleville ON); and, 'Black Sheep' – FSLt Gerry Nash (Stoney Creek ON).

Squadron Commander Redford Henry 'Red' MULOCK (Winnipeg) is the world's first naval Ace, and the CO of 3 Naval. His unit is due to be relieved by a newly constituted Squadron, 4 Naval, which is working-up in Dunkirk on Sopwith Pups to convert to the latest fighter, the Sopwith Camel, and replace 3 Naval 'in the field'. This training period for the new unit turns out to become action packed when the Germans begin bombing raids on London:

--FSLt Langley Frank Willard SMITH (Phillipsburg PQ)
-- ACE



Flying a 4 Naval Sopwith Pup, Smith achieves his fifth victory big time, bringing down a Gotha bomber. The nineteen-year old Smith will score eight times in the Pup before transitioning to the Camel. Dunkirk Headquarters states that he is 'Deserving of special recognition' and Smith is awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

On June 13th, news is flashed that hostile bombers are again en route to London, and pilots scramble to intercept. Smith is one of the last to get airborne and is not seen by the rest of

the formation. Off Zeebrugge, several hostiles are encountered and driven back in the direction of Bruges. At about this time, a dark-coloured aircraft is sighted spinning down minus a wing. Smith was flying a new Camel and the recently rigged machine has broken up in the air.

The young Ace had only been flying operationally for six weeks. Smith graduated with the highest RNAS flying marks 'Very Good Pilot Indeed' and arrived in squadron at the end of April. Albert, King of Belgians, confers on him a posthumous Commander, Order of the Crown, and a Croix de Guerre decoration.

27May17 -- FSLt Alfred William 'Nick' CARTER (Calgary) – ACE

'Excuse Me' is Carter's personalized 3 Naval Squadron Sopwith Pup. Today he excuses himself to an Albatros DIII that is attacking RFC observation machines East of Bullecourt. Firing 40 rounds he sees the tracers strike home sending the German down out of control for his fifth victory.

Nine days later the term 'Excuse Me' could be used to describe a most unusual accident as told by his English wingman (FSLt AB Ellwood): "One of our favorite recreations was 'Contour-chasing' and we rarely came back from the lines much over twenty feet from the ground. On one occasion after taking off from our Advanced Landing Ground we had climbed to about 100 feet and were just starting to dive down when I saw the leader, FSLt Carter, suddenly go into a vertical dive. He ...received a violent jerk backwards, and turning on his back floated gently to the ground from a height of about thirty feet. A large crowd of soldiers collected around the wreck, and as I flew round to see whether Carter was safe I narrowly missed a balloon cable.

"It turned out that he had struck the cable in the centre of his engine, snapped it, and wound it securely round his propeller shaft. As the cable tightened he had been jerked over on his back and the balloon had then let him down lightly, acting like a parachute. He escaped without a scratch, as did the occupants of the basket who had been all but ejected by the shock of the collision. This somewhat sobered our enthusiasm for low flying, at any rate in the balloon area."

Carter survives this 'crash' and will raise his score to 17 enemy aircraft. He becomes an RCAF Air Marshal during the next global conflict.

02Jun17 – FSLt (A/FCdr) Arthur Clarke DISSETTE (Toronto) – Killed In Action

Dissette is the Commander of C Flight of 10 Naval and together with Collishaw's B Flight he leads an escort for two photographic reconnaissance aircraft. The mission is a wash when heavy clouds prevent any photo opportunity. But danger is lurking in this same cumulus and Dissette fails to return. His Sopwith Triplane is broken up by gunfire and crashes and burns in a wood near Proven. A 'Tripe' is claimed by Lt Gustav Nolte of Jasta 18.

Dissette, although only a Flight-Sub Lieutenant in rank, is 31 years old and has shown the maturity to lead. He first flew in combat with Three Wing and during the

Freiburg Reprisal Raid in April managed to nurse his Sopwith Strutter back over the French Lines when flak killed the engine. Posted to 10 Naval he is described as 'A good formation leader. 'Specially recom'd for promotion. Ability to command VG'. Dissette is posthumously awarded the French Croix de Guerre.

03Jun17 -- FSLt (A/FCdr) Percy Gordon McNEIL, CdGaE (Toronto) – Missing

McNeil is the Commander of A Flight of 10 Naval and has led a six plane distant offensive mission late this morning providing escort for RFC machines. Now, in the early evening he takes up a three plane close offensive patrol. Airborne, they encounter an Albatros force four times their number and OffSt St Klein of Jasta 27 brings down McNeil's Triplane near Moorslede.

Like Dissette, killed yesterday, McNeil is lowly in rank for flight commanding. He too has proven himself with Three Wing 'Ability to command VGI, a steady and reliable Pilot. Capable Officer with a sense of responsibility. Recommended for promotion.' During April he was decorated the Croix de Guerre avec Etoile by the President of the French Republic.

Just days before his death Parker wrote home "I have brought down a few Hun machines". He had indeed four victories. A graduate of Toronto's Parkdale Collegiate, he is recorded in the school's memorial book 'Their Name Liveth'.

The consecutive death of two Flight Commanders in twenty-four hours can only have had a devastating impact on 10 Naval. Raymond Collishaw is now the sole remaining original flight leader from the time of squadron transfer to RFC command in mid May

With today's death of Percy McNeill, Collishaw's Black Flight deputy John Sharman takes over leadership of A Flight's red motif Triplanes. 'Nick' Carter, of balloon cable strike fame, is transferred from 3 Naval to take command of Art Dissette's blue-nosed C Flight

03Jun17 -- A/FCdr Arnold Jacques CHADWICK (Toronto) – ACE

4 Naval's Chadwick scores his Ace-making triumph flying the Pup. His tally includes a Gotha Bomber that was attacking England in May and after training on Camels he will raise his 'bag' to eleven enemy aircraft.

Chadwick has led a charmed existence in the War. He was a student in Germany in August 1914 and managed to slip away and avoid being interned. In another episode he crash-landed deep across the Eastern side of the Lines and yet escaped capture. His luck runs out on the 28th of July when his wheels catch a wave while flying too close to the water and the aircraft turns turtle. His body washes ashore several weeks later and is buried at Adinkerke Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

The young Flight Commander had been recommended for a DSC: 'He has destroyed eight enemy machines and has on three occasions forced down balloons. Has always fought with the utmost gallantry and pluck.' The medal is Gazetted posthumously in August.

04Jun17 -- FLt Alexander MacDonald SHOOK, MID (Tioga ON) – Camel First

Number 4 Naval is just becoming operational with the new twin machine-gun Sopwith Camel and to Shook goes the honour of scoring the aircraft's first victory. He sends down an Albatros D.III and the next day crashes another German scout on the beach between Nieuport and Ostende for his Ace-making fifth kill.

The gyroscopically unstable but highly maneuverable Sopwith Camel will set an Allied War record for 1,294 victories. Equally deadly to the hands of an inexperienced pilot the machine is said to offer 'a wooden cross, a red cross or a Victoria Cross.'

When the French government awards Shook with the Croix de Guerre, England catches up in recognition and Gazettes him for the Distinguished Service Cross in August.

In October, Shook is wounded. When discharged from nursing care, he takes Canadian leave bringing home the news that his younger brother, a Royal Flying Corps pilot with 46 Squadron, has just been shot down and taken POW. While in Canada Shook learns that he himself has been awarded the Distinguished Service Order for over 30 aerial combats. In the event he is invested with both his August DSC and the DSO at Buckingham Palace.

Promoted Major, RAF, during 1918, Shook is described as a 'Magnificent Flight Leader... Much of the success achieved by his flight is due to his brilliant leadership.' He survives the War with 12 victories

14Jun17 – A/FCdr John Edward SHARMAN, DSC (Oak Lake MB) -- ACE

On an offensive patrol, Sharman observes five enemy Albatros aircraft and aggressively dives on them. Firing his Triplane's single machine gun at about 50 feet range, he sends one German machine spinning to the earth for his fifth kill.

On July 22nd, while leading his 10 Naval A Flight as top cover for Collishaw's B Flight, the Squadron is attacked by a hostile formation. During the drift-down fighting, Sharman's aircraft is observed to break up, possibly struck by an anti-aircraft or artillery shell.

Sharman's Flight, **John Albert Page (Brockville ON); Charles Haddon Weir (Medicine Hat AB)** and **George Leonard Trapp (New Westminster BC)** are all Killed In Action before the end of the year. Both Page and Trapp become Aces before their deaths. Trapp's two aviator brothers are also lost during the War.

25Jun17 – FSLt Gerald Ewart 'Gerry' NASH (Stoney Creek ON) – Prisoner Of War

Airborne in Triplane 'Black Sheep' Nash looses a fight against an Albatros D.III from Richthofen's Jasta II. Collishaw reports that his wingman is "Missing from offensive patrol. Last seen brought down by hostile aircraft, believed to have landed under control." Nash has indeed landed OK but on the wrong side of the trenches near Lille. He is slightly wounded and taken prisoner.

Nash made **Ace** on June 6th and now has 6 victories but he has been outclassed. His victor is Lt. Carl Allmenroder, a 'Blue Max' recipient with 29 kills. The German himself is mortally wounded 2 days later.

A telegram from the Geneva Red Cross in August is the first word that Naval 10 receives confirming that their squadron mate is indeed a POW. He will be repatriated in December 1918 and returns to his fruit growing business on the Niagara Peninsula. During the Second World War, Nash serves again as a Group Captain, RCAF.

06Jul17 -- FSLt William Melville ALEXANDER (Toronto ON) -- ACE

Flying 'Black Prince', Alexander scores victories 4 & 5, both Albatros DIII's sent down out of control. "Encountered about 25 EA scouts near Deulemont – killed pilot of one and drove another down into sideslip and nosedive. Was then forced to dive to get away from two others."

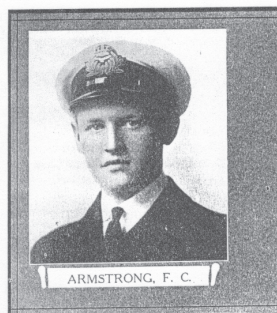
In later life Alexander recalled this victory, and how he had opened fire on his target from a distance of just 40 feet. "I saw the bullets streaming into the cockpit. I was very excited. Over the trenches our nerves were so taut that when we got back, landed and lifted our goggles, it was like having a 100-lb weight eased off your back. Of the dogfights I remember the clatter of the engine, the high pop-pop-popping of the machine gun and the flic-flic-flic as slugs tore through the aircraft's fabric."

Alexander will score all of his first 8 victories in this aircraft before switching to Sopwith Camels. He is awarded the DSC and his war tally will be 23 enemy aircraft by the end of May 1918 when he is posted to Home Establishment as an Instructor.

07Jul17 – If Canada were to declare a National Naval Aviation Day then this date would be a strong contender. Five Canadian RNAS pilots become ACES today:

A/FCdr Frederick Carr 'Army' ARMSTRONG, CdGaE (Toronto) -- ACE

In a 3 Naval Pup, Armstrong destroys his fifth enemy aircraft - a *Marinestaffle* seaplane North of Ostende. The French Government has already honoured Armstrong with their Croix d'Guerre avec Etoile and he will



ARMSTRONG, FREDERICK CARR: E. September '09, from the Model Sch., Toronto; aged 14-3; L. June '12; son of Fred Armstrong, Contractor, 189 Madison Ave., Toronto; Clerk. P.F. Sub-Lt., Cheneydon, R.N.A.S., Sub-Lt.; Croix de Guerre, April, 1917; Flt. Comdr.; D.S.C., November, 1917; Missing, March, 1918.

be Gazetted the DSC 'for several victories and for leading his Flight with very great skill & gallantry.' Armstrong now retrains on the Camel.

On March 21st, 1918, the last-ditch Lundendorff Offensive by the German Army gets under way and high-flying Sopwith scouts are sent out on dangerous low-level missions to help stem the enemy advance. On the 28th of the month 'Army' Armstrong falls in flames near Ervilliers. While leading five aircraft on a bombing and trench strafe he observes massed troops attacking and dives to

disband them. Re-crossing the lines his machine is seen to go down.

For the previous four consecutive days, Armstrong had shot down an aircraft a day bringing his victory total to 13. The 'tall, fair-haired Canadian' of Naval 3 was 23 years of age. His name is listed among the Western Front Missing Airmen on the Arras Memorial, France.

A Dunkirk Command Confidential Report had recommended Armstrong for promotion to Squadron Commander. He was cited as 'A most fearless flight leader and very daring war pilot. Has splendid command of men.'

FSLt James Alpheus 'Jimmy' GLEN, CdGaP (Enderby BC) -- ACE



During the 3 Naval offensive patrol led by Armstrong, Glen also smashes a seaplane into the water. This Ace action will form the basis of his first DSC.

Glen was conferred the Croix d'Guerre avec Palm in April by General Nollet, Commander of 36 French Army Corps, for assisting at Verdun. One of the original pilots with Three Wing, Glen had flown support out of the Ochey and Luxeuil airfields near the Swiss border.

By August, in spite of the summer weather, Glen is hospitalized with frostbite and sent on a Canada leave. The Vice Admiral, Dover, recommends a special promotion for Meritorious War Services. 'He is a good formation leader & a daring fighter.'

Promoted Flight Lieutenant, Glen's sick leave is extended by DNS Ottawa until late December. He arrives back in 3 Naval and is immediately appointed an Acting Flight Commander – Just in time for the Lundendorff Offensive. The Germans have completely demoralized the French Army and they realize that they must defeat the British Empire troops before the fresh American soldiers are combat ready.

On March 21st, 1918, the opening day of the German attack, Glen is maneuvering against an Albatross 2-seater East of Bapaume when he is wounded in nose and mouth. He perseveres to shoot down the enemy then manages return and land safely in spite of the head injury. This same day, it is announced that King George V has approved the DSC to Glen 'for exceptional abilities & courage as a fighting pilot.'

Glen's new Squadron Commander, Raymond Collishaw, writes to the Admiralty about this latest exploit adding: '... but owing to shortage of experienced pilots in the squadron he has continued flying in spite of his wound.' A Bar to Glen's DSC is Gazetted. He will finish the War with fifteen victories and will remain in service with the RAF.

FSLt Sidney Emerson ELLIS (Kingston, ON) -- ACE

Ellis, a recent Cranwell graduate, has been with 4 Naval for only two months. Initially flying the Sopwith Pup, he scored his first kill on the 25th of May. On July 4th, with the Squadron completed re-equipment in Sopwith Camels he became one of the first two Camel pilots to shoot down a Gotha bomber. Today, he brings down his fifth German Aircraft.

Ellis has gone from being a student at the Curtiss Flying School in Toronto to achieving Ace status in less than a year. Although it would appear that he is now competent on the new Sopwith machine, he falls victim to the Camel's unforgiving stall characteristics at low altitude. Taking off on July 12th, he enters a low level spin and is killed on ground impact. Age 21, the Queens Student is interred at the Adinkerke Cemetery, Belgium.



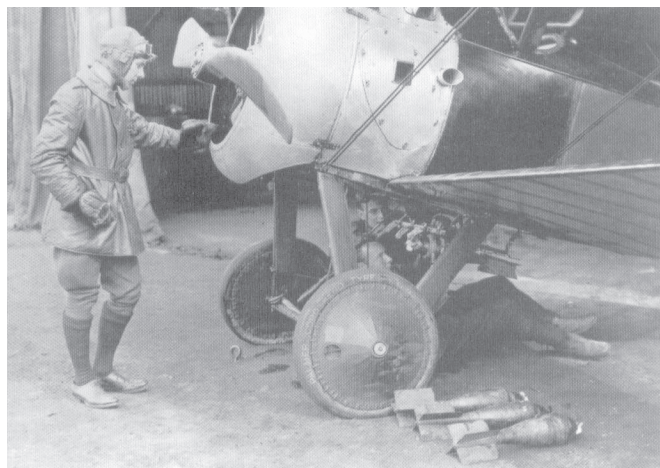
JOHN ALBERT PAGE
E.S.C., 1915
Born near Brockville, Ont., July 11th, 1895.
Commissioned, in the summer of 1915, in the
Royal Naval Air Service. Served in the 10th
Squadron. Promoted to the rank of Flight
Lieutenant. Was specially mentioned in des-
patches. Killed in action, July 22nd, 1917.

FLt John Albert PAGE (Brockville ON) -- ACE

Like Ellis, Page's time is short. A 10 Naval pilot, he will score again on the 22nd of the month shooting down a sixth and seventh German machine but during that swirling aerial combat he himself is killed by LtN Otto Brauneck of Jasta 11. Page's Sopwith Triplane falls near Messines. The young McGill Student is recorded as missing and death is presumed in view of report dropped by a German Aviator.

This is the same patrol in which John Sharman is killed. When the War Graves are built following the Armistice, Page's recovered body will be interred at Pont-du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue, France, to rest alongside that of his Flight Commander.

-- FSLt Arthur Treloar WHEALY (Toronto) -- ACE



Whealy's fifth victory is scored in a Pup. He has been on active service since August 1916 with Three Wing near the Switzerland border and now with 3 Naval at the Dunkirk end of the long trench line.

Following a well-earned Canada Leave during the winter he returns to fly the Camel. By the end of March 1918 his score stands at 14 of an eventual 27 victories and

he is reported as having: '...had valuable experience, leading a fighting flight for a year. Has good command of men. A splendid Officer.' But, no gallantry awards come his way until his 3 Naval is integrated into the new Royal Air Force as 203 Squadron on April 1st, 1918 -- at the height of the German Spring Offensive.

Whealy is awarded the DSC by Headquarters, RAF on April 26th: 'For most consistent determination, bravery and skill with which he has carried out numerous low flying harassing attacks... His Flight Commander ('Army' Armstrong) was killed in one of the early attacks, and during the remainder of these patrols he led the flight and, by his splendid example and gallantry a great many minor hostile operations were hampered and frustrated with severe loss during the massed enemy attacks in open fields between Bapaume and Albert.' This is followed by a recommend and awarding of a Bar to his DSC in May.

'Canada's 100 Days' begins with victory in the Battle of Amiens on the 8th of August 1918 and the Canadian Corps leads the drive to Mons and the Armistice in November. In the opening offensives Whealy receives the RAF's new Distinguished Flying Cross: 'This officer has always shown exceptional stamina and initiative in action against the enemy. During the recent advance he carried out daring reconnaissance from very low altitudes, and always returned with invaluable information. The moral example set by Captain Whealy has always encouraged and inspired the younger pilots in the squadron.'

What makes a great fighter pilot? It would appear to be the coupling of Situational Awareness with Berserker Mentality, an oxymoron combination that leads to success in aerial combat.

The 7th of July 1917 unprecedented addition of five new Aces gives Canada twenty-three Naval heroes to be proud of. That number of Aces will increase to an even fifty by November 11th, 1918. Other Canadian Naval aviators shoot down Zeppelins and sink U-Boats. One fifth of the 900 who serve do not live to return home to Canada.

Unheeding the annual November 11th Poppy mantra, we have NOT Remembered Them. Precious little historic mention is yet to be given to Canada's greatest Naval contribution to the First World War -- Our RNAS aircrew.

Postscript -- Canada's first Ace, 'Red' Mulock has been recognized by the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame and will be Named at the 2010 Ceremony to be held in Vancouver on June 10th. Tickets are available through the CAHF website. During this, the 100th year of our RCN, all Naval Aviators, especially West Coast types are encouraged to attend the black tie/mess kit affair.

J.Allan Snowie

Fledgling to World Recognition - A Brief Synopsis of Canadian Naval Aviation's Historic Accomplishments in Canada's Naval Century"

Canadian Naval Air History

The following documentation of Canadian Naval Aviation's two and one half decades (1945-1970) is but a minute snapshot of the valiant, innovative, professional efforts of this small but extremely dedicated group of servicemen that forged a most significant place in the archives of both Canadian Aviation and in particular, the Canadian Aerospace Industry. Their efforts, on land and sea, in war and peace, are a testament to what Canadians can do when confronted with potentially insurmountable challenges.

These Naval Airmen were instrumental in defeating aggressive forces in the world, successfully overcoming cold war confrontations, developing modern Anti-Submarine Detection Systems/Tactics and modern aircraft technology and were always ready and available to assist during numerous homeland and international catastrophes. Their footprint on the development of our current national aerospace industry, and countless leading Canadian engineering, educational, medical, legal, and government institutions, has been nothing less than astonishing.

As you read through these few pages, you will undoubtedly gain a much better understanding of the aforementioned accomplishments, accomplishments that instill pride in all Naval Airmen who served Canada during those magnificent days of carrier operations. These extraordinary efforts are a fundamental part of our heritage and are indeed worthy of the continued recognition of those who have gone before while providing a basis to ensure that all those who follow will have the opportunity to recognize and complement their efforts.

Although the main part of our Canada Naval Air History essentially took place between 1945 and 1970, we feel it is important to emphasize that our roots commenced during WWI. The Canadian Naval Aviators serving in the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and in the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service (RCNAS) from 1914 – 1918 made significant contributions to the historical record of the Royal Canadian Navy. Of particular note, Raymond Collishaw of Nanaimo, a young Canadian Naval airman, who was the leading Naval Ace of the Great War with 61 victories. Out of the 936 Canadians who served in the RNAS in WWI, 53 were considered air aces, accumulating 10 DSOs, 63 DSCs, 45 DFCs and numerous orders and foreign decorations. An enviable record indeed! Official records indicate that one out of five of these pilots were killed while, in the trenches, the odds were one in ten. Subsequently, many of these individuals came back to

serve as skilled aviators in WWII.

Note: A compelling account of Canadian naval aviators in the early days of flight has just recently been documented by Mr. Allen Snowie in a book called "Collishaw and Company - Canadians in the Royal Naval Air Service 1914-1918".

New Beginnings

History tells us that Naval Air became relatively silent between WWI and WWII, however, in 1942, the British and Canadian Governments became painfully aware of the urgent requirement for adequate naval air forces to provide critical air coverage in the mid-Atlantic to combat a German U Boat threat even greater than that of WWI. Consequently, in October 1943, the Canadian Cabinet War Committee approved the re-establishment of the RCNAS.

By February 1944, RCN personnel were manning two Royal Navy aircraft carriers, HMS Nabob and HMS Puncher, with Canadians providing a high proportion of aircrew and aircraft technicians to Royal Navy air squadrons. Experience levels of RCN personnel in seaborne air operations continued to grow to the point where in May 1945, the Canadian Cabinet War Committee established an RCN force plan for the Pacific Theatre that included two Light Fleet Class carriers, two Naval Air Stations and ten Naval Air Squadrons totaling nearly 2,000 Naval Aviation personnel. Despite the official Japanese surrender in September, 1945, ending the Pacific conflict, the continuing requirement for a Canadian Naval Air Branch was underscored by the fact that experienced RCN personnel had adapted well to the special requirements of carrier operations and were ready to operate as Canadian units against future threats.

In December 1945, the Canadian Cabinet approved the post-war, permanent RCN Air Branch. Although small, the aviation component of the RCN developed into a force second to none in the "Western World". During its 25 year existence it contributed significantly to the defence of North America and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) force in the Atlantic, thereby helping to deter Soviet aggression and the outbreak of global nuclear war.

ORGANIZATION/PRIMARY ROLES

The first RCN carrier, "HMCS Warrior", was commissioned 24 January 1946 and 803 (Seafire) and 825 (Firefly), both originally with the Royal Navy's (RN) Fleet Air Arm, became the first official Canadian Naval Air Squadrons. They embarked in HMCS Warrior for training, operations and transport to RCAF Station, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, arriving on 31 March 1946. The RCN Air component became a lodger unit at RCAF Station Dartmouth, constituting the Royal Canadian Naval Air Section (RCNAS). By the summer of 1948, the RCNAS

had grown to four squadrons, a fully operational training group and 900 personnel operating 56 aircraft from 11 hangars. On December 1st, 1948, the RCAF Station Dartmouth became officially known as RCN Air Station Dartmouth and was simultaneously commissioned as "HMCS Shearwater". Thus began the formation of a distinct, totally Canadian, Naval Air Service.

HMCS Shearwater's disciplined aircrew operational training and proficiency programs, combined with the sound leadership of dedicated personnel at all rank levels, produced a rapid advancement of aircrew experience levels, innovative aircraft maintenance procedures and greatly improved aircraft availability, especially during carrier flying operations. Meanwhile, HMCS Warrior, built with expedience for wartime service in the Pacific Theatre, lacked heating and cooling systems needed for acceptable living and working conditions. Hence, Warrior was returned to the Royal Navy in exchange for HMCS Magnificent, commissioned 07 April 1948. "Maggie" would serve with the RCN until June 1957, during which time she would become the focal point for further advancements in aircraft maintenance and operating procedures designed to ensure personnel safety and aircraft reliability in a hostile sea environment.

During the early to mid 1950's, Naval Air Squadrons, including Air Reserve Units, increased in number as the RCN was expanded to meet Canada's commitments to NATO. These commitments included Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Combat Air Patrol (CAP), and Air Support of Land Forces. Part of this build up of Air Branch personnel involved extensive training with the United States Navy on carrier based fixed wing aircraft, early vintage helicopters and dirigibles. Squadrons were outfitted with Anti Submarine, Airborne Early Warning (AEW) Grumman Avengers and Hawker Sea Fury Fighters. Three small Bell helicopters were brought into service 01 September 1951. They were followed by the first Sikorsky Helicopters taken on strength 29 April 1952. In light of the increasing variety and complexity of airborne navigation and anti-submarine detection gear, Experimental Squadron Ten (VX10) was formed 5 November 1952 and charged with developing and testing equipment and systems intended or being considered for use in Naval Aviation.

The heyday of Canadian Naval Aviation came with the commissioning of the carrier HMCS Bonaventure, 17 January 1957. This new carrier, fitted with an angled flight deck; mirror landing sight; the latest steam catapult technology; and a carrier approach radar, provided Canada with its first all-weather day-night capability to operate Banshee jet fighters and the modern ASW Tracker aircraft from its deck. The Banshees with their Sidewinder Missile capabilities were not only capable of providing CAP to the fleet but also direct support to the North American Air Defence System (NORAD). On the retirement of the Banshee fighter in 1962 and the

introduction of the Sikorsky Sea King ASW helicopter, "Bonnie" became a dedicated ASW carrier. New Canadian destroyer escorts, which were built and/or converted to enable the large Sea King helicopters to operate from their decks, added a third dimension to the team which became renowned in the world of ASW.

Canadian Naval Aviation and carrier operations as a whole forged a unique place in the protection of Canadian security and national interests. First and foremost was its ability to protect Canada's interests thousands of miles from her shores, still a fundamental principle of national and global security. Its admirable level of success can be directly attributed to the fully integrated, experienced aviation team that delivered highly capable operational aircraft to combat the threat of the day in support of NATO and NORAD during the Cold War. A prime example was Canada's naval air support to the blockade of Soviet shipping during the Cuban Crisis. This type of support continues to play a major part in today's naval doctrine, in particular, when operating internationally with embarked maritime air (Sea Kings) during security operations.

History tells us that the Royal Canadian Navy emerged from the Second World War as one of the most powerful and proficient navies in the world. North Atlantic convoy protection operations had focused early attention on the importance of air power over the sea. As far back as 1943, Canadian Naval Authorities foresaw the growing submarine threat and briefly considered following the USN lead to convert some of its planned new destroyers to carry helicopters in an above water attack role. It was clear by 1948 that the world was dividing between East and West making the Cold War inevitable. This and the inexorable westward deployment of Soviet submarines forced Canada to review its plans to be able to conduct effective operations in its North Atlantic area of responsibility.

One outcome of this was the concept of putting heavy anti-submarine helicopters equipped with new technology dipping sonar to sea not only on aircraft carriers as the RN and USN had done but on smaller destroyer type ships. In 1956, helicopter trials on HMCS Buckingham, a Prestonian Class Frigate and later HMCS Ottawa, led to the complex conversion of St. Laurent class destroyers to carry a single ASW helicopter housed in a hanger with a unique Canadian designed Helicopter Hauldown and Handling System (BEARTRAP). The essential advantage of this development was to permit suitably modified helicopters to sustain operations at night and in adverse weather conditions. The incredible success of this system reflected the ingenuity of the Canadian scientists, engineers, test pilots, operators and industrial partners and garnered much interest around the world. In the late 60's plans were finalized for 4 new 280 Class Frigates each capable of operating 2 ASW helicopters. Like their predecessors, these ships would also be built in Canadian shipyards employing a broad array of Canadian industry in

their fitment.

SECONDARY ROLES

In addition to Canada's commitment to NATO and NORAD, naval aviation resources on both the East and West coast played a substantial role in Search and Rescue (SAR); in Aid to the Civil Power operations; in joint Canadian, United States (CANUS) projects; and in support of other Government Departments. The flexibility of naval helicopters providing SAR from shore based facilities and ships at sea, proved invaluable in numerous rescue operations, a fact that is well documented by those that owe their lives to these often heroic efforts. Bonaventure's rescue helicopter played a major part in the transfer of survivors and recovered bodies from Flying Tiger Flight 923 that ditched in the Atlantic off the coast of Ireland in September 1962.

It was Bonaventure's rescue helicopter that immediately responded to the flash fire aboard HMCS Nipigon and to the explosion in HMCS Kooteney. In each event, and under inordinately hazardous conditions, she transferred firefighting equipment to the distressed destroyers and returned to the carrier with the burned and injured. Naval helicopters saw service in support of the Springhill, Nova Scotia coal mine explosion in 1956, and again during the 1958 mine disaster and provided key assistance during major forest fires in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Naval helo's also provided the lift capability to supply materials to remote Arctic sites during the construction of the NORAD Distant Early Warning System (DEW Line). Aboard the icebreaker HMCS Labrador, Bell and Piasecki naval helicopters were not only employed in ice reconnaissance, but were also directly involved in the monumental task of mapping and charting the Canadian Arctic. Naval Aviation resources were also assigned the significant responsibility of Arctic water surveillance during the strongly contested transit of the USS Manhattan through the Northwest Passage. Other secondary roles were drug enforcement and Fisheries Patrols to protect Canada's resources while enforcing the laws established by the International Commission for the North West Atlantic Fisheries. (ICNAF)

CONTRIBUTION TO AEROSPACE

The contribution to the Canadian Aerospace Industry since the reincarnation of Canadian Naval Aviation in 1945 has indeed been significant, especially given the modest size of the aviation component. Off shore aircraft companies invested in permanent infrastructure and facilities in Canada to support the repair and overhaul of naval aircraft. Other aircraft manufacturers licensed Canadian based firms to manufacture and assemble their products. Canadian companies, influenced by naval aviation requirements, designed and manufactured new and innovative aircraft systems and components. Industry started apprentice training programmes, while vocational

schools and colleges added courses in aerospace related topics. Over time, research, development, and manufacture of new and advanced ASW sensors, and aircraft electronic and avionic systems provided the stimulus for industry and Government to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in leading edge technology and aerospace jobs

With the advent of Naval Aviation in Canada, a contract was let in 1946 to the Canadian Car and Foundry Limited, a Montreal company, to effect the repair and overhaul of the British built Firefly and Seafire aircraft. Engine repair and overhaul was sub-contracted to Canadian Wright Limited also located in Montreal. The jigs, tools, aircraft technical data, and technical staff were provided by the Fairey Aviation Company of England to transfer the knowledge and skills to the Canadian employees. Thus began the first in a number of post-war aerospace technology transfers related to naval aircraft and aircraft systems that became a leading element in the expansion of Canada's aerospace industry.

In early 1948, as the Canadian Car and Foundry Limited began to phase out of the aircraft industry, the Fairey Aviation Company of England established a branch plant in Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia. This facility, Fairey Aviation Company of Canada Limited (FAC), opened in 1948 and provided aircraft repair, overhaul, modifications and the manufacture of spare parts for the Fairey Firefly and Seafire; Hawker Sea Fury; Grumman Avenger and Tracker; and the McDonnell Banshee fighter aircraft. Over the subsequent years FAC increased their technology base, including specialists in design engineering; aeronautical, structural, electrical and electronic engineering. As such, it was responsible for the design and prototyping of major conversion and reconfiguration programmes for the Avenger, the Tracker and for Sea King helicopters.

FAC expertise was further engaged to develop the Helicopter Haul Down and Handling System (BEARTRAP), originally designed by VX10 Squadron. This system was created to support the safe operation of the relatively large Sea King ASW helicopter from the decks of the relatively small St Laurent and Annapolis class destroyers. This major Canadian Naval Aviation innovation significantly influenced international understanding of, and capability in, the operation of naval helicopters from small ships. The Canadian aerospace company, DAF Indal, Toronto acquired the design and manufacturing rights to the Helicopter Haul Down System and became the world leader in the design, manufacture and installation of variations of the original VX 10 BEARTRAP design.

In 1970, with the closure of FAC, former employees of the company formed a partnership with the President of Industrial Marine Products (IMP), Halifax leading to the formation of IMP Aerospace Limited and the construction a large new aircraft repair and overhaul facility at the

Halifax International Airport. Hiring a good many former FAC employees experienced with naval aircraft and the challenges of operating aircraft at sea, and with the engineering and technical support provided by HMCS Shearwater, IMP came up to speed in short order to support the Tracker and Sea King fleets. Today, IMP continues to support the Sea King fleet, including US Navy Sea Kings, the Canadian Forces CP140 Auroras and the Cormorant SAR helicopters.

Contracts for two major naval aircraft buys went to US aircraft firms that licensed the manufacturing to Canadian companies. One hundred Grumman Tracker ASW aircraft were manufactured in Toronto by De Havilland Canada and the Helicopter and Systems Division of Pratt and Whitney Canada built forty-one Sikorsky Sea King ASW helicopters and later developed a major Sea King helicopter airframe, engine and electronics update programme. The entire technology transfer required to manufacture and support these aircraft was passed on to numerous Canadian component level manufacturers and suppliers who in turn became suppliers to the vast US aircraft industry.

The success of a multitude of other Canadian based companies can be directly attributed to the influence of Canadian Naval Aviation requirements. They include: EMI Cossor Electronics Limited, Sparton Electronics and Hermes Electronics Inc. for sonobouy development and production; Canadian Marconi/CMC Electronics Inc. that designed and manufactured the Sea King Doppler navigation radar; Litton Systems Canada Limited for development and manufacture of Tracker and Sea King airborne radars; SPAR Aerospace for the repair and overhaul of the Sea King helicopter gearbox; and Canadian Aviation Electric (CAE) that developed the Automated Compensator for the Tracker aircraft Magnetic Anomaly Detection (MAD) System and manufactured the next generation compensators installed in most ASW aircraft worldwide.

Historically, the naval air squadron that provided the greatest contribution to the aerospace industry was VX10. Squadron projects ranged from routine evaluation of small items to aircraft acceptance, a continual series of armament and weapons trials, and evaluation of ASW sensors and aircraft electronic and navigation systems, all of which were predominately RCN initiatives. Other tasks included the complex and hazardous Carrier Suitability Trials aboard the carriers HMCS Magnificent and HMCS Bonaventure, and the development of the Bendix PB20 Automated Flight Control System, a system which was a precursor to today's automated flight control and landing system utilized world-wide in both military and commercial aircraft.

VX10 made many contributions to the art and science of naval aviation that were far beyond that expected of such a comparatively small unit. This role included the

development of the ASW Tactical Navigation System (ASWTNS); the Explosive Echo Ranging System (JULIE); the Magnetic Anomaly Detection System (MAD) improvements; Automated Permanent Magnetic Compensation (APMC) for most ASW aircraft MAD systems; the development of the Mark III Tracker aircraft; the Sea King helicopter Doppler Navigation Radar System; and the most ambitious and successful development project, the Helicopter Haul Down and Handling System.

The main development and evaluation effort of the ASWTNS and related ASW detection systems focused on the integration of navigational and sensor inputs and their accuracy; the operation and reliability of the system as a whole; human engineering factors; and the development of effective operational techniques for using the system both as a navigation aid and to assist in the detection, tracking, localization and attack of submarines. This was likely the first major turn-key ASW systems integration to be conducted in Canada that involved several aerospace suppliers throughout the evaluation. On 27 July 1959, a VX10 crew flying from the USN carrier "Valley Forge" effectively demonstrated the capability of the fully integrated ASWTNS by continuously tracking a submerged, unrestricted, high speed, nuclear attack submarine. This historic achievement was a dramatic milestone which significantly advanced the ASW capabilities of both the Canadian and US Navies and provided marked technological advancement opportunities to the aerospace suppliers.

VX10 Squadron operated out of Shearwater until June 1970 when it merged with 448 Test Squadron and the Central Experimental and Proving Establishment (CEPE) to form the Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment (AETE).

TRAINING/PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The many different entry training systems for aircrew, technical officers and maintenance staff, were based on the criteria of being Naval personnel first, and aviation specialists second. Initially, these officers and men came from cadres with aviation expertise acquired in the RN, RCN and RCAF. However, as Naval Air expanded, the majority of personnel came from Military Colleges, Canadian Universities, Technical Institutes, the Navy's Training Programs and HMCS Shearwater's Naval Air Maintenance School. Selected pilots were trained to wings standard in the RN, RCAF, RCN and USN, while Engineers underwent one-year naval air engineering specialist training with the RN. Some of these went on to obtain wings and became test pilots while others went on to post-graduate training in Canada, England and the United States. In all, seventeen Canadian Naval Pilots graduated from either the "Empire Test Pilot's School, Farnborough," or the "Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River". These test pilots "initially groomed by VX 10 Squadron" were an essential component in evaluating the

technical qualities and capabilities of naval aircraft and their systems, in particular, their flying characteristics and performance with respect to carrier and destroyer operations.

Maintenance personnel were recruited, while others were transferred from existing naval trades. Initially many were trained with the RN, particularly Air Artificers, until apprentice training was established in the RCN. This program provided the highly skilled technicians essential to conducting depot level repairs during carrier operations at sea. Senior NCOs (Petty Officers) performed as supervisors and managers while still effecting "hands on maintenance". Junior technicians were trained as "dual tradesmen" all of which was designed to optimize carrier accommodations without jeopardizing crucial maintenance requirements. Senior non-commissioned personnel, "from all aviation trades", were offered further specialized training, academic upgrading, and commissions.

BENEFIT TO SOCIETY

Many of these highly talented individuals eventually sought employment in the rapidly expanding Canadian aviation industry. They were able to apply their well honed skills in all fields including Naval Air Reserve Squadrons established at Naval Reserve Divisions; aircrew; maintenance and support for world airlines; the aerospace industry; research and development; legal, medical and educational institutes; private business; and Government, including Air Traffic Control and Aviation Standards. Their many individual contributions are characterized by the remarkable advances in aviation technology and weapon systems in an era of transition from piston-engine to gas turbine, and from vacuum tubes to transistors to micro chips.

The following highlights only a few of the areas in society that were influenced by this most talented group of former Naval Airmen. They tested and certified new aircraft types; engineered simulators for Canada's space arm design; developed and produced a Canadian family of gas turbine engines; were instrumental in the development of aircraft sensors and navigation systems; became jumbo jet aircraft captains; assisted in startup and operation of successful helicopter companies and feeder airlines; authored books on Naval Aviation and other historic topics; became noted authorities in the legal profession; and took lead positions in government and industry. Most importantly, Naval Aviation made an immense contribution over the years to keeping Canadians safe.

SUMMATION

To recognize the tremendous accomplishments of Canadian Naval Aviation is to herald a distinguished and remarkable contribution by Canada's Naval Airmen to the defence of North America, in NATO operations and, to the aerospace industry and Canadian society as a whole. In the short span of 25 years, Naval Aviation made a huge

impact on Canada. Not only did it contribute substantially to the security of our country during troubled years but it did so with pride and dedication. Its innovative spirit, collective wisdom and talented leadership multiplied into advances in world recognized aerospace and ship technologies, air operations at sea and commercial helicopter operations across our country. And although relatively few in number, naval air personnel carried this proud legacy into Canadian society and their impact will be felt for many years to come. Though formally ended in 1970, our spirit continues and is evident in the CF today.

"Compiled by Bud MacLean and the CNAG HGVC Chapter".

"TOUR OF DUTY GALA"
"An Historical Salute to Canadian Naval Aviation"
"Come Join the Celebration"
Canada Aviation Museum
Ottawa, Ontario
06 November 2010
In The Centennial Year Of The Navy In Support Of
"The Perley and Rideau Veteran's Health Centre
Foundation"
and the
"Canada Aviation Museum Foundation"



These three Sub Lieutenants took elementary flying training at Stanley Airport near Windsor, NS during the winter of 1942-43. Peter Lawson asks if you recognize them.

CANADA'S AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

Ernie Cable – SAM Historian

At the outbreak of the Second World War, many young Canadians wanted to get into action as soon as possible. To avoid the delays caused by the massive number of volunteers rushing to join Canada's burgeoning military services, some paid their own passage to England to join the British Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Air Force (RAF). Although aircraft had yet to be introduced into the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), young Canadians were lured by the prospective adventures of naval aviation and joined the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm (FAA) as members of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR). Later, the FAA was streamlined recruiting by accepting Canadians who had enlisted directly in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR). These young men provided the cadre of experienced naval aviators that would later enable Canada to establish its own naval air arm and to operate its own aircraft carriers. While serving in the FAA, Canadian airmen made a significant contribution to British naval aviation. The most notable, Lieutenant (RCNVR) Robert Hampton Gray was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for leading a courageous attack on a flotilla of Japanese destroyers while flying from the aircraft carrier *HMS Formidable*. He was the RCN's sole recipient of the British Commonwealth's highest award for valour.

The success of the FAA's attack on Taranto in 1940 which immobilized the Italian Mediterranean fleet and the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck* in 1941 signalled the rising prominence of the aircraft carrier. Any doubt about the aircraft carrier's dominant role in naval warfare was erased in December 1941 by the devastating Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which crippled the American Pacific fleet. America's aircraft carriers were fortunate enough to escape the attack and became the nucleus for powerful Carrier Task Forces which spearheaded the final defeat of Japan in the Pacific. At war's end, major navies of the world built their naval doctrine around the supremacy of the aircraft carrier.

In the early years of the Second World War British shipbuilders could not keep up with the competing demands for merchant ships and aircraft carriers. Consequently, some ships hulls originally designed and built for other sea going tasks were diverted to build aircraft carriers. The Americans resorted to a similar process to meet the demand for aircraft carriers; many of which were loaned to the Royal Navy under the American-British Lend-Lease Agreement. Canada's first experience operating aircraft carriers occurred late in the Second World War when the Royal Navy, because of manpower shortages, asked the RCN to man two of their American-built lend-lease Escort Carriers; *HMS Nabob* and *HMS Puncher*.

The First Carriers

Both the *HMS Nabob* and *HMS Puncher* were built by Seattle Tacoma Shipbuilding, in Tacoma, Washington, USA. *HMS Nabob* was the slightly larger vessel at 15,390 tons with an overall length 495 feet and a flight deck width of 107 feet. *HMS Puncher* had a displacement of 14,170 tons and an overall length of 492 feet and a flight deck width of 102 feet. Both vessels were built as RULER Class "Escort Carriers" which were the third group of aircraft carriers built in the United States for the RN.

The RCN provided the Captain, officers and ships' companies including manning of the ships' flight deck, engineering, electrical and supply departments. The RN provided the aircrew, air engineering and aircraft maintenance personnel. The two carriers belonged to the RN, but their flying operations were under the control of the RCN Captain and crew.



HMS NABOB (7 Sep 43– 30 Sep 44)

After completing work-ups on the west coast, *Nabob* sailed for San Diego where she embarked a RN squadron of Grumman Avengers (825 Sqn) then proceeded to the Panama Canal to embark 45 United States Army Air Force (USAAF) P-51 Mustangs. After calling at Norfolk VA to pick passengers she sailed in convoy to the UK. After disembarking her aircraft and passengers in England, *Nabob* was assigned to the British Home Fleet and participated in "OPERATION OFFSPRING", where her Avenger aircraft were tasked to mine areas along the Norwegian coast to disrupt shipping carrying raw materials to Germany.

In August 1944, *Nabob* as part of the Home Fleet participated in the largest FAA operation of the war, OPERATION GOODWOOD, a coordinated attack on the German battleship *Tirpitz* anchored in Altenfiord in northern Norway. After two attacks had to be aborted because of weather, *Nabob's* aircraft participated in the third attack. But only a few aircraft managed to penetrate the bad weather and the attacking aircraft claimed only a single hit on *Tirpitz* with a 500 pound (250 kg) bomb. Later *HMS Nabob's* aircraft flew a Combat Air Patrol (CAP) over the main force. While the aircraft carrier was withdrawing westward in a gale she was torpedoed by a German U-boat, U-354, resulting in a hole about 32 square feet (three square meters) located aft of the engine room and below the waterline.

A large number of her crew were killed or wounded and damage control parties had difficulty in shoring up her merchant hull. Because of the extensive damage 214 of ship's company took to boats and Carley Floats. By early evening vital spaces had been shored up and *Nabob* got underway. With her flight deck canted at an eerie angle, she launched two Avengers that kept the U-boat at bay until she retreated from the area. On recovery, one of the Avengers ran into the barrier and caused damage to six other aircraft. After jettisoning all portable heavy gear and several aircraft off the canted heaving deck and transferring 203 of the ship's company to the destroyer *HMCS Algonquin* in a 43 knot gale, *HMS Nabob* eventually limped into the home waters of Scapa Flow on 27 August. The fact that she made it to a safe haven at all is a tribute to her RCN Captain and crew!

HMS Nabob never sailed again in the RN but was cannibalized for spare parts for other ships. In commission less than a year, she taught the RCN about the operation of aircraft from aircraft carriers. Following the Second World War, she was converted into a civilian training vessel for the post war German merchant service as the *MV Nabob*. In 1967 the ship was sold to the Panamanians and renamed the *Glory*. The ship ultimately was broken up in Taiwan in 1978.



HMS PUNCHER
(5 Feb 44-16
Jan 46)

HMS PUNCHER was the second aircraft carrier operated by RCN personnel for the Royal

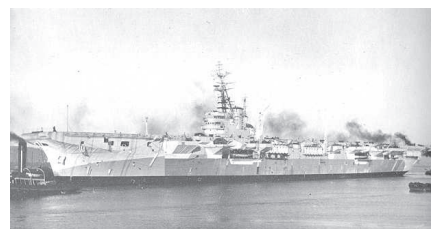
Navy. *PUNCHER* was commissioned on 5 February 1944 and came under RCN jurisdiction on 10 April 1944 during her refit at Vancouver when Captain R.E.S. Bidwell, RCN, took command. *HMS PUNCHER* had no aircraft embarked when she sailed in June via the Panama Canal, en route to the American eastern seaboard. A Blackburn Shark torpedo bomber was borrowed from the RCAF and used to train the enthusiastic flight deck party. It was then off to the Navy Yard at Norfolk, VA to be fitted with 40 mm Bofors gun mounts and embark a deck cargo of 40 USAAF aircraft including P-61 Black Widow night fighters for service in the Mediterranean.

HMS PUNCHER delivered her deck cargo to Casablanca and then made a return trip to Norfolk to embark Chance-Vought F4U Corsairs, Grumman F6F Helcats and TBM Avengers and a Curtiss SB2C Helldiver destined for the FAA in the UK. In October 1944, *PUNCHER* finally assumed her role as an aircraft carrier with the British Home Fleet and embarked 12 Fairey Barracudas from 821 Squadron (FAA). During work-ups in the Firth of Clyde, *PUNCHER* suffered an engine gear failure and lost control in severe

weather; barely managing to regain control she was able to launch five of her aircraft which were recovered ashore. After repairs, using parts from the disabled *HMS Nabob*, *PUNCHER* participated in a search for U-1055 which had torpedoed her sister carrier, *HMS Thane*.

In late January 1945, *HMS PUNCHER* embarked 14 Grumman F4F Wildcats of 881 Squadron (FAA) and four Fairey Barracudas of 821 Squadron (FAA). *PUNCHER*'s aircraft provided a Combat Air Patrol for a Cruiser Task Force shelling targets in northern Norway. Upon completion of this operation *PUNCHER*'s F4F Wildcats provided air cover for a mining operation along the Norwegian coast. After a brief turnaround in Scotland *PUNCHER* was part of OPERATION NEWMARKET, a five carrier Task Force which attempted to raid the U-boat pens a Narvik, Norway north of the Arctic Circle. But after five days of appalling weather the operation had to be cancelled.

HMS PUNCHER returned to the Orkney Islands and to all intents and purposes her carrier days were over. Following VE-Day she was used as a training carrier, then converted to a troop ship and served from August 1945 repatriating Canadian troops from the UK. On 16 January 1946, she arrived in Norfolk, lowered her White Ensign for the last time and was returned to the US Navy. *PUNCHER* reverted to being a merchant ship and served as the British *Muncaster Castle* in 1949, renamed the *Bardic* in 1954 and *Bennevis* in 1959. She was broken up in Taiwan in 1973.



**HMCS WARRIOR (24
Jan 46– 23 Mar 48)**

On 27 March 1942, the Canadian Government approved the retention "on loan"

of two light fleet aircraft carriers on terms agreed with the British Admiralty and the purchase of four naval air squadrons (including reserve aircraft, stores and equipment) at a cost not to exceed ten million dollars". In March 1944, the RCN advised the Admiralty that it planned to acquire two light fleet carriers and proposed that the RN train two RCN fighter and two RCN torpedo-reconnaissance squadrons. The torpedoing of *HMS Nabob* gave impetus to a plan that the RCN should operate the carriers *HMS Vengeance* and *HMS Ocean* or *HMS Warrior* in lieu of *HMS PUNCHER* for service in the Far East. In January 1945, the UK formally offered to transfer two carriers to Canada with the RN providing the aircraft and squadrons; Canada was to be responsible for paying the squadrons. The aircraft and stores for 803 and 825 squadrons were included under the offer which was valid until to 1 March 1946 and because of Britain's war reparation payments no money was to exchange hands.

On 14 February 1945, an agreement was made to transfer the carriers to the RCN on the understanding that Canada would have the right to buy them at a later date if desired and employ them in the Pacific/Indian Ocean in accordance with Canadian Government policy. The first of the light fleet carriers to join the RCN retained the RN name "*Warrior*". This ship was a Colossus Class aircraft carrier built by Harland & Wolf, Ltd, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The ship had a displacement of 13,350 tons, an 18,000-ton full load, overall length of 682 feet (225 meters), beam 82 feet (25 meters) and a flight deck length of 700 feet (230 meters).

Before Canadian naval personnel completed their training, the war in Europe ended in May 1945, followed by the defeat of Japan in August 1945. Therefore, the RCN Air Branch, as an entity, did not have the opportunity to participate in the Second World War as *HMCS Warrior* wasn't commissioned into the RCN until 24 January 1946. Her aircraft compliment included Supermarine Seafire XV fighters and Fairey Firefly FR-1 fighter-reconnaissance aircraft. Formal transfer of *HMCS Warrior* to the RCN occurred on 17 March 1946.

During her first Canadian Navy sea trials with 13 Seafires and four Fireflies embarked it became obvious that *HMCS Warrior* was not built to operate in Arctic or Canadian North Atlantic weather conditions. But, despite all her limitations, *HMCS Warrior* sailed for Halifax with 803 Squadron's 32 Seafires and 825 Squadron's 21 Fireflies embarked along with 30 tons of aircraft stores. With 28 of the aircraft parked on her deck, *HMCS Warrior* was forced to heave-to in a North Atlantic gale. After the weather moderated all but two of the 28 aircraft ranged on deck flew ashore to the newly established Royal Canadian Naval Air Section at RCAF Station Dartmouth, on 31 March 1946.

In November 1946, *Warrior* was transferred to her new home port at *HMCS Esquimalt* in Victoria, B.C. While undergoing refit on the West coast it was recognized that the ambitious plans for the RCN to commission and man two aircraft carriers would not be possible because of post-war manning ceilings; even if two aircraft carriers were commissioned only one at a time could be manned. As a consequence, it was decided to return *HMCS Warrior* to the RN and replace her with her sister ship, *HMCS Magnificent*.

Following this decision *HMCS Warrior* returned to Halifax via the Panama Canal. In May 1947, the third and fourth former RN squadrons, 826 and 883, destined for the RCN were reformed at Dartmouth as the 18th Carrier Air Group (CAG); the newly reformed squadrons inherited the Seafires and Fireflies previously operated by 803 and 825 Squadrons of the 19th CAG. On 2 August 1947, *Warrior* with 206 personnel of the 19th CAG embarked sailed for the UK to attend courses on the new Sea Fury FB 11 and Firefly Mark IV aircraft. *Warrior* immediately turned around

and arrived back in Halifax on 28 August. By mid-November the recently reformed 883 and 826 Squadrons were ready for sea training and embarked in *HMCS Warrior* for carrier deck landing qualification and air training exercises. *Warrior* returned to Halifax on 21 November, having completed her last flying commitments for the RCN. The ship was then loaded over 3,000 crates of stores and equipment to be ferried to the UK for the soon to be commissioned *HMCS Magnificent*.



**H M C S
MAGNIFICENT**
(7 Apr 48 – 14
Jun 57)

Following the Canadian Government Cabinet decision, of January 1947, to return *HMCS*

Warrior to the Royal Navy and to keep only one carrier in commission, the future hopes of the Naval Air Branch were centered on *HMCS Magnificent*. Harland and Wolf Ltd, Belfast, Northern Ireland, determined from experience that to construct a Fleet Carrier with an armoured deck and built to naval standards would take 39 months. Construction time for a light fleet carrier with a hull built to modified mercantile standards could be reduced to 29 months. The 10 month reduction in building time was most important for the RCN to maintain momentum in developing its naval air branch. Unlike her predecessor, *HMCS Magnificent* was modified for cold weather operations and had incorporated Canadian enhancements including improved messing. Though essentially the same size as *HMCS Warrior* she did have a slightly longer three feet (one meter) overall length.

The ship was launched in Belfast, Northern Ireland on 16 November 1944. Key Canadian personnel arrived at the shipyard during 1947 with a large party from *Warrior* joining the ship in March 1948. The vessel was commissioned *HMCS Magnificent* on 7 April 1948 with Commodore DeWolf, who had recently left *Warrior* in Portsmouth, assuming command. After successful sea trials and air tests off Portsmouth *Magnificent* embarked ship's stores and returned to Belfast where the aircraft of the 19th CAG (803 Squadron Sea Furies and 825 Squadron Firefly Mark IV's) were hoisted on board along with FAA Sea Furies, Sea Hornets and a Sea Vampire from 806 Squadron which was deploying on a North American tour to demonstrate British naval air power. On 25 May 1948, *HMCS Magnificent* set sail on her maiden voyage to Canada. However, because of bad weather on her 1 June arrival in Halifax, *Magnificent* was able to fly off only two of her aircraft to RCN Air Section Dartmouth; the

remainder had to be hoisted ashore when *Magnificent* came along side.

Magnificent participated in numerous training exercises with the RN over the years. Her first trip back to the UK in March 1949 provided an opportunity to exchange the loaned Fairey Firefly Mk IV for the new Firefly Mk V ASW aircraft and to bring back the next batch of Sea Fury FB 11's to Dartmouth. In the early 1950's, the RCN's carrier operations became more closely aligned with the US Navy in the joint defence of North America. To improve interoperability the RCN abandoned the British technique of a sweeping left turn approach to land aboard *Magnificent* and adopted the American landing procedure of lining up on the carrier from astern using the straight in approach to landing. During joint operations the common landing procedure provided another emergency deck for US naval aviators and Canadian pilots could, in turn, use American decks.

From 1950 to 1956 *HMCS Magnificent* and her embarked Air Groups were very busy participating in NATO exercises in North Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean waters. Portsmouth, Plymouth, Norfolk, Bermuda and Puerto Rico were common ports of call. The regimen of naval exercises was interrupted in October 1956 when *Magnificent* embarked the officers and men of the RCAF's 410 Squadron along with their 48 F-86 Sabre jet fighters in Norfolk VA for transport to Scotland. No 410 Squadron was the first of the RCAF's 12 Air Division squadrons based in England, France and West Germany.

In 1956, a RCN rotary wing milestone was achieved when the first HS 50 Anti-Submarine Squadron HO4S helicopters embarked in *Magnificent* and worked with her escorts to enhance protective submarine screen around the carrier. Although, the learning curve was very steep, the addition of helicopters to the ship borne anti-submarine mission would, in due course, provide a major leap in the RCN's anti-submarine capability.

Also in 1956, the RCN discussed the modernization of *HMCS Magnificent* including a strengthened deck, improved aircraft elevators, arrestor gear and barriers. This required the fleet to be without the services of the carrier for an extended period so three alternatives were examined:

- (a) Borrow a Royal Navy aircraft carrier during the refit;
- (b) Exchange *HMCS Magnificent* for a modernized Light Fleet Carrier; or
- (c) Purchase one of the partly built Light Fleet Carriers on which construction had been stopped in 1945, then complete the construction with the latest carrier innovations.

The Naval Board recommended *Magnificent* be placed in reserve, but in September 1956 the government decided to return her to the Royal Navy.

Again in 1956, the Suez Canal crisis erupted prompting the United Nations to declare an emergency. *HMCS Magnificent* was detailed to act as a troopship to transport Canadian army personnel to the Middle East and to act as a Headquarters once in situ. Dockyard workmen swarmed aboard to prepare the carrier for Operation RAPID STEP. "A" Hanger became a dormitory and was supplied with double bunks and wash places. The sonobuoy storage and maintenance areas became a Sickbay Annex. "B" hanger became a stores area. The First Battalion of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada was embarked, all was complete. But Operation RAPID STEP was placed "on hold" at the last minute. Since British and French forces had earlier seized the Suez Canal, Colonel Abdel Nasser of Egypt found the British connotation in the Queen's Own Rifles regimental name unacceptable, so the Regiment along with their goods and chattels were offloaded.

It was then decided that the Canadian contingent would act in a logistic support role. Exercise RAPID STEP II began with *HMCS Magnificent* loading stores, vehicles and equipment for a second and new Army contingent. By now the aircraft carrier had become a troop carrier only – the requirement for headquarters ship was dropped. Finally on 29 December, the carrier with 406 personnel, vehicles and stores sailed for the Mediterranean. On arrival in Port Said, Egypt on 12 January 1957, *Magnificent's* ship's company was assisted unloading by Finnish United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) personnel, while Swedish, Finnish and Indian troops acted as security forces for the carrier. *Magnificent* had retained her HU-21 HO4S helicopter which was put to good use by Canadian General E.L.M. Burns and *Magnificent's* Captain, Captain Fraser-Harris in establishing the U.N. forces ashore.

On her return to Halifax, *Magnificent* was permanently de-stored and made ready for her last voyage and return to the Royal Navy as previously agreed.

On 10 April, *HMCS Magnificent* sailed for Portsmouth, UK and reverted to the Royal Navy on 14 June 1957. The remainder of the ship's company went to Belfast to join *HMCS Bonaventure*, which commissioned in January 1958. *HMCS Magnificent* joined the RN Reserve Fleet at Plymouth and was scrapped shortly thereafter.



**H M C S
BONAVENTURE**
(21 Jan 57 – 3 Jul
70)

In April 1952, the Canadian Cabinet agreed to replace *HMCS Magnificent* with a new modernized carrier.

The British identified a Majestic Class light fleet carrier, *HMS Powerful*, which was just three feet (one meter) longer than *Magnificent*, as the most suitable candidate. Harland and Wolff in Belfast, Northern Ireland had started her construction in November 1943 and launched the ship in February 1946. However, since the Second World War had ended the carrier was no longer needed and construction was suspended. Canada agreed to purchase the ship on 29 November 1952 and within two weeks construction on *Powerful* was resumed. The ship had been redesigned to include the latest developments for operation of modern fixed wing and jet aircraft by incorporating a 7 1/2 degree angled deck, an improved arrester gear, a steam catapult and a mirror landing system. In addition to her strengthened deck and aircraft elevators, a remodeled bridge and funnel, she was fitted with fully automatic US pattern 3.50 inch guns.

On 10 December 1952, the RCN announced the name "*Bonaventure*" for the new ship, a name of some repute in the Royal Navy and the name of an island bird sanctuary in Canada's Gulf of St Lawrence. During negotiations the Royal Navy argued that the contract required that *HMCS Magnificent* be brought up to date with the latest Alterations and Additions (A&A's) for her class before she was returned. These very expensive modifications included major changes such as an angled and strengthened deck, etc. The RCN won the argument by claiming that these were modernizations and not A&A's and since *HMCS Bonaventure* was being bought "as is" then the RN must forgo any claims for *HMCS Magnificent*.

The new carrier had many Canadian innovations incorporated to make her one of the most modern of her type of ship afloat. These included three million dollars worth of electrical and electronic equipment and two million dollars of fire control and radar units. Like *HMCS Magnificent*, she was fitted with one three bladed and one four bladed propeller for vibration control. The RCN intended *Bonaventure* to embark McDonnell F2H-3 Banshee jet fighters obtained from the US Navy for fleet air defence; to fulfill her primary anti-submarine role she would embark Grumman CS2F Trackers (built by de Havilland Canada, Toronto under license from Grumman) and Sikorsky HO4S-3 helicopters.

During the acquisition process for a new carrier the RCN considered purchasing a United States Navy ESSEX Class aircraft carrier or the new *HMS Hermes*, a British Advanced Light Fleet Carrier, but neither proposal went forward. It was planned to commission *Bonaventure* in the fall of 1956, but the date was delayed to finalize the standards of workmanship throughout the final fitting out and the nature of the pre-commissioning trials. Preparing for the commissioning proved to be difficult as most of the ship's company was slated to come from *HMCS Magnificent*, but she and her crew were diverted to the Suez crisis. So, the nucleus of *Bonaventure*'s company, comprised of the 100 RCN personnel pre-positioned in

Belfast, had to be augmented by flying in replacement crew members from Canada.

After full power trials, the ship moved down to Portsmouth, England for storing and ammunition. Flying trials included launching and recovering of two RN Hawker Sea Hawks, two RCN Grumman Trackers, two RN Fairey Gannets and two RCN McDonnell F2H-3 Banshees. The Gannet was a turbine-powered antisubmarine aircraft, which the Royal Navy had hoped to sell to the RCN. *HMCS Bonaventure* sailed for Halifax on 19 June 1957 with the UK-built hydrofoil *HMCS Bras d'Or* onboard. Her first deployment was delayed until September to make modifications to her island structure to accommodate a senior officer's bridge, separate from the main bridge and compass platform.

Following a ten-day work-up in St Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, *HMCS Bonaventure* sailed on her first flying training exercise. Ten Tracker pilots had qualified two months earlier on board *USS Wasp's* angled deck and its mirror landing system. Now the RCN pilots could refine their skills on their own carrier.

From 1957 until she was de-commissioned in 1970, *Bonaventure* participated in a myriad of exercises and operations in the North Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas; ports of call included Stockholm, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bermuda, Quonset Point, New York, Norfolk, Charleston, Puerto Rico and Malta.

In September 1962, *Bonaventure* was diverted to a crash site off the coast of Ireland where a Flying Tiger Lockheed Constellation carrying 76 American servicemen and families had ditched. Upon arrival at the crash site Commodore Landymore, embarked in *Bonaventure*, as the Senior Canadian Officer Presently Afloat (Atlantic) assumed the role of rescue coordinator. The aircraft carrier's Medical Officer and medical attendants were flown, via helicopter, to the other ships responding to the rescue to attend to the casualties; other flights were made to move medical supplies and people back to the ship. The US Air Force presented a plaque to acknowledge *Bonaventure's* immediate response and recovery of 12 fatalities and for their unselfish assistance to the surviving American servicemen.

Following the rescue, *Bonaventure* participated in an exercise where she demonstrated her peak operational efficiency by keeping four Trackers airborne around the clock for four days for a total of 424.8 flying hours; similarly, HS 50 kept its HO4S-3 helicopters airborne, from dawn to dusk for 92.9 flying hours. Immediately after the exercise *Bonaventure* had to forego a planned rest period and sailed on six hours notice to participate in the US Navy's Cuban Missile Crisis blockade. With the ship's company scattered all over England and four of her aircraft ashore at RNAS Lee-on-Solent for training, *Bonaventure* had to leave a destroyer behind to collect the 20 to 30 members of the ship's company who did not make it back

to the ship in time. With NATO aircraft carriers spread at 150-mile intervals across the Atlantic to intercept Soviet ships carrying ballistic missiles to Cuba, the world was on the brink of another world war. Fortunately, American resolve in due course ended the crisis and *Bonaventure* returned to Halifax for a self-maintenance period.

In 1962, the RCN's the first jet fighter, the McDonnell Banshee, was retired without replacement; but in early 1963 the new CHSS-2 Sea King ASW helicopters took their place on *Bonaventure's* flight deck. In the same year, Jezebel, a sonobuoy submarine detection and tracking system was also introduced into the RCN. During a NATO exercise *Bonaventure's* Tracker crews had employed Jezebel to locate and plot all exercise submarines with great accuracy. During the exercise wrap-up at Northwood, UK there was much consternation about how much the Canadians knew of the submarines' locations beforehand. The British Admiral demanded that the Senior Canadian Officer, Commodore R.P. Welland, come to Northwood from Bergen, Norway, where the ship was visiting. At this point Welland explained, in confidence, how the secret new American/Canadian Jezebel sonobuoy system added an entire new dimension to ASW.

In 1964, a regional conflict erupted in Cyprus resulting in *HMCS Bonaventure* being tasked to transport a contingent of the First Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment and their equipment from Canada to Cyprus in the same way *HMCS Magnificent* had transported army units to Suez in 1956. Because the naval Auxiliary Oiler and Replenishment ship, *HMCS Provider* had limited deck capacity, *Bonaventure* had to transport a number of vehicles for the Royal Canadian Dragoons reconnaissance squadron; the additional vehicles did not alleviate the carrier from embarking the maximum number of Trackers. Sensitive to the impending presence of Canadian peacekeepers, the Turk and Greek Cypriots decided that the reconnaissance vehicles were "offensive weapons" and must remain out of sight. So the vehicles were stored below in the hangars and the Trackers remained on deck. Despite the deck congestion, the dozen Trackers were able to fly operationally.

Also at this time, the RCN was interested in a replacement for the F2H-3 Banshee and was evaluating the Douglas A4E Skyhawk and the Ling-Temco-Vought A-7 Corsair II jet fighters. Douglas and the US Navy hoped to use the very successful flight deck and landing trials on *Bonaventure* to sell the A4E to the Indian and Australian navies which operated similar size carriers. However, Canada abolished, the Banshee replacement program, but the Royal Australian Navy bought and successfully operated A4E's off one of *Bonaventure's* sister ships. The Canadian Armed Forces later had another opportunity to buy A4E's but opted to build the supersonic Northrop/Canadair CF 5A/B fighter in Canada instead. After the successful introduction of the new fleet of Sea King helicopters in 1965, *Bonaventure's* standard aircraft

compliment consisted of six Sea King ASW helicopters from HS 50, 12 CS2F Trackers from VS 880/881 Squadrons, one Sikorsky HO4S-3 from HU 21 for utility/plane guard purposes, and one COD (Carrier Onboard Delivery) Tracker aircraft which had been converted from an ASW Tracker. Because this was the largest aircraft complement ever carried, the ship's company increased to 1,350, her wartime complement. Spaces where bunks had been removed were put back into service as living spaces.

In 1967, *HMCS Bonaventure* sailed to Lauzon, Quebec for her mid-life refit. This refit and dramatic changes brought on by the integration of Canada's armed forces had a profound effect upon Canada's Navy. By the third month of *HMCS Bonaventure's* refit it was obvious that the eight-volume work order did not account for all of her defects and many additional "arisings" were identified. Following a lengthy investigation the Commander, Material Command, who had technical, financial and administrative responsibility, recommended a six-month extension for the refit!

Amid much debate and controversy about the costs of her mid-life refit, *HMCS Bonaventure* made her last operational trip as an aircraft carrier in 1969. Ports of call included Holland, Oslo, Norway and Portsmouth, England before returning to Halifax. In early December 1969, *Bonaventure* made a short trip to Boston without any aircraft embarked. On her return trip to Halifax as many Tracker aircraft as possible from Shearwater flew out for their final touch-and-goes (landings and take-offs) before the carrier was to be scrapped. Four Trackers were kept on board for a final launch in harbour. Despite the fact that the wind died down and the catapult was unserviceable the four Trackers did a free launch in Bedford Basin with Commander Rod Lyons flying the last aircraft to be launched from *HMCS Bonaventure*.

In 1970, *HMCS Bonaventure* participated in PEACEKEEPER her last NATO Exercise. Despite her demise as an aircraft carrier as a cost saving measure, *Bonaventure* continued as an operational support ship providing maintenance and logistical support to Sea Kings embarked in helicopter destroyers; *Bonaventure* augmented the destroyers' aircraft by carrying six additional Sea Kings from HS 50 and a HO4S rescue helicopter from HU-21 (Pedro). Trips were made to Jamaica and to Narvik, Norway, the latter in the role of an Army replenishment support ship and not as an aircraft carrier.

HMCS Bonaventure was paid off on 3 April 1970, decommissioned 3 July 1970 and sold in August for scrap to Taiwan; she departed Halifax harbour for the last time on 27 October 1970 under tow.



Some of the Canadian Crew RCNVR 1946 on board HMS PUNCHER (821 Crew) - sorry I don't have names. The aircraft was brought on HMS PUNCHER in 1946 for Shearwater. This type of aircraft probably would have been used on HMCS WARRIOR, if, the war in Japan had continued.



HMS PUNCHER: Captain R.E.S. Bidwell, RCN inspects the men at Division aided by the Captain's Secretary, Lieut (S) W.J. Thorpe, RCNVR. After Divisions, the Captain breaks the good news that the ship is to make a trip across the Atlantic to secure a load of planes needed for the Far East, and that on the westbound voyage the hangar will be filled with bunks to facilitate the return to Canada of Naval personnel who are volunteers for the Far East and who are entitled to leave in Canada before going to the Far East. The ship will go to Halifax before proceeding to Norfolk.

(The above information on PUNCHER was sent to us from Mr. O.J. Parker, 1171 Ambleside Dr. Apt 1110 Ottawa, On K2B 8E1 ex RCNVR Vet.)

Helicopter Squadron Summary

SQUADRON	FORMED AT	AIRCRAFT TYPES	REMARKS
No. 1 Helicopter Flight	HMCS Shearwater Sep 1951	HTL-4 HTL-6	Renumbered VH 21 May 53
VH 21	HMCS Shearwater May 1953	HTL-4, HTL-6, HUP-3	Renumbered HU 21 Apr 55
HU 21	HMCS Shearwater Apr 1955	HTL-4, HTL-6, HO4S-2, HO4S-3, Sea King	Disbanded Jul 72, Training assumed by VT 406
HS 50	HMCS Shearwater Jun 1955	HO4S-2, HO4S-3, Sea King	Disbanded, Sep 74 HS 50 Split into HS 423 & HS 443
VT 406	CFB Shearwater Jul 1972	Sea King Tracker	Assumed helicopter training role from HU 21
HS 423	CFB Shearwater Sep 1974	Sea King	Based at 12 Wing Shearwater
HS 443	CFB Shearwater Sep 1974	Sea King	Based at Pat Bay BC as a 12 Wing Shearwater squadron
HT 406	CFB Shearwater 1981	Sea King	Changed from VT 406 to HT 406 when MR 880 assumed Tracker training
MH 423	12 Wing Shearwater 1994	Sea King	Renamed from HS 423
MH 443	12 Wing Shearwater 1994	Sea King	Renamed from HS 443

Naval Fixed Wing Squadron Summary

SQUADRON	FORMED AT	AIRCRAFT TYPES	REMARKS
803	RNAS Arbroath Jan 1946	Seafire XV	Renumbered 870 Sqn May 51
825	RNAS Rattray Jan 1946	Firefly FR 1, FR IV & AS 5	Renumbered 880 Sqn May 51
743 Fleet Requirements Unit	RCAF Dartmouth Sep 1946	Swordfish, Walrus, Harvard, Anson V	Renumbered VU 32 Sqn Nov 52
826	RCAF Dartmouth May 1947	Firefly FR 1, AS 5	Renumbered 881 Sqn May 51
883	RCAF Dartmouth May 1947	Seafire XV	Renumbered 871 Sqn May 51
870	HMCS Shearwater May 1951	Seafire XV Sea Fury FB 11	Renumbered VF 870 Nov 52
871	HMCS Shearwater May 1951	Seafire XV Sea Fury FB 11	Renumbered VF 871 Nov 52
880	HMCS Shearwater May 1951	Firefly AS 5 Avenger AS 3	Renumbered VS 880 Nov 52
881	HMCS Shearwater May 1951	Firefly FR 1 Avenger AS 3	Renumbered VS 881 Nov 52
VX 10	HMCS Shearwater Mar 1953	Sea Fury, Avenger, T-33 Banshee, Tracker, Sea King	Absorbed by Aerospace Engineering & Test Establishment, Jun 70
VU 32	HMCS Shearwater Nov 1952	Avenger, Expeditor, T-33, Dakota, Tracker, Twin Huey	Disbanded, absorbed by No. 434 Sqn. Sep 1992
VT 40	HMCS Shearwater May 1954	Expeditor, Harvard, Sea Fury, T-33	Disbanded, training functions absorbed by VU 32, May 59
VF 871	HMCS Shearwater Nov 1952	Sea Fury Banshee	Disbanded, absorbed by VF 870 Mar 59
VF 870	HMCS Shearwater Nov 1952	Sea Fury Banshee	Disbanded Sep 62
VS 881	HMCS Shearwater Nov 1952	Avenger AS 3 Tracker	Absorbed by VS 880 Jul 59
VS 880	HMCS Shearwater Nov 1952	Avenger AS 3 Tracker	Renumbered MR 880 Mar 75
MR 880	CFB Shearwater Mar 1975	Tracker CS2F-3	Transferred to CFB Summerside 1981 Disbanded 1990
VT 406	CFB Shearwater Jul 1972	Tracker Sea King	Absorbed VU 32 & HU 21 training roles

RAMBLINGS OF A FORMER SUN DOWNER

“ Be at Shearwater at 0800 “ said Wally, leaning on the Stadacona Wardroom bar on a May Friday night in 1958. “ I’ll drop you off in St. Hubert and pick you up Sunday on my way back”. Thus began my naval air career. It was the only time I flew in an TBM Avenger and with Wally Schroeder. Fifty two years later I ask, “ how did those years pass so quickly”? Thirty six of them were in uniform: 16 in Navy blue, 17 in CF green and 3 in Air Force light blue. Not once did those regular visiting Naval career managers who loved Shearwater on a Friday afternoon, ever mention anything about such a career path.

I had the privilege just recently to visit Shearwater once again and be hosted by the Wing Commander, Colonel Michaud, who briefed me on the latest changes being undertaken in preparation for the introduction of the CH-148 Cyclone helicopter and its complex weapon system. It was a great day - one of both pride and nostalgia: pride because clearly our legacy is in good hands and nostalgia because it was good to be home. After my Wing tour including a splendid visit to the Shearwater Aviation Museum, I slipped back up to the air field alone and walked out past 3 Hanger. Glancing over at A hanger took me back to my beginning - my first squadron HS 50, my first operational aircraft the HO4S-3 Horse helicopter, my first deployment to sea in Bonnie and my first real junior officer challenge - being a worthy Divisional Officer to the SN division. Over a period of 2 years, Chief Graham and his SNs taught me a lot about myself, mutual respect, responsibility and professionalism for which I remain grateful.

Looking around there on that rather cold Nova Scotia day, I was quite surprised just how little Shearwater had changed in a physical sense. Yes D hanger was gone having been replaced by the huge new Cyclone support and 423 Squadron facilities and the encroaching skyline of Dartmouth was evident. But much was as many of us would remember. It was difficult not to reminisce. I recall many times standing in a similar spot and marveling at the activity around me. To the south F2H Banshees ranged along the taxiway and HO4S-3 helicopters along the north side below Tower hill; T 33’s overhead equipped with the Delmar target gear flying Navy fleet support missions; row upon row of VS 880 and VU 32 Trackers filling the infield between the hangars and big X’s evident on VX 10’s aircraft. It was a very busy airfield. Of course, from such a vantage point it was not possible to see the Bonaventure Jetty with Bonnie tied up alongside but the memory is indelible.

Standing there for those brief moments last December, I savoured our rich naval aviation history and proud contribution to our Navy and Country over half a century through peace and conflict and I thought about the generations of dedicated warriors at all levels who had made it all possible. More personally, I thought about the

friendships I had made, the characters I had met during my 19 year Shearwater association and the leaders I admired from Robert Hilborn Falls, A.B.F. (Fraser) Fraser-Harris and Robert Hampton Gray VC to the incredibly well trained, resourceful and tough Chiefs and Petty Officers who were our backbone.

I also thought about other occasions which at the time were a great source of frustration and puzzlement. The day in the spring of 1966 when the decks were cleared at Shearwater and we found ourselves in Dockyard manning the road and bidding a farewell to Admiral Bill Landymore as he was driven out for the last time. I recall saying to myself and I admit naively , “ let me see, have I got this right, the Navy is in crisis and all our leaders are leaving?”With the wisdom of much hindsight, the post integration climate of 1966 with its inter as well as intra service rivalries and concern for political influence was acute and took its toll on the Canadian Forces. The Cold War was raging. Canada was developing an international reputation as the UN’s peace keeper. Together these had an adverse impact on national attitudes towards National Defence, the size and shape of our Armed Forces and ultimate costs. But a clear outcome of that difficult period was that the die was cast for the future shape of Naval Aviation. Like many of you, I remember 20 September, 1969 when the media reported that Bonaventure was to be scrapped and VS 880 disbanded. Ominous but not unexpected, fixed wing naval operations in support of the Navy would cease.

I thought about the happy day back in 1963 when the new Sea Kings began to arrive. It was exciting and would be a huge leap in HS operational capability. The Sun Downer era was about to end. The Navy would be the recipient of an enormous increase in operational capability and, when finally deployed to Bonaventure, the new Sea King crews of HS 50 would no longer have to suffer 880’s good hearted Sun Downer barbs!! That was 47 years ago! In itself, this is an incredible story. Much credit is due to the Naval Air staff in Ottawa who had the vision to select the Sea King in the first place. Equally, credit is due to the aircrew and maintenance personnel who have not only made the 46 years possible but have preserved the Sea King’s relevancy to this very day through peace, Cold War and conflict. Such was our history here at Shearwater characterized by our collective dedication and commitment to our many missions.

Today, Shearwater is an extension of CFB Halifax and 12 Wing is an Air Command lodger unit. It is no longer an aerodrome but a heliport. Notwithstanding, the departure of fixed wing aviation and our fleet carrier, the arrival of our new CH 148 Cyclone is reminiscent of the arrival of its predecessor back in 1963. The aircrew are excited, the maintainers and logisticians are getting ready and the Navy has the potential to once again be the benefactor of another enormous jump in operational capability.

It was recognized back during WWII that the future of naval power would be inextricably linked to naval air power. Canada is a maritime nation requiring a strong Navy capable of 3 oceans operations. A critical multiplier has been, is and will be the judicious application of air power. Having visited the Base once again and been briefed on the future, I am enormously confident that 12 Wing will do its part to carry our torch high as the Navy celebrates its Centennial and prepares for the challenging years ahead.

Larry Ashley was a former sun downer. He commanded 406 and 423 squadrons, Shearwater and the Air Force.



Names in picture:

Back Row: Colin Curleigh, John Lusher, Mike Churchill, David Cramton, Bob Burnie, Larry Ashley, Don Bauder, Jack Ford, Nick Browne, Bud Abbott, Bruce Mackenzie.

Front Row: Lorne McDonald, Al Bingley, Peter Barr, Ken Eliason, Stan Brygadyr, Bill Vallee, Ian Powick, Peter Waddell.

Fifty years ago 19 fresh, bright eyed young naval officers who had descended on RCAF Training Command as Course 5908 graduated and received their wings at RCAF Station Saskatoon. These intrepid 19 went on to participate in both fixed and rotary wing operations ashore and afloat in Bonnie and our DDHs. Some went on to provide leadership in the post integration Air Force while others pursued other careers from commercial aviation and medicine and to various business and high technology fields. Their bond today is a common acceptance of the impact naval aviation had on their lives. To that end, many continue to work to preserve that great naval aviation heritage and spirit.

CASH IN THE CARRIBEAN - An Avenger Adventure

Deus Ex Machina!

Snuggled down in your easy chair? Feet to a cozy fire? Hot buttered rum in hand? Pretty damned comfortable eh?

Now, close your eyes and trade places with Don Cash, sitting on a parachute pack, feet to a hot engine, no rum, dark night, dark sea and, at his patrol's end, no welcoming flight deck in sight - fuel gauges inexorably homing in on the zero mark, shark habitat below. Pretty damned uncomfortable eh?

H.M.S. NABOB, Caribbean Sea, Avenger, Anti Submarine Patrol, March 1944. That's the broader scenario. Don's was more localized: Don's world was a dimly lit instrument panel plus a windscreen and canopy that, at ETA, yielded not a trace of the image of NABOB - not a trace of phosphorescent wake - just empty sky and sea. "Before him not the ghost of the ship, before him only a ship less sea."

Not to put too fine a point on it, this Avenger crew was L-O-S-T lost! Whether this was because of a PIM screw-up, the Observer's screw-up, or the then yet-to-be discovered Bermuda Triangle effect may never be known. In situations like this, the eyeballs get one hell of a workout - watch, fuel gauges, sea scan, watch, fuel gauges, sea scan over and over and over. The grip on the Newfoundland seatbelt becomes like that of your pit bull on the neighbour's cat. Now squirm down deep into your easy chair, sip your rum and cast off that nasty thought - thank God it's Don, not Me!

So what does any well-trained crew do? Why, search (square search) for the errant flight deck of course! Steer and scan, scan and steer while gauges and watch predict the conclusion of the airborne phase of this patrol. Then comes decision time: We ain't gonna find her - let's head for the nearest land.

Somewhere out there should be Jamaica and Cuba, lush tropical islands with unlimited supplies of rum. So let's go (flying for range of course - not BUSTER throttle).

Suddenly, breakers ahead, stark white against the dark sea. Then the question "Whether tis better to suffer the bumps and grinds of outrageous bellying-in on a beach of unknown surface or, by ditching near the shark-harboured breakers, impale yourself on the dilemma's other goring, sharp horn?" With either choice the depth charges had best be got rid of first. A quick dart offshore, away charges (unarmed) and then back to the beach.

Perhaps a Very Pistol light would illuminate the beach enough to read its surface? Pow! Bang! Pfutt or whatever



the flare casts its feeble light about.

Now here we come to the deus ex machina bit. Forget about the beach. Forget about the breakers. Forget about the sharks. Like in a Greek play, while our desperate aviators are peering intently down through the glare of the flare, knowing full well that they are running on fumes, Salvation comes on stage. Runway lights come on! Yes, actual honest-to-God, Edison variety electric lights - and very close aboard. Fate (Don says "The Divine Navigator") had seen fit to bring him and his crew, with absolute precision, to an airfield they didn't know existed. The new USN Base, Guantánamo, Cuba.

With the connections Don demonstrably has, he'd be a good man to trust your eulogy to. Might improve your chances at your Pearly Gates reception - "I'm a friend of Don's, your Majesty".

Don's epilogue: Would like to add at the end, that a very warm welcome was given at the Officers' Quarters for us all and that we were given an F6F (Hellcats to you) escort back to the ship, where we had been posted as missing and that it took the Admiralty a week to correct the telegram that they had received! If you wish to soften the 'blow' be my guest. Otherwise, you have indeed found another vocation!





Beartrap

Canada's Contribution to Naval Aviation

In the mid-1950's the helicopter operating from warships other than aircraft carriers had made its mark as a force multiplier among the world's navies. The challenge was how to land a large helicopter on a rolling, pitching flight deck of a destroyer size ship. The problem was solved when the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) VX 10 Experimental Squadron, based at Shearwater, in collaboration with Dartmouth's Fairey Aviation Ltd., developed the world's first Helicopter Hauldown and Rapid Securing Device (HHRSD). The Canadian pioneered HHRSD or "Beartrap" as it was colloquially known was subsequently adopted by navies around the world, including those of the United States, Australia and Japan. The Beartrap is considered to be Canada's greatest contribution to the advancement of naval aviation.

Why Helicopters on Destroyers?

In the 1950's and early 1960's, anti-submarine helicopters operated only from aircraft carriers in their prime task of protecting naval forces from submarine attacks. The helicopter's speed and range brought many advantages to naval task groups and proved to be an indispensable member of the anti-submarine team.

- The helicopter dramatically increased the speed and size of an area that could be searched,
- The helicopter could attack submarines beyond range of surface ship weapons,
- The helicopter provided the element of surprise, as it could not be easily tracked by the submarine (a submarine could track a surface ship on its sonar), and
- The helicopter allowed surface ships to remain beyond range of submarine's weapons.

In the mid 1950's the RCN made the bold decision to modify their new *St. Laurent* class destroyers with a flight

deck, hangar and Beartrap device that would enable them to operate helicopters as part of the ships weapons system. The concept was revolutionary and many skeptics claimed that the technical difficulties would be insurmountable. But, without a helicopter Canada's destroyers would have been severely disadvantaged against the faster wider-ranging nuclear-powered submarines.

Canadian Development

Between 1956 and 1962, VX 10 conducted feasibility trials and experimented with landing a HO4S "Horse" helicopter on the Prestonian Frigate, *HMCS Buckingham*, and the St Laurent class destroyer, *HMCS Ottawa*. The flying trials proved successful in calm seas but made obvious the need for engineering and development of a system to assist a helicopter to land on a destroyer in rough seas. By January 1963, VX 10 had demonstrated the feasibility of a developmental device to assist a large Sea King helicopter to land on a small destroyer; prompting the RCN to issue a formal Project Directive to develop a HHRSD for operational use. In support of the project, the destroyer, *HMCS Assiniboine*, was assigned to be the trials ship for the prototype HHRSD. The first haul down landing was made on *Assiniboine* on 3 December 1963. After a period of equipment modifications and procedural refinements further operational trials were carried out on *HMCS's Annapolis* and *Nipigon*. In 1967, all the design changes VX 10 deemed essential were incorporated into *HMCS Nipigon's* HHRSD; making her the first helicopter carrying destroyer to be declared operationally ready. Today, the HHRSD or Beartrap is an integral component on all the flight decks of Canada's destroyers and frigates.

Why HHRSD?

The HHRSD enables a helicopter to land safely and quickly on a rolling, pitching deck of a destroyer size ship at sea. The HHRSD haul down cable, connected to the helicopter's main probe protruding below the hull, applies a stable centering force that guides the main probe into the jaws of the Beartrap during landing. An important advantage of the HHRSD assisted landing is that no personnel are required on the flight deck once the HHRSD cable from the ship is attached and locked into the helicopter's main probe. As soon as the Sea King lands on the deck the jaws of the Beartrap clamp on to the main probe rapidly securing the aircraft to the deck and preventing it from sliding overboard in rough seas. After the helicopter is secured in the Beartrap, the tail probe forward of the tail wheel, is lowered onto a grid on the aft end of the flight deck. Once the tail probe is engaged and locked in one of the slots in the grid, the tail of the helicopter is secured, preventing it from yawing with the roll of the ship. The HHRSD is used to centre the Sea King laterally in the Beartrap to align it with the deck track. The aircraft can then be traversed along the deck track into the hangar where it is protected from the elements. With the

ability to rapidly secure the helicopter on the deck, the ship is quickly freed from any manoeuvring restrictions imposed by the landing, e.g. heading into wind, thus reducing its vulnerability to attack or damage.

Sea King Helicopter

The Sea King has been Canada's primary ship borne anti-submarine helicopter since 1963. It was selected for its all-weather, day-night capability to extend the weapon and sensor range of surface ships. The Sea King had the required size and range to conduct extended anti-submarine missions while embarked in a variety of ships and its two turbine engines provided a good safety margin for extended over water operations. The Sea King's primary sensor is its dipping sonar, which from the hover can be lowered up to 150 meters below the sea surface to search for submarines. The Sea King has the advantage of surprise in that it can "jump" from dip to dip without warning the submarine of its next dip position. The Sea King carries two torpedoes to attack submarines detected by either its own sonar or on information from ships or other aircraft.

Specifically designed to reduce the space required for ship-borne operations, the Sea King's five rotor blades can fold back along the fuselage and the tail pylon can be folded forward to make the aircraft sufficiently compact to fit into a ship's hangar.

Flight Deck

Many auxiliary elements on the flight deck are required for the Beartrap to function effectively.

Beartrap The Beartrap itself consists of a metal rectangular device in the center of the flight deck; a cable issuing from the center of the Beartrap is attached to the Sea King's probe to guide the helicopter down to the deck. Because of the centering forces provided by the cable the main probe is contained within the Beartrap when the Sea King's wheels hit the flight deck. The Beartrap's jaws then clamp on to the probe between the Sea King's main wheels thereby securing it to the deck.

Grid The grid is a series of raised slots on the aft end of the flight deck. After landing the pilot lowers the tail probe, forward of the Sea King's tail wheel, to engage one of the slots in the grid to prevent the aircraft from yawing with the roll of the ship.

Howdah The howdah is a windowed compartment on the forward starboard side of the flight deck that houses the "Landing Signals Officer" (LSO) and the HHRSD controls. The LSO is specially qualified pilot who controls all flight deck operations and operates the Beartrap controls that land and secure the Sea King and traverses the helicopter into and out of the hangar.

Hangar The Beartrap traverses the Sea King into and out of the hangar along a track in the flight deck. Red, green and amber trafficator lights on either side of the hangar doors are used during flight deck operations as a back up or replacement for radio communications. In periods of restricted communications for tactical reasons radio transmissions must be reduced to a few essential, short calls for landings and other flight deck operations. The trafficators also provide information to flight deck personnel and aircrew not equipped with radio communication.

Horizon Bar A gyro stabilized horizon bar above the hangar provides the pilot an indication of the true horizon while the ship is rolling side to side. During landing and take off it is important that the pilot keep the aircraft parallel to the horizon and not follow the rolling motion of the ship.

Flying Control The Flying Control position or "FLYCO" is a windowed compartment located on the port side of the hangar. The senior firefighter mans the FLYCO and assists the LSO in flight deck operations by controlling lighting systems and the emergency response personnel (firefighters and flight deck crew) in the event of a mishap. The FLYCO also provides visual coverage of the port side of the aircraft during deck operations and can give a "wave-off" signal during a flight deck sequence. A "wave-off" is a command given to the helicopter or a decision taken by the pilot to abort a landing (or other) sequence. It is most commonly given in high sea-states when the deck becomes unstable just as the helicopter intends to land.

Guardrails Guardrails and their associated nets are stowed in the vertical position as a safety feature for personnel on the flight deck when there is no flying activity. During flying operations the guardrails are lowered to a horizontal position to prevent interference with aircraft movements, yet provide a safety net for flight deck personnel working on the deck.

Shearwater Aviation Museum Exhibit

The Helicopter Hauldown and Rapid Securing Device exhibit is one of the latest additions to the Shearwater Aviation Museum. The exhibit is a one-third scale representation of the hangar face and flight deck of the Halifax class frigate, *HMCS St John's*, with a Sea King helicopter hovering above the deck.

Ernie Cable, SAM Historian

**SUPPORT THE
SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM
FOUNDATION
BECOME A MEMBER**

**IN REMEMBRANCE
OF THOSE
WHO DIED IN
NAVAL AVIATION**

S/Lt Alan R. Johnson, RCNVR
22 May 42

Lt John B. Diamond, RCNVR
10 Jul 42

S/Lt Ross M. Wilson, RCNVR
8 Sep 42

Lt John L.S. Cunningham, RCNVR
13 Jan 43

Lt James E. Gaunt, RCNVR
3 Jun 43

SLt Donald N. Crysler, RCNVR
29 Mar 44

LCdr Digby R.B. Cosh, RCNVR
14 Jun 44

S/Lt David A. Cary, RCNVR
18 Aug 44

Lt Edward G.L. Morgan, RCNVR
7 Nov 44

Lt Bernard Kennedy, RCNVR
6 Jan 45

Lt Arthur W. Sutton, RCNVR
24 Jan 45

Lt Robert R. Sheppard, RCNVR
22 Mar 45

Lt Charles R. Thurston, RCNVR
13 Apr 45

Lt David W. Baker, RCNVR
16 Apr 45

Lt Jack A. Crogan, RCNVR
19 May 45

Lt Herbert M. Little, RCNVR
6 Jun 45

Lt John J. Feeney, RCNVR
27 Jun 45

Lt William B. Ashbridge, RCNVR
18 Jul 45

Lt Charles P.R. Stevens, RCNVR
28 Jul 45

S/Lt A. Forbes, RCNVR
30 Jul 45

Lt James F. Ross, RCNVR
30 Jul 45

Lt Robert Hampton Gray, VC, DSC,
RCNVR 9 Aug 45

Lt Gerald A. Anderson, RCNVR
9 Aug 45

Lt Frank W. McCarry, RCNVR
8 Sep 45

Lt George F. Clarke, RCNVR
18 Sep 45

S/Lt L. Wade, RCNVR
2 Oct 45

S/Lt Lloyd A. Nash, RCNVR
2 Oct 45

Lt Robert A. Jacobs, RCNR
8 Feb 46

S/Lt James C. Philley, RCNR
8 Feb 46

S/Lt Douglas J.V. Shortt, RCNVR
11 Mar 46

Lt George A. Greenwood, RCN
17 Oct 46

Lt Clifford R. Gavel, RCNR
31 Jan 47

LCdr Oscar Tattersall, RCN
31 Jan 47

Lt Robert M. Galbraith, RCNR
17 Jul 47

Lt John M. Lamon, RCN
17 Jul 47

Lt Alexander L. Warren, RCN
16 Oct 47

PO James W. MacDonald, RCN
4 Nov 47

Lt Gerald Quarton, RCN
17 Jan 48

Lt George A. Carter, RCN
24 Aug 48

Lt Joseph T. Murphy, RCN
13 Oct 48

Lt John S. Berge, RCN
14 Oct 48

Lt John M. Stewart, RCN
6 Dec 48

Lt Thomas A. Coultry, RCN
1 Feb 49

Lt Clarence J. Pulfer, RCN
28 Mar 49

LCdr Robert A. Monks, RCN
28 Mar 49

ABAN Joseph R.H. Cambray, RCN
28 Mar 49

Lt Glenn W. Hutton, RCN
28 Mar 49

Lt Douglas Stevens, RCN
31 May 49

LCdr Clifford G. Watson
23 Aug 49

Lt Alfred C. Elton, RCN
23 Aug 49

Lt Leslie F. Peever, RCN
18 Feb 50

ABPN Walter D. Mitchell, RCN
30 Jun 50

Lt Mervin C. Hare, RCN
30 Jun 50

Lt William M. Phillips, RCN
13 Sep 50

Lt John B. Hartle, RCN
28 Feb 51

S/Lt John J. Morehouse, RCN
27 Mar 51

Lt John E. Anderson, RCN
17 Apr 52

Lt William J. Hutchinson, RCN
17 Apr 52

Lt John K. Mason, RCN
17 Apr 52

Lt John S. Murphy, RCN
17 Apr 52

S/Lt Phillip J. Plotkins, RCNR
17 Apr 52

ABOM William J. Hunter, RCN
17 Apr 52

ABOM Douglas S. Moffatt, RCN
17 Apr 52

Lt William J. Spencer, RCN
24 Apr 52

Mid Winthrop F. Wood, RCN
28 Apr 52

Lt Michael Milovich, RCN
13 Jun 52

A.S/Lt James F. Washbrook, RCN
3 Mar 53

LSOM Ernest V. Marshall, RCN
3 Mar 53

LSOM William E. Dutfield, RCN
3 Mar 53

Lt Fredrick G. Rice, RCN
9 Apr 53

Lt Robert C. O'Neil, RCN
9 Apr 53

Lt George W. Noble, RCN 4 Oct 53	S/Lt Gary E. Logan, RCN 2 Apr 59	P2OM R. Mander 1 Dec 67
P1EA George W. Wraith, RCN 4 Oct 53	ABOM Jean Nantel, RCN 2 Apr 59	S/Lt W.J. Boles, 3 Feb 68
Lt Leslie H. Terry, RN 26 Jan 54	Lt George B. Daugharty, RCN 2 Apr 59	S/Lt P.E. Kaersvang 3 Feb 68
A.S/Lt John A. MacLeod, RCNR 6 May 54	P2OM Alan Moore, RCN 2 Apr 59	S/Lt M.G. McRadu 3 Feb 68
S/Lt James. D Holden, RCN 6 May 54	ABOM Francis D. Dawson, RCN 12 Dec 59	ABAF M. Schofield 3 Feb 68
S/Lt Robert H. Jones, RCN 6 May 54	LCdr Roger S. Harris, RCN 12 Dec 59	Capt (S) R.B. Walker 19 Apr 71
P1RA John A. White, RCN 6 May 54	P2OM Jack A. Bottaro, RCN 12 Dec 59	Lt (A) D.C. Magee 19 Apr 71
A.S/Lt Edmund W. Alexander, RCN 4 Oct 54	S/Lt Gordon G. Mowat, RCN 12 Dec 59	WO (S) G.J. Brown 19 Apr 71
A.S/Lt Ian Robertson, RCN 11 Oct 54	ABNA William D. Taylor, RCN 15 Aug 60	Cpl (A) D.J. Mitchell 19 Apr 71
S/Lt Charles L. Wright, RCN 4 Dec 54	Lt Louis I. Veronneau, RCN 15 Aug 60	Capt. L.M. Ostaficiuk 7 Nov 71
Lt Reynold Poulton, RCN 15 Jun 55	LSAM Edward J. Henderson, RCN 13 Dec 60	Lt A.E. Dick 7 Nov 71
Cadet John M. Glenister, RCNR 2 Aug 55	ABNA Philip K. Lowery, RCN 12 May 61	L/S J.O.R. McCrea 7 Nov 71
ABAC Stuart R. Tock, RCN 16 Aug 55	S/Lt J.K. Rassow, RCN 16 Jun 61	Capt E.R. Bade 20 Sep 73
Lt Donald A. Wardrop, RCN 22 Apr 56	Lt William P. Dall, RCN 25 Aug 62	Capt L.T. Schaufele 20 Sep 73
ABAF Fredrick J. Ford, RCN 30 Jan 57	Lt Larry A. Viczko, RCN 25 Aug 62	Sgt S.W. Pye 20 Sep 73
LCdr Henry F. Utting, RCN 1 Mar 57	Lt David F. Matheson, RCN 11 Jun 63	M/Cpl J.R. Scammell 20 Sep 73
S/Lt Morris Komarnisky, RCN 18 Mar 57	Lt O.S Clark, RCN 23 Nov 63	Capt K.J. McDonald 21 Mar 74
S/Lt Conrad R. Bissett, RCN 14 May 57	Lt N.J. Ogden, RCN 23 Nov 63	Capt A.P. Wilson 5 Oct 76
Lt Derek A. Prout, RCN 31 May 57	P2NA Robert A. Hammer, RCN 11 Jun 63	Capt R.A. Ross 5 Oct 76
S/Lt Julian G. Freeman, RCNR 27 Aug 57	S/Lt A.L. Aintree, RCN 22 Dec 64	
Lt Edward K. Trezinski, USN 27 Aug 57	P2AT Victor M. Porier, RCN 7 Jan 65	
S/Lt Howard G. Cooper, RCN 2 Oct 57	LCdr Victor A. Williams, RCN 8 Oct 66	
Lt William T. Troy, RCN 25 Feb 58	P1RN Ronald D. Greenbury, RCN 22 Mar 67	
LCdr Brian Bell-Irving, RCN 4 Mar 58	CMD.O Claire G. Tully, RCN 1 Dec 67	

Rest in Peace



SEAFIRE

When examining museum category aircraft we readily accept that technical progress rendered them obsolete and replacement essential, but do we ever consider that in many cases technicians and aircrew physically outgrew these aircraft. Take the Seafire 2 and 3 on up to the double digit marks of this veteran carrier aircraft.

At one stage in my life as a radio mechanic I was drafted to an aircraft repair yard in Scotland. Its aircraft inventory included a considerable number of Seafire MK2 and 3 parked out in the open awaiting delivery to the French navy. Even then – when I weighed about 138 lbs - climbing into the aircraft cockpit required removing my duffle coat or relying on the Braille system to find controls etc. adjacent to the seat. Any added beef would have made life rather uncomfortable.

When installing equipment in these birds it always seemed to involve reaching through tiny hatches that had enough room for a head or two arms – never both at the same time. Dropping a tool or hardware inside the airframe could ruin your day because it meant a recovery trip through a tiny port side aft hatch. This hatch was really intended to give access to some controls and deck hook release - not actual body entry. Initial recovery reaction was to snivel to the rigger in the faint hope he would remove the seat and armour plate. It was always worth a try, but never done to the best of my recollection. Only option was to sit on the floor/deck with back to the aircraft, extend one arm and head

through the hole and drag the rest of your protesting body forward over the control cables to the otherwise inaccessible FOD. Wren mechanics were excused. They were always senior to me anyway!

The best part of working with these blood stirring aircraft was the final engine run-up. While some Chief and Petty Officers had a permit to move the aircraft under power, other engine mechanics got to start and shutdown the aircraft. At the lowest access level radio mechanics got to sit in the cockpit and operate the engine throttle to ensure there was no electrical interference with the four channel radio. It is at this point that hangar pilots are born! You have the leather helmet with headset jack connected and the engine at idle awaiting your opinion. As you eased the throttle forward the tail lifted under the restraint of chocks and a pair of cinder blocks hanging over the tail. After several throttle cycles these “flight of fancy” came to an end when the engine mechanic pumped the control surfaces to get your attention. If you were lucky a pair tin “Hangar Pilot” wings cut from a soup can appeared on your toolbox – no other comment on your first flight was necessary. *Bill McDermott*

SEAFIRES for WARRIOR

from Geoffrey Warren

In January, 1946 I was serving in the RN(VR) Air Branch (as an Observer) and was in Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Evanton (HMS Fieldfare), located north of Inverness, Scotland. A tender to that station was the Royal Naval Air Maintenance Yard Evanton which managed the storage and repair and maintenance of all types of RN aircraft in large numbers.

At that time an order for 12 Seafire fighters was received for delivery to the RCN asap. Information was the RCN had then acquired and commissioned the WARRIOR, from the RN, which was lying at Belfast and was a brand new 'Light Fleet' Carrier built there by Harland and Wolff shipyard.

The carrying out of the work required to prepare them for squadron service entailed working late nights and week-ends for about 2 weeks. My job was to swing and adjust the compasses. After the completion of flight tests the aircraft were ferried to RNAS Sydenham (Belfast) for loading on board the WARRIOR.

PILOTS WHO CAME OVER ON WARRIOR



*From Mrs Marie Peacocke
Art Liley, Brian Cartwright, Doug Peacocke, Rod Bays*



Stu Soward - Dick Bartlett - Doug Peacocke

Supermarine Walrus/Sea Otter *Bill McDermott*

These were the same bi-plane “flying boat” type aircraft – except the older Walrus had a pusher rather than the Otter’s pull propeller. The difference wasn’t important to ground crew until it came time to fire up the engine. It had an inertial starter - I believe it was called. For younger folk this means two “volunteers” cranked a handle until there was enough torque developed to engage and start the engine – first time if they were lucky! To duplicate the experience just imagine operating a merry-go-round by hand. As one of the poor souls had to stand with his back to the propeller – seemed to be mere inches away – it appeared prudent to be first up and have a choice of location. Better still was to ensure there were other able bodies closer to the chief. Once dinged for the job it quite possible included flying as crew and cranking the wheels up/down. No wonder we were skinny!

The Walrus/Otter I remember occasionally retrieved aircrew enjoying an unexpected swim off Culdrose in Cornwall. As the hull was held together by pop rivets, leaks could be interesting. The handheld bilge pump looked like the one used to inflate bicycle tires and had about the same capacity. Can you imagine how many times a minute a pilot can yell “pump”

I can only remember one Walrus/Otter rescue pilot even though they appeared to change on a regular basis. He was a Petty Officer or rating pilot as they were called at that time. I still remember his name for some reason! I understand he had been accused/tried and convicted by Commander Air of trying to thin out the rabbit population along the taxi-way with a Sea Fury. For his sins he was banished to flying the lumbering flying “boat” for a while. It must have felt like purgatory, but the standard fighter pilot flourishes were often apparent even if done considerably slower.

A flying attraction at Culdrose in the late 1940’s was an all unit/squadron air race. As the Walrus/Otter had a cruising speed in the 90 MPH range it needed a huge handicap. Leaving the base with a comfortable time cushion it was a dot on the horizon coming home not long after the Hornets, Sea Furies, and jets took off. As the audience cheered the veteran home one after another the faster aircraft flashed past leaving the Walrus/Otter way down the also ran card. I guess it wasn’t winning that counted, but participation – right!

THE RUBBER DECKY *by Earle Cale*

Upon docking at Portsmouth aboard MAGNIFICENT, a few of us Aircraft handlers looked from our flight deck across the way and recognized our old ship, the WARRIOR.

About five of us, being curious to see what had happened to our old friend, walked over to where she was docked and received permission for an escorted tour. We went up

on the flight deck and saw that it was completely covered with about two inches of black, hard rubber. These were times when the jet righter aircraft had come into being, but the angled deck had not, as yet, been designed. Many people were working on the ‘how to’ problem of landing jet aircraft on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier.

It was explained to us that the idea of a rubber deck was to have the aircraft land on skids, life the aircraft with a crane, lower the wheels and then taxi the aircraft on the rubber deck.

As Aircraft Handlers, we shuddered in horror and quickly made our way ashore leaving behind what had once been ‘The Pride of Our Fleet’.

A STORY OF THE TECHNICIANS OF THE CANADIAN NAVAL AIR BRANCH

I shall preface this tale by stating that, in my humble opinion, the technicians in the Royal Canadian Navy were the best of all three branches of the service. I, of course may be prejudiced as I was one of them. This was so because the Navy invested time and money in providing the very best training for its men and women.

In 1945 when the Air Branch was formed at RCNAS Dartmouth there were only a few technicians with any background in naval aviation, they were mostly either transfers from the RCAF or loans from the RN, Denny Shaw, Norm Lambert, Les Southwell, Reg "Baggsy" Baker, John Cottle were a few of the latter, while Pierre "Ace" Gibeau and Paul Brunelle were ex RCAF. However some were initial entries as air mechanics. After basic training in metal bashing at HMCS Stadacona a nucleus of these were sent to the UK In 1946 for their initial training as air mechanics/air riggers. RNAS Bramcote (AKA HMS Gamecock) near Nuneaton, Warwickshire was one of the training establishments. The course length was approximately 9 months after which they returned to Shearwater for on type experience. In 1947/48 a group were sent to RNAS Arbroath (AKA HMS Condor) in Scotland to train as air artificers. Alan Moore, Reg Greutz, Don Purchase, Gerry Brushett, Rene Normandeau and Earl Slack were in the group and the latter three each brought home a new Canadian wife. However Don Purchase tells me that he along with several others were arbitrarily selected for training as electricians and sent back to RNAS Bramcote for training as Air Electrical Artificers. All of these people became the nucleus of the RCN Air Branch Technicians who went on to train those of us who followed as the branch expanded. The establishment of Naval Aircraft Maintenance School (NAMS) enabled the RCN to train it’s own thereafter although electrical and radio technicians received most of their training in HMC Electrical School in Stadacona.

The Naval Air Branch was the poor cousin of all the other branches in the Canadian Forces, it had very little in logistical support, it's aircraft were hand-me-downs or cast-offs from first the RN and then the USN so they were somewhat the worse for wear when received and had very few spare parts so we, the technicians had to make do, improvise, cannibalize, and in some cases manufacture our spares. It was a case where necessity being the mother of invention was never more true, however it made us better technicians.

In illustration of my point that the RCN invested heavily in training I present the following as evidence:

In my case after enlisting on 26 January, 1953 and undergoing basic training at HMCS Cornwallis I was posted in June 1953 to HMCS Stadacona Electrical School to be trained as an Electricians Mate. 14 weeks later after a basic grounding in Ohms Law etc. I was sent to sea in HMCS Quebec to practice my trade. Promoted to Able Seaman, my next posting was to Naval Radio Station Newport Corners where I learned to do maintenance on radio transmitters and stood watch keeping duties on those transmitters. In January 1955 I was posted to Stadacona for a Trade Group 2 & 3's Radio Technicians Course. Midway in the course after a visit to Shearwater and a flight in an Expediter I requested and was granted a change to air electrician, graduating in December as an Able Seaman Electrical Air Technician Trade Group 3 (ABEA-3) with a posting to Shearwater. As you can see, after nearly 3 years service I had received 14 months technical training and 5 months basic training. The RCN had invested a great deal in me with very little return as yet and I believe this was the norm for most. On arrival at Shearwater I was assigned to the electrical shop in Z2 hangar.

All of the hangars at Shearwater were identified alphanumerically and Z2 was where second line maintenance was carried out, this included engine and gearbox changes, airframe component replacement and major modifications. All types of aircraft were routed through Z2 so it was an excellent training site. The 1st aircraft type I worked on was an Avro Anson Mk II which was inherited from the RCAF. I think we only had 2 and they were antiques at that time perhaps best described in this ditty:

Oh, the Crane may fly much faster
 Inside she may be neat,
 But to me the draughty Anson
 Is very hard to beat.
 Her plywood may be warping,
 Her window glass may crack,
 But when you start out in an Anson.
 You know that you'll come back.

-Andy, No. 7 SFTS (Fort Macleod) 1943

During my time in Z2 I worked on the Anson, Beechcraft C-45 Expediter, Hawker Seafury, Gruman Avenger, Sikorsky HO4S, McDonnell F2H3 Banshee and Lockheed T-33. Perhaps the biggest challenge was the Banshee as they had been well used to put it kindly, they were also an all electric aircraft, the undercarriage, flaps, speed brakes, trim etc were all electric and to access the wiring, panels which were secured with Reed & Prince screws had to be removed. Reed and Prince screws are not interchangeable with Phillips screws therefore, one should always use a Reed and Prince screwdriver with Reed and Prince screws, and a Phillips screwdriver with Phillips screws, or a ruined tool or ruined screw head will result. However the RCN had no Reed & Prince Screwdrivers thus the airframe technicians spent many, many hours drilling out ruined screws.

In January 1953, the RCN introduced a Technical Apprentice Program on board HMCS Cape Breton located in the Halifax Dockyard. The program provided training for apprentices in trades as follows; engine room artificers, ship's electricians, ship's ordinance technicians, shipwrights (hull technicians), and air artificers (aviation technicians). Air apprentices trained on board the Cape Breton for two years, which included; academics (math and physics Ont. Grade XII equivalent), hand tool fitting, machine shop, welding, molding, sheet metal, drafting, blacksmithing, and internal combustion engines. In the third year, air apprentices were posted to the HMCS Shearwater and attended NAMS for six months air theory, and then, six months OJT on a squadron. The fourth year they returned to NAMS for additional classroom instruction and some metal workshop training. At the end of March, the thirty-nine months training was completed and the successful apprentices graduated as Petty Officer Second Class trade group three and were posted to a squadron as supervisors.

The introduction of the RCN Technical Apprentice Program negated the program to send aviation technicians to the UK for advanced training. It is considered that the Apprentice Program was a success as most if not all apprentice trained personnel that became career servicemen advanced in rank.

Note: The above on the Apprentice Program was prepared by Bob Findlay who ended a successful service career as a Major (AERE) and went on to further success with SPAR Aerospace.

I hope that I have made enough errors in this brief column that it will encourage other former Naval Air Technicians to put pen to paper or sit down at their computers to submit stories from the lower deck.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Edgar



Memories of a Back Seat Naval Aviator

By Peter Bruner

...continued - Part III

Mid October 1954 -

We sailed under the Lion's Gate Bridge in Vancouver and tied up at the C.P.R. Dock. HMCS Magnificent alongside was a major attraction for the populace and many stopped by to view Canada's aircraft

carrier. Shore leave was piped the next day and 4 of us went up the jetty to see the sights of Vancouver. The usual souvenirs and gifts were obtained and we retired to the Hotel Vancouver Beer Parlour for a wet one or two. The ship's company was invited to a variety show at the Naval Reserve Division HMCS Discovery, to be held that evening at 7pm. We four all decided we were going to attend.

While quaffing a few beer at the hotel we were approached by a large man who offered to buy us a drink. He explained he was a lumberjack just back from a logging camp in the North and would like to join us as he was all alone. For free beer he could certainly join us and pass an hour or two. As time passed and we got to know him better we invited him to attend the show that evening which he accepted and would even transport us there as he had a car. Del Brooks, Don Byer, Al Evans and yours truly were driven to Stanley Park by the driver, our guest. We spent an evening of being entertained and at 11pm the show was over. Our driver invited us to his apartment in North Vancouver for a nightcap which we accepted. At 2am we wanted to leave but our host was well under the weather and unable to drive as he had passed out. After attempting and unable to get any response we decided to borrow his car to get back to the ship. Leaving a note for him as to where the car would be we left and drove back to the ship, leaving the car on the jetty. In the A.M. we sailed to Victoria and never heard anything more except as how a car had been stolen by 4 sailors and left where the carrier had been tied up, this we heard on the local Vancouver radio station. The 4 of us did not discuss this matter with anyone for many years thereafter.

We sailed from Victoria proceeding south to the Panama Canal, traversed it to The Atlantic and headed North to Halifax. During this time we flew daily conducting a lot of Sono Drops, photography, low level bombing and strafing etc...

On Nov. 22 after landing on deck and parking the Avenger on the forward deck park. The crew, 3 of us were walking back to the island when Avenger 354 crashed into the barriers, the prop flew down the deck towards us and 3

aviators avoided getting hit as it careened past, only by the dexterity of fear the sight created.

Dec 3 - Three days later while landing, our Avenger crashed a wing on landing. My last deck landing for the year and no injuries to report.

In December I was promoted to Leading Seaman and VS 881 was sent ashore to Shearwater.

In May an Avenger carrying out ordinance drops at Chezzacook Range ditched on the tidal flats. Three of us, Observer's Mates were sent out to the Range to guard the wreckage which at low tide was resting on a sand bar and at high tide was just lapping at the wings. Del Brooks, Al Evans and myself were issued a dingy 1 man plus a 4 man for us all. At low tide we sat on the wings and at high tide in the dinghies. The local fishermen were very interested in what they could salvage. They approached us in their boats to negotiate, but we told them "No Dice". They asked about fuel and offered us some of their home made "Screech". As the main tank was full of fuel it was not of value to anyone else and would only be gashed. We left the aircraft after 3 days as the salvage crew towed it to shore. We returned to the squadron and shared 6 bottles with the OM's at a Banyan Party celebrating our return. All's well that ends well.

May 10, 1955 -

Night flying to search for the cruiser "Quebec". We were about 100 miles south of Halifax, the weather wasn't great along with a low ceiling. I picked up a contact on my APS-4 radar and we commenced a curve of pursuit homing. As we approached the contact in a descent at 1/2 mile and 500 feet we were still in cloud, we continued to 200 ft and 1/4 mile at which point we broke out of the cloud and directly in front of us was a passenger liner with all lights shining brightly. Monk Geary my pilot stood the Avenger on it's starboard wing and we passed down the starboard side of the "liner". We circled about at 200 feet and identified the ship as the "Queen Mary" on passage to Great Britain. We returned to Shearwater and never did find the "Quebec". A lot of people that night never realized that they owed a lot to Monk Geary my pilot and his flying ability.

In August of 1955 I was posted to VU 33 squadron at Patricia Bay Airport (Victoria BC Airport). The squadron consisted of 2 pilots, Fisher and Swiggum, 2 OMS, Tuckwood, Yours Truly and 23 ground crew. We had 3 Avengers and two C45s and served the pacific fleet as met their needs for naval aviation. We spent our time doing all the good things a utility squadron had to provide, transportation, gunnery, tracking torpedo trails for the MK43, delivery of Admiral's Mail, checking out forest fires, casing subs, working with the ships I.E. "Exercise Full House", photography, search and rescue, testing flares, contractors, test flights and standing duty watch one in four.

In October the C/O advised the OMs, Tuckwood and myself that the 2 pilots would be teaching us how to fly the C-45 expeditors as co-pilots. As there were 2 pilots and 2 OMs the shortage of pilots and the workload would be much easier if they had someone to fly in the right seat. We started training on the C-45s and went through the full spectrum of learning how to fly the twin engine tail dragger.

One of the more exciting things that happened was with Harry Swiggum and I. We were off Saltspring Island at 6,000 feet. Swiggum was showing me how to trim the aircraft and demonstrated by leaving the left hand seat and walking to the rear of the aircraft. I dutifully as instructed rolled the trim control to bring the nose up attitude to level flight. Swiggum then advanced to the cockpit and the nose dropped. I rotated the trim wheel to level the plane. Swiggum was standing between the pilot and copilot seats and continued to comment on trim and balance. He instructed me to push on the left rudder pedal which I did applying full left rudder. The aircraft went into a nose up attitude, rolled over on it's back to a steep nose down as I saw Swiggum doing a backward turn to the top of the passenger section and landed on his back on the roof as we were spiralling down. The only thing I could think of was an "Avenger Training Film" from my air fitter (Mechanic) training at S.N.A.M. "Positive forward stick and opposite rudder". I applied those thoughts to the rapidly descending C-45, the aircraft stabilized in a nose down wings level attitude and I recovered the aircraft to level flight. Swiggum crawled back to the cockpit into the left seat and said to me as he grasped the control column "I have control now". We returned to Pat Bay and landed. His only comment was I could taxi back to the hangar.

The remainder of my dual training was very uneventful and instructions to me were very explicit both from Swiggum and Fisher the C.O. I ended up flying approximately 250 hours in C-45s, mostly in the right hand seat.

Funny thing, in 2008 I went on a tour of the aviation museum in Winnipeg and to my surprise there was a complete cockpit from a C-45 Expediter on display. Imagine my additional surprise when on the dash panel was the aircraft number "1545" that my "Dual Training" incident had occurred in over 50 years before.

January 1956 -

Flying in an Avenger I was to photograph "Royal Roads" and "Naden Parade Square". In order to get a good vertical shot of the Parade Square we removed the starboard hatch to the OM's compartment and I was positioned in the door on my knees, leaning in to the hatchway. Swiggum flew a tight orbit over the Parade Square, as we circled I took several photos vertically on the Parade Square. When we hit our slipstream from the previous pass, the aircraft lurched and I ended up hanging out the door and let go of the A-20 camera. It fell into the centre of the square and I held on for dear life as I almost

followed it down. Landing back at Pat Bay we drew our spare A-20 camera, went to the hangar where I obtained a one inch hawser and got George Dalgetty, our safety equipment guy to tie me in the door. We then proceeded to photograph "Naden". I also wore a chest pack parachute and completed the task.

One afternoon Swiggum and I were to go out to "work point" to do some gunnery tracking for a destroyer in the Jaun De Fuca Straights. As we proceeded over work point which was an army firing range, there was a large bang and I rotated my observer position seat to observe the tail area. Looking aft at the tail, imagine my surprise that the starboard tail plane leading edge had a large hole in it and the skin of the aircraft was peeled back and shredded. Returning to Pat Bay, we landed safely. Dick Turner, one of the mechanics said "serves you right for flying so low". It was later revealed that AA practice was scheduled in the A.M. and they had 2 rounds left which they fired off rather than returning them to storage.

August 1956 -

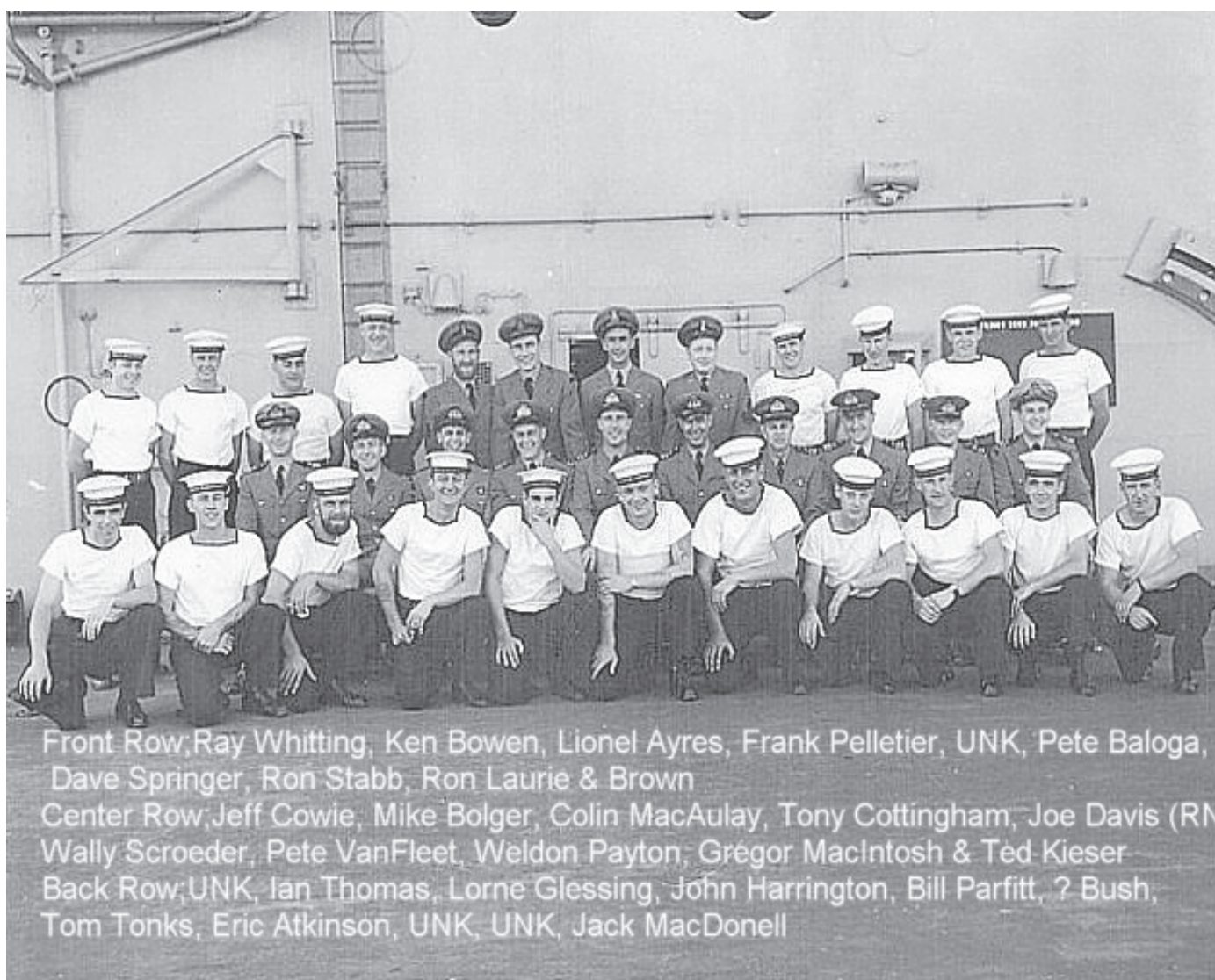
We participated in the Navy Day Celebration by towing an Avenger from Pat Bay to Beacon Hill Park for a static display. One way was approximately 21 miles. The cruiser "Ontario" was anchored off the park as well as a couple of other destroyers. Two Avengers from Pat Bay carried out low level torpedo runs on the ships and in the course of the attacks I fired Vervys pistol. Brown smoke puffs from the Observers Position to simulate AA fire. On one of the passes approaching the Ontario, I fired a series of about 5 shots at about 4 second intervals. The last as Swiggum pulled the Avenger up and over the bridge of the cruiser. It is to be noted, when a smoke puff was fired it would go about 100 feet before the brown puff exploded, casting a metal clip free. I learned later from a signalman on the bridge that the metal clip had cut through the captains visor on his cap. I never knew if this was the case or not but in subsequent years, I never mentioned it to Welland who was the captain at that time.

December 1956 -

I was promoted to Petty Officer Second Class. In March I was posted to Shearwater for training as a carrier controlled approached operator on "The Bonaventure"; but that's another tale.

To be continued... Yours Aye, Peaches





AVENGER 3W2 - GUPPY



By late 1952, steps had been taken to provide squadrons

with airborne radar equipment that made up for the deficiencies inherent in the APS-4 gear. The air Arm acquired TBM-3W2 "guppy" Avengers fitted with powerful AN/APS-20 radar capable of detecting snorkels and periscopes at up to 20 miles away. A total of eight examples arrived in September and October and Squadron crews began familiarizing themselves with the new aircraft the following Spring.

Because they were unarmed, the guppies each worked in conjunction with an AS3 "Scrapper", the two forming a hunter-killer team. With downward sweeps of its radar scanner during anti-submarine patrols, the unarmed 3W2 searched a broad area of seascape while the Scrapper accompanied it in loose formation. Soon aft the guppy made contact with a submarine, the signal was typically lost due to surface "noise" as the distance between the aircraft and its target diminished. At this point, the Scrapper, with its short-range AN/APS-4 radar and array of ordnance, was directed to investigate, under the 3W2's

control. When the submarine was localized, the procedure described above for the AS 3s was put into play. To ensure that the submarine's ECM did not pick up the Scrapper's radar emissions, the latter remained passive until just about on top of the target, when the Guppy ordered it to go active. It was not necessary for the guppy to go silent because it kept well clear of the target. Although the submarine might know there was an aircraft (the guppy) using radar, it was not closing and therefore could be ignored; it was only when a radar-emitting Scrapper aircraft approached the submarine that the latter "pulled the plug" - by which time, according to the book, it was too late. During seagoing NATO operations, the normal Squadron complement aboard MAGNIFICENT was 12 AS 3s and four Guppies.

In the meantime, the Squadron's TBM-3W2s had been formally organized into a four plane "Guppy Flight" designed to provide both VS 880 and VS 881 with worked-up crews that would fly together as much as possible and be assigned to the carrier as exercises and operational requirements dictated. The flexibility and assignments of the Flight with its multiple roles (long-range surface coverage for the fleet, fighter-control and interceptions for fleet defence) called for a single operational unit trained for Ops over and above the normal staffing, training and role of the aircrew borne in the ASW squadrons. Also, the need to have more specialized maintenance personnel for the Guppy's electronic systems required that they be assigned to this special Flight since the higher level of maintenance and training was not normally available to the VS squadrons.

Additionally, the guppies were designed to provide an Air-to-Air capability in protection of the fleet from air attacks. By detecting aircraft approaching at long range, the guppies could direct the CAP to intercept the incoming bogies long before they reached the fleet.

Notwithstanding the small CRT on the APS-20, (8" diameter), the operators, with practice, became very adept at homing the CAP into an attack position.

Unfortunately, when the RCN ceased operating fighter a/c from HMCS BONAVENTURE, this capability was rarely needed.

The preceding information has been provided by a number of sources other than my failing memory, including Leo Pettipas and Windy Geale. *Ted Kieser*

A Miracle at Sea

From Bryan Hayter

In September of 1953 an almost unknown and incredible event took place on the high seas. This is the story.

I was aboard HMCS Magnificent, the RCN's Majestic class British light fleet carrier when she sailed from Halifax to join a fleet of NATO ships and aircraft on what was heralded as the greatest maritime maneuvers in history, Exercise Mariner. Over a 19 day period 300 ships, 1000 aircraft and half a million men from nine NATO countries took part in coordinated operations in the North Atlantic, North Sea and English Channel. The primary object of this massive undertaking was to test the efficiency of the participating naval forces under simulated conditions of war. What I am about to relate to you is the story of a miracle and it is told not only through my personal recollections but also through my good friend Stuart Soward's book *Hands to Flying Stations Volume 1* and the recollections of Magnificent's Captain, Vice Admiral H.S. Rayner.

For Magnificent the exercise began on September 16, 1953 when she sailed as the senior ship of a task force to provide anti-submarine and air defense for a 10 ship logistic force convoy. Flying intensity was of high order with our squadron Avengers flying around the clock on anti-submarine patrols maintaining four on station. Our fighter aircraft, the Hawker Sea Furys were conducting dawn to dusk air patrols in defense of the fleet. An additional asset to the air surveillance of the fleet was provided by a flight of airborne early warning Avengers called Guppies.

After the first phase of Mariner was completed the convoy group assumed the role of a logistic support force. Replenishment was carried out and Magnificent and her escorts were now integrated in a fast carrier force with two American Essex class carriers, Bennington and Wasp. The fleet was now transiting one of the most treacherous and unpredictable ocean areas involving the combination of the Labrador and Greenland currents and the Gulf Stream. The ensuing merging of these different over-running currents was not only subject to changing air masses overhead but the entire region was notorious for its unpredictable weather patterns.

On September 23 a series of events unfolded around the 3 carrier task force which swiftly deteriorated into an extremely dangerous situation. It was feared that a catastrophe was about to take place and of such proportions that it would result in the worst peace time disaster in history. Let me share more of this unbelievable story through the eyes of Vice Admiral H.S. Rayner in a newspaper article 11 years after the event.

I quote "Probably the most hair-raising incident in the peace time history of the RCN has been recounted for the

first time by Vice admiral H.S. Rayner who retires this month as Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Rayner told a reporter that the September 23 incident, when Canadian and American carrier borne planes were almost lost en masse sticks out in his mind as vividly as his battle actions as a destroyer commander during WW 2. I quote "Probably the most hair-raising incident in the peace time history of the RCN has been recounted for the first time by Vice admiral H.S. Rayner who retires this month as Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Rayner told a reporter that the September 23 incident, when Canadian and American carrier borne planes were almost lost en masse sticks out in his mind as vividly as his battle actions as a destroyer commander during WW 2.

At the time Rayner was commanding the aircraft carrier Magnificent which was in company with US carriers Bennington and Wasp, the US battleship Iowa and a host of other Canadian, American and NATO ships on Exercise Mariner in the mid Atlantic. The nearest landing field was an unmanned strip on the southern tip of Greenland 450 miles from the fleet. Admiral Rayner tells the story this way. "Weather information on that particular afternoon was unusually meagre.

At 1330, 52 aircraft were launched in good weather to carry out an exercise some distance from the fleet. Without warning a blanket of fog rolled in. The aircraft were recalled at 1440 but only ten managed to land. Repeated attempts were made to talk down more planes using radar and radio but the pilots couldn't get low enough to see the decks. We could hear the unseen approaches through the solid wall of fog. The Iowa and cruisers were ordered well astern of the carriers to eliminate the hazards of masts and high structures for the aviators. The three carriers were in line abreast. We were entirely dependent on radar because the ships had lost site of one another in the fog. The planes formed up high above the position of the unseen fleet below. At 1620 it was estimated the planes had enough fuel for another two hours. Plans were made for a mass ditching of aircraft. Boats were manned with picked crews, ropes were rigged to hang down over the sides, life rafts were readied for slipping and the sick bay was prepared. Then came a call from a US submarine, Redfin, 10 miles to the west. She said the ceiling near her was 100 feet with two miles visibility. The carriers could not reach the area before dark but the aircraft could so we decided to head for Redfin where the pilots could ditch in a group near the submarine. Just as darkness approached there was a miracle! That is the only words for it. The fog ahead began to thin and lift a bit. We began to make out other ships. The planes were recalled and came down one by one on whatever carrier was convenient. At 1820 it was dark and 10 planes were still in the air even though their estimated fuel time had passed. But they all got down. Within minutes after the last plane landed the fog shut down again. An isolated patch of warm water on the way to Redfin had opened up the fog at exactly the critical moment" and so the article ended.

As I was flying one of the last 10 aircraft my perspective was much different. After our 1330 launch we formed up in two groups of four with a Guppy Avenger leading and were vectored by the ship in the direction of the 'enemy' submarine Redfin. Not long after turning on course we were instructed to begin an orbit in loose formation until further notice. What was happening? When the minutes grew into hours a real sense of alarm crept over me and my crew. Where were we going to go? About this time the Guppy was ordered to attempt a landing using its great radar to track in. They couldn't get low enough to see the ship. Before long they were called in again and again to no avail. There was utter silence in the cockpit. It slowly began to dawn on us that we might have to ditch our aircraft and by the look of our dwindling fuel supply and gathering darkness it would be sooner rather than later. I began going over the ditching procedures. My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the ship calling the Guppy in again. We held our breath. Minutes later a triumphant cry broke the silence. They had made it aboard! We had a chance.

With that initial success the ship began to clear us in two by two and when it came to our turn I closed up on my leader as near as I dared. He signaled a descent and before long we entered the dense cloud and fog. Visibility deteriorated drastically. When my radio altimeter registered 150 feet and I could barely make out the water I despaired..

Suddenly a light flashed by, then another and another. What were they? We found out later that they were flares thrown into the water by the ships crew. Our leader followed them until we came upon wake and then the stern of Magnificent and we came up along her starboard side and into the upwind leg of the landing circuit. When the leader turned down wind I counted to 12 and did the same. It was completely dark and as we came abreast of the ship downwind we could barely make out her silhouette. When we turned onto the approach I settled down to watch the LSO's signals like never before for we didn't feel we had enough fuel for an overshoot. As we approached the ships round down with a roger signal the tension eased. The LSO gave a cut and we landed on with a welcome thud. As I was clearing the deck, I noticed an US Skyraider. I thought any old port in a storm I guess. When I climbed out of the cockpit my legs gave way and I slid off the wing into the arms of a group of cheering deckhands. One thoughtful lad thrust a cup of navy rum into my trembling hands and as I slowly drank it down I felt the tension of all those hours in the air begin to ebb. The remaining aircraft came aboard safely. We had all made it. HALLELUJAH!. And the fog closed down again.

There was great rejoicing and thanksgiving in the ship and indeed, in the entire fleet that night. Aboard Maggie we attended Chapel to give thanks for the safe return of all of our aircraft and for the blessed miracle that let it happen. We also welcomed our fellow pilot from Bennington and he

first time by Vice admiral H.S. Rayner who retires this month as Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Rayner told a reporter that the September 23 incident, when Canadian and American carrier borne planes were almost lost en masse sticks out in his mind as vividly as his battle actions as a destroyer commander during WW 2. I quote "Probably the most hair-raising incident in the peace time history of the RCN has been recounted for the first time by Vice admiral H.S. Rayner who retires this month as Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Rayner told a reporter that the September 23 incident, when Canadian and American carrier borne planes were almost lost en masse sticks out in his mind as vividly as his battle actions as a destroyer commander during WW 2.

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the first surprise, as after fuelling and refilling, it had turned pitch black, always a surprise how fast this happens in the tropics. But no matter, off we went, and had an uneventful trip to San Juan, got some quarters and dinner and hit the hay after a long day.

I had two marvelous days on my own in San Juan while Commander Creery had work to do.

The next flight was to Trinidad, that presenting some minor problems. Facilities were very limited at Trinidad.....no oxygen and no external starter. So we decided to fly down without oxygen at 20,000 feet, which pressurized the cockpit to 12,000 feet, about the limit. It was a marvelous flight down the Windward Islands with great views of Antigua, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominique, St. Lucia and on. We landed with no difficulty, and then found out that indeed, facilities were more than limited. No hangar, no oxygen, no external starter.

So I parked under some trees if you can believe, and then while Commander Creery engaged some of the "natives" I managed to get the cockpit closed and the control panel closed. A big worry was that they would find out how to use that and perhaps drain our more than vital battery, which was all that stood between us and home!

Again, Commander Creery worked while I had a marvelous time in Port of Spain, made better because it was Carnival and "Jump Up" time.

All good things come to an end, and now we faced the prospect of not getting the trusty T-Bird started. But it started right away, and we were off, this time at 35,000 feet with oxygen, nice flight back to San Juan.

While in San Juan, the USN took us over to St. Thomas in an Expediter, minor business, and back to be on our way.

The rest of the flight back was uneventful except for one small incident. It seems that the ground crew had not put a fuel cap back on properly and we were leaking fuel. So I declared an emergency and decided to land at Ramey AFB on the western tip of Puerto Rico. We landed and taxied in to be met by two very large, very black, very armed, USAF Military Policemen. I had not realized that Ramey AFB was a SAC base and thus ultra-secure. After some fancy talking and lots of ID, they were convinced we were what we said we were, gave us fuel, and we were on our way to Jacksonville, Quonset Point, and finally, Shearwater.

It was a great trip, a total of 20.1 hours in the trusty T-Bird, and she never let us down once, not counting the fuel cap incident.

Ray Creery and I get together on occasion and have some fond recollections of a great trip. I subsequently found out that he didn't work quite as hard as I thought!

Sea Fury Story

by Adm Gord Edwards (Ret'd)

This a true story from the 50's, and even though the pilot in question is no longer with us, the name is NOT important.

It was the first flight in a Sea Fury, and of course it is single seat, so the checkout consists of a full briefing, sitting in the cockpit with the check pilot looking on, going through drills and start up procedure. All well and good. The pilot in question was warned that the Sea Fury was a very hot aircraft, so it was suggested to take it easy on the first flight.

After runup checks and so on, the Sea Fury was wheeled onto the main runway, and take off clearance was obtained.

But here is where the problems started. Our pilot had more recently flown aircraft with the various levers for flaps and wheels reversed. The procedure in the Sea Fury was to take off with ¾ flap, raising after takeoff. So.....this pilot had NO flap for takeoff, but then, thinking he was bringing the flaps UP after takeoff, actually put them down. Now the aircraft was being flown with almost full flap for the entire flight, and he couldn't get it over 200 knots. Confused, he flew around for a while, and decided to head for the home...

But wait, it got worse, as now, on the approach, wheels down, the pilot brought the flaps UP, so was now landing with NO flap and thus had a hard time getting the Sea Fury down to landing speed, thus landing very fast and hot. Well, he managed to bring it to a stop at the far end of the long runway, breathed a sigh of relief, then thinking he was bringing the flaps UP, he put them down, and taxied in that way.

He came back into the crew room in a hot sweat, complaining that IN the air the Sea Fury was a dog, but that landing was yet another story. No one could figure it out, and of course the aircraft engine was checked out fully for adequate power, etc

After a lot of investigation, questions, sitting in the cockpit, and the fact that the aircraft was shut down with flaps down, not normal, it was finally determined what happened.

Needless to say, this aspect figured big in future initial Sea Fury first flights.

Reader's Comments

Peter Lawson asks:

Please ask your readers to contact me at caperbooks@yahoo.com if they have photos of race,

exercise and regatta activities which took place in St. Ann's bay, Cape Breton Island in July 1948 during the first shake-down cruise of Maggie. Thank you.

Ted Gibbon writes:

There has long been controversy over who made the final fixed wing take off from Canada's last full deck aircraft carrier, HMCS Bonaventure. Moot to most, but important to those who concern themselves with historical accuracy.

It has been asserted and largely accepted that Rod Lyons flying the COD made the last take off and proof of this is offered by the caption under the picture on the last page of the Spring 2007 edition of the newsletter that concluded Dave Tate's article.

I mean no disrespect to anyone but as Bonaventure's last Flight Deck Officer and the one who launched the last Tracker from her deck I have always disagreed with that opinion and firmly believe that the last take off was made by Peter Hamilton with Ed Smith as co-pilot. I submit that the proof of my contention was presented on the front cover of that same edition of the newsletter.

The cover photograph (also appearing on page 317 of Al Snowie's book "The Bonnie") depicts Bonaventure as she approached Halifax Harbour with her paying off pennant proudly flying. The last Trackers were ranged on deck and this order did not change, despite the many activities precipitated by the forward lift un-serviceability that preceded the final launch sequence in Bedford Basin. The first aircraft in the range is the COD. Photo analysis will show that the aircraft has no ECM cans on the wing tips. The picture in Dave's article shows the absence of wing tip cans and also the blanked out sono tubes on the nacelles. Clearly this was the first to launch that fateful day but the fourth last aircraft to launch from Bonaventure.

It should also be noted that the last aircraft in the range has a darker grey paint scheme than the others and "NAVY" is clearly evident on the port quarter. It seems reasonable to me that by prior arrangement and communicated to the flight deck that a "NAVY" aircraft would have the honour of being the last and no doubt in my mind that an "operational" squadron would reserve that position for historical purposes.

I have no idea how the aircraft were assigned, nor do I know who, if anybody, occupied the back seats but I do know that before I dropped that green flag for the last time the pilot who saluted me was Ed Smith and Pete Hamilton was the pilot. If memory serves Bob Stone launched the COD, Tim Kemp the third last and Frank Carlson the second last.

Some time later we discussed the event and Peter said he thought that I had given him an invitation to visit Mount Saint Vincent College's mother superior as he passed

directly over the institution on departure at the extreme end of the ship's launch envelope.

I respectfully submit that the last Fixed Wing Launch from Bonaventure was piloted by Peter Hamilton & Ed Smith

From: **John Eden**

The question we hear occasionally is - what did Naval Air contribute to the Royal Canadian Navy during its existence? I could write a book but can honestly say that in my experience the embarking of our squadrons in carriers and on DDH's more than doubled the ability of ships to carry out the RCN's primary role of anti-submarine defence. The presence of naval aircraft made it possible for our ships to participate with our NATO allies in exercises where they otherwise may not have been invited and most certainly would have been less effective. In fact senior officers of the USN on many occasions complimented the RCN for its outstanding anti-submarine capability. In many instances singled out the contributions of the naval air component. I served for over 6 years in the sea element as the EA on the DDH 280 Project and again as the EA to COSSEA and during that time heard nothing but compliments and accolades from many senior sea element officer. If there had been no naval air component in the RCN for those critical "Cold War" years (1949 to 1970) it is difficult to contemplate what the present RCN would look like in both size and importance. *Ready Aye Ready*

(I had the question 'What did Naval Air ever do to be remembered?' asked of me approx 3 months ago. Ed.)

From **Terry Lynch**: I was looking in my Log book and thought it might be interesting to some of you who like to look back at our early years.

My first CS2F Crew consisted of #1 Lt. Stu McGowan, #2 S/Lt Sandy Farquhar, #3 Me and #4 Joe Saunders. Jan 1964.

Members of my 'MOAT' course in VP449 25 Feb 75 - 28 Jul 75:

Ted Procher	Wayne Romans
Bob Campeau	Mike Joval
Gerry Walker	Rick Cassavant
Ken McGirr	USN AW1 'Mac' McAndrew
John Richard	USN AW1 Bob Vilburn
Phil Gavin	

O. J. Parker writes:

I served on HMS Puncher A/C from 1944046. On VE Day, I signed up for the Japanese War and was drafter to the WARRIOR. I returned to Canada for 60 days leave - the war ended and I stayed in Halifax until I was discharged

from the Navy.

I have yet to see any write-up about the PUNCHER or NABOB (the Captain of the PUNCHER was Capt Bidwell from Halifax).

Returning from overseas, our carrier brought a plane called 'Firefly' to Shearwater. I sent a picture of this plane to SAMF a few years ago after attending the grand finale for HMCS Bonaventure. At that time, I was recognized as being from the Puncher.

Rolfe Monteith writes:

During the latter half of the 1940's and through the 1950's, I so well recall the dynamic days of Canadian Naval Aviation - for me a most rewarding era. In due course that period was duly recorded in the book "Certified Serviceable - Swordfish to Sea King". The prime purpose of that endeavour was to give due recognition to the contribution made by those serving in the technical and logistic branches.

the purpose of this letter is to remind one and all of a quotation from the Preface of the book written by a Petty Officer Maintainer -

"The history of our Navy and its Air Arm is more than a precise and impersonal construction of happenings. It is a story too of individuals who gave by their service, inspiration and pride for generations to come. Our account is such a story; above all, it finally gives a human face and long overdue recognition to the forgotten men and women of aviation - those who did so much, received so little and through it all, 'kept them flying'."

Warmest regards, Rolfe Monteith

From those left behind....

Tuffy Buchanan When we first lived on McNab Avenue, we bought one of the Whitby's puppies and we tended to take her everywhere with us, even to the Wardroom. One night there was a keg of beer and oysters, free until the keg was empty and the oysters gone, of course we had Tuffy with us and she soon found the bowl that was a drip catcher under the keg. To heck with the oysters, she sat quietly by that bowl until the foam showed over the lip and she started lapping. I am glad the SPCA didn't see our little Tuff the next morning. She was eager, after a good sleep for a long walk or a swim in the lake.

Another time with Tuffy was when we would take her to the Sunday night dinners and there was often a movie in the

old wardroom, several new moms took their babies, tucked into their carry kots in the ladies cloakroom, checked by Mum every so often. During the movie, getting bored, Tuffy would wander and visit friends. Then we would hear a glass being knocked over and someone would yell " Tuffy Buchanan - go back to your mother." She was very obedient and would slink back to me. - **Margaret Buchanan**

Sub-letting... In the '50s, when the guy's went to sea for Exercises in the sunny climates etc., quite a few of the wives took this opportunity to bundle up the children and pay a visit to their families. Rather than leave an empty house, they would arrange to sub-let their home to newcomers who were on the PMQ waiting list. Such was the case when we arrived from Ottawa in May of '50, after a six month stay in Ottawa where Buck was at Headquarters doing 'something about obtaining "turkeys from the US Navy". We had been married since the previous October. I was a Wren at RNAS St Merryn in Cornwall and Buck had completed a 9 month SNAW course there. Wally Walton, who had been on the same course with Buck, and had been our Best Man, met us and we stayed with him and Pat in Pat and Charlie Bourques' house in the old PMQ's - Charlie was away in Maggie and Pat had gone home to Mum. After a few days, Buck discovered that Roger Harris was looking for someone to 'sub-let' his house in "Dog-Patch", so that was our first move, and we were there for the following six months. Our furniture, of course, went into storage, but not for long, as the Walton's were to move into their own house and they needed some furniture! From McNab Avenue, we were lucky to find another sub-let - John and Sheila Runciman's house overlooking Eastern Passage.

After Maggie returned and the Runciman's wanted their house back, I moved in with Kathie Donaldson and her two children, Judy and Richard. Buck was then in the ship for a while. We had bought our first car at this time and while the ship was away, I got my driver's license.

Our next move was into the Stokes' house when Marie went home to Vancouver and from there we eventually came to the top of the list and were given "our own" abode on McNab Avenue - and we lived there until the new PMQ's were finished and happily settled into the little house at the bottom of the hill on Swordfish Drive where we stayed until Buck was appointed to Iroquois for Watchkeeping Duties and sailed for Korea. I thought I would have to move again, but Capt Storrs allowed me to remain until Buck came home. *Margaret Buchanan*

Patricia Muncaster writes:

In the fall of 1960, we had to leave PMQs as Doug (Duke) was appointed to HMCS CRESCENT taking part in anti-submarine exercises in the North Atlantic, flying the helicopter and watch keeping.

We were fortunate to find a house in Hubbard's between Halifax and Chester. It was entirely surrounded by woods with a long driveway ending in a circle in front of the house. The children went to the local school but came home for lunch. One day at lunchtime we heard a helicopter very close. It hovered over the driveway sending branches in all directions. A white object was dropped so I went out to retrieve it. It was a note wrapped around a rock when said "Bring my dressing gown and slippers to beach". We all jumped in the car and headed down the lane towards the beach and saw the helicopter in a field. Doug ran over; kissed us "goodbye" and headed back out to sea. The kids thought that this was a great lunchtime entertainment and had a good tale to tell their friends.

The house in Hubbard's was rather isolated so Doug left his father's shotgun for my protection. One day I spotted a partridge in a tree so I loaded the gun, rested the barrel on the bathroom window ledge, took aim and FIRED! The bird fell to the ground. I tied its feet together and hung it in the basement to wait for help to dress it. A few days later, Duke's parents arrived from Montreal for a short visit. Dad declared he would like the partridge for his dinner. He thoroughly enjoyed it and managed to not break a tooth on a bit of shot.



Bermuda , Here We Come!

By Stan Brygadyr

It was a dark and stormy night but we had to go to Bermuda as an RN "A" Boat was waiting. It was

25 Nov, 1961, Doc Schellinck (VS-880 Ops0) was to lead a 4 plane to Bermuda for a Trainex, and I was his co-pilot and the "Lead Navigator" for the formation. Navigation the 750 nm to BDA was not normally a problem provided one goes VFR and stays low in order to see the "wind-lanes" on the water surface, and/or can do a "360 wind-finding" to assist in the " Dead-Reckoning" navigation. The Tracker was not equipped with any long-range capability except for a low-freq radio and TACAN which allowed for IFR overland Airways navigation, and at-sea relative positioning with the Carrier.

The morning ETD was stymied by weather as Shearwater was zero/zero in fog. We waited and waited, and finally the weatherman advised us of a rain-shower approaching the field and we would likely see the fog dissipate somewhat. By now it was mid-afternoon and we faced a flight that would be mostly at night. A 4 plane, VFR flight was out of

the question and so we filed IFR flight plans with New York Oceanic Control, stacked 9, 8, 7 and 6 thousand feet in that take-off order so we could depart with the minimum time and spacing between each other. Now came the challenge. The weatherman had briefed us on a Frontal System between Nova Scotia and Bermuda, the exact location though could not be determined (no satellites in those days!). We were also advised to expect severe thunderstorms and changing winds en-route. The track to Bermuda is virtually due-south and I initially biased our heading to the West (a west wind was predicted at the start). By 4 hours airborne we should have been able to receive the Bermuda low-freq beacon. unfortunately, we were in an area of severe thunderstorms and the ADF needle spun aimlessly: we couldn't even tune-in the beacon and we were still too far out for the TACAN. All of a sudden our windscreen lit-up like it was on fire. My apprehension level was already rising rapidly and this first-ever (for me) encounter with St Elmo's Fire caused me to shout to the crew "They don't pay me enough for this crap!!" Doc Shellinck and Sr Naval Air crewman, Joe Saunders, tried to male some levity of the situation which helped me calm-down a bit, but only a bit!

Jim Pilgrim was the Jr Air crewman onboard but he stayed awfully quiet, for good reason no doubt. If the senior crew of the Squadron was temporarily uncertain of their position, a contribution from him was not likely to change things! We motored-on trying to keep all four aircraft in close proximity using UHF bearings and trying desperately to figure out where we were, or where Bermuda was from us! 4.5 hours airborne we really, really should have been able to get the Bermuda beacon and /or TACAN, but neither could be received. Doc Schellinck then urged a course of action, up to me though, the Navigator! Fortunately, I had done a but of navigational research long before our departure and thus had taken along a CONSOLAN chart for the Carolina Beach Station. That facility provided me with a low-freq aural signal, unaffected by the thunderstorms, which by counting the "beep/pulses" gave me a reasonable position of geographical latitude. I thus knew we were still a bit North of Bermuda. As I had biased our heading to the west, my best guess was to turn easterly and so I advised Doc to turn 60 degrees left (to ESE). In about 20 minutes we locked on to the Bermuda TACAN at about 90 miles, almost on the nose! What a relief: however, the drama was not over as about 10 minutes later the low fuel warning lights illuminated (30-40 minutes on dry tanks?). With heightened anxiety the next 20 minutes or so seems to drag forever. But all 4 aircraft made it no doubt with not much but fumes in the fuel tanks. That 5.5 hour flight was my longest in a Tracker, and that was before the installation of long-range tanks. Memories are made of this!

**LOWER DECK
RECOLLECTIONS
OF VS881 1951-1952**

as was written by the late Mick Owens

For maximum enjoyment of Mick's Article:

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

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

T.A. Wilson arc-welding his pliers to the fuselage while checking the batteries in our cab. After that, it was my job. Moe Sangster of Air Headquarters holding court in the spark plug bay. A wonderful escape.

Tot time on your birthday, a very vague memory. Spillers from all! Blackie Menard, George Woods, Joe Craik, Jack Moss, Gus Salkus.

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

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

Ronnie's Bar in Halfar, Ambeat and Hopleaf.

Scoop Maddock, the roving photographer.

Fred Snooks, a fine Newfy fellow

Reg MacKinnon, a great guy, and the huge sword he bought in the Bazaar in Turkey.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Flying ashore to Gibraltar with Lt Bill Gourlay to recover a sick turkey. Relieved the crew and they left with our cab in the early afternoon. Finally had the thing serviceable and ready to return to ship.

Night landing. Gourlay asked what the noise was back there and I had to admit it was my knees knocking. No problem.

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

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

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

The gut, Bobby and Cookie.

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

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

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

The Green empire, Don Drinkwater, Jake Leonard et al.

After cruise of '51, realized that Maggie didn't carry nose cowlings and they were almost irreparable.

Night before sailing in '52, after a couple of trays of beer, we stole one off the cabs parked by Z2 hangar and brought it aboard with our personal effects. It proved to be a winner as we flew all twelve off in '52.

Working with Air Rigger, Gunner Campbell in 1952, I loaned him a stubby screwdriver. We had a radical lifestyle change in 1955.

Gunner swore allegiance to the Queen as a Pilot and I pledged mine to Agnes as a husband.

At a CNAG reunion in Edmonton in '95. Gunner returned my screw-driver, gift-wrapped. He's still a great guy!

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

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

Final three rubbers of the Magnificent Contract Bridge tournament. LS Owens and LS Dowdall against the Commander (S) McClure and the Navigator, LCdr Porter. Cheered on by the Sqn Pilots - Mickey and Frank prevailed.

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

Cleaning ABD with the whole crew helping. Bill Cody, Jack Cairney, T.A. Wilson, Shag Crawshaw and myself.

Advised them not to leave their flying jobs.

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

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

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

Suck back and secure!

Each and every one of these salty dips has a real story behind it. The people were great. I was one of the luckier guys.

I had been accused earlier of being Hulla's Minion by the Limey AEO Bryan Dawburn and I do believe he liked my work when he was the Chief at TAG. He was a great guy to work for and called a spade a spade.

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

(Mick was a good guy. Had he told all his stories, there wouldn't be room for anything else in this edition - but - you would have been thoroughly entertained. He'll be missed. Ed.)



The Red Herring

Lockheed T33 'Silver Star' Aircraft 631 with VU32. This aircraft was used for jet proficiency and instrument training. Initially assigned to VT40, which was formed in May '54, then amalgamated with VU32 in May '59. VT40 received its first four 'T-Birds' in 1955, the RCN's first jet aircraft.

The aircraft depicted is the mount of the '**Red Herring**' (Ian Ferguson) as it appeared in 1965 - the RCN's tongue-in-cheek rebuttal to the RCAF's famed 'Red Knight'.



A Tribute

Adm R.H. Falls

A debt of gratitude is owed to all those who were involved with the Banshee, whether aircrew, technicians, aircraft carrier personnel and a whole host of supporters. One person, however, stands out as a superb example of inspirational leadership, superb talent and consummate professionalism. I will 'plagiarize' a few comments made by Michael Whitby who prepared an extensive biography of him. That person is Robert Hillborn Falls, known to all as "Bob" Falls, and "widely believed to have been the most admired and respected naval aviator in Canada's post WWII era."

In spite of many difficulties, he "guided training programs for the new aircraft, led the squadron in day and night landing qualification programs on HMCS Bonaventure and established operating parameters for the fighter onboard the carrier." And "VF 870 has successfully introduced jet fighter operations into our fleet. This distinction has come as a triumph of fighting spirit over much adversity encountered on their way".

Bob Falls continued to pursue a distinguished career both in naval aviation and the navy in general, culminating in his appointment as the Chief of the Defence Staff as a full 4 star Admiral and, following his retirement from that job, as the Chairman of the Military Staff at NATO Headquarters.

His leadership was instrumental to the success of the introduction of the Banshee into the RCN, and he inspired all those with whom he served, many of whom later achieved senior positions in both commissioned and non commissioned ranks. He died in November, 2009. He will be remembered.

Afterword

Fighter Aviation may no longer exist in the Canadian Navy or in the maritime element of the Canadian Forces, but it does exist in the aforementioned museums, in memories and in print. Two superb books have been produced which tell, in great detail, many of the stories of the Banshee. The first, entitled "BANSHEES in the Royal Canadian Navy", by Carl Mills and the Bansheesites, is a wonderful collection of history and stories of the Banshee era.

The second, entitled "CERTIFIED SERVICEABLE", edited by Peter Charlton and Michael Whitby, with support from Editor Emeritus Leo Pettipas, contains a significant section on the Banshee which, along with the rest of the book, is well worth reading.

These two books, along with several excellent others which discuss Canadian naval aviation from different perspectives, are available at the gift shop in the museum at Shearwater. Again, the scribbler of this short history is most grateful, both as an active participant in most of the Banshee era, and as your scribe, to those who have dedicated so much time and effort recording memorable historical events which would otherwise have been forgotten.

BANSHEE QUIZ

1. What Banshee pilot flew the circuit at night upside down while coming aboard the USS Forrestal in a USN Phantom?
2. Who accumulated the most number of RCN Banshee hours?
3. What RCN Pilot flew the Banshee first?
4. What RCN Pilot was awarded the US DFC for carrier operations in Korea?
5. Who fired the first Sidewinder missile at a real airplane and missed?
6. Who made the last RCN Banshee flight?
7. Who double flamed out and crashed at NAS Boca Chica (Key West)?
8. What Banshee CO had his own scratching post?
9. Who shot his own Banshee in the air?
10. What infamous Naval aviator came from a town known as "fourteen tits"?
11. Who hit the inner wave off light at night in a Banshee on Bonaventure?
12. What Banshee pilot dropped 500 pound bombs on a real boat?
13. Who were the only two RCN pilots to fly across the North Atlantic in Banshees?

All Banshee quiz answers can be found in the Banshee Book (and elsewhere in this edition of WARRIOR).



Angel in her UN finery

'ANGEL' Liberates El Arish

by ABAR Jack Beard (Ret'd)

The highlight of Angel's tour with the UN forces in Egypt occurred on 15 Jan 57.

With the aircraft piloted by Lt Cdr W. Frayn and Sub Lt D. Neilly, we flew to El Bellah to pick up the UNEF Commander, Gen. E.L.M. Burns and transport him to El Arish. Also on board the aircraft was Capt Fraser-Harris the Commanding Officer of HMCS MAGNIFICENT.

After picking up Gen Burns, we landed inside the town and were immediately mobbed by thousands of Arabs. Capt Fraser-Harris and myself left the aircraft to try to hold back the people. They were in a frenzy, waving palm leaves and paper flowers. We were both grabbed and thrown to the ground with much handshaking, kisses and back slaps.



The people began to climb in and onto the aircraft, so the pilot took off to a hover a few feet off the ground. After a few seconds, we were able to get back inside the aircraft only to be dragged out again for more kisses and handshakes. This happened a few times until only two extra passengers were still on board. These were ejected from the helicopter while in the hover and managed to escape down the road a way to another landing spot which was less crowded. The second landing was a little hairy also, as the crowd swelled in on us. People could have been seriously hurt as they were moving around under the rotor blades carrying one another on their shoulders.

Gen Burns was safely delivered to his staff with their jeep.



HU21 Maintenance crew during the Egyptian Campaign.

L-R ABAR Jack Beard, ABAR Dick Barry,
ABAR Doug Beamish, LSAR Joe Porier,
P1AT Bill Sopko, LT Don Neilly
LCDR Bill Frayne

Lt Cdr Frayn pointed out that this was the first time a Canadian helicopter had liberated a town. He added, jokingly, 'may we never have the pleasure again'.

I would guess *Angel* felt the same.

HU21 Det - embarked in HMCS LABRADOR

Photos and article from Gord Foster

The date was June 1956, we departed Halifax for the Eastern Arctic as a Det from HU21 Helicopter Squadron, embarked in HMCS LABRADOR. Our small detachment comprised of two Bell Model 47 helicopters and one Piasecki (Hup) twin rotor helicopter. Three Officers and nine men. Unfortunately, after some fifty, or more years, all the names cannot be recalled, some however can still be recalled.

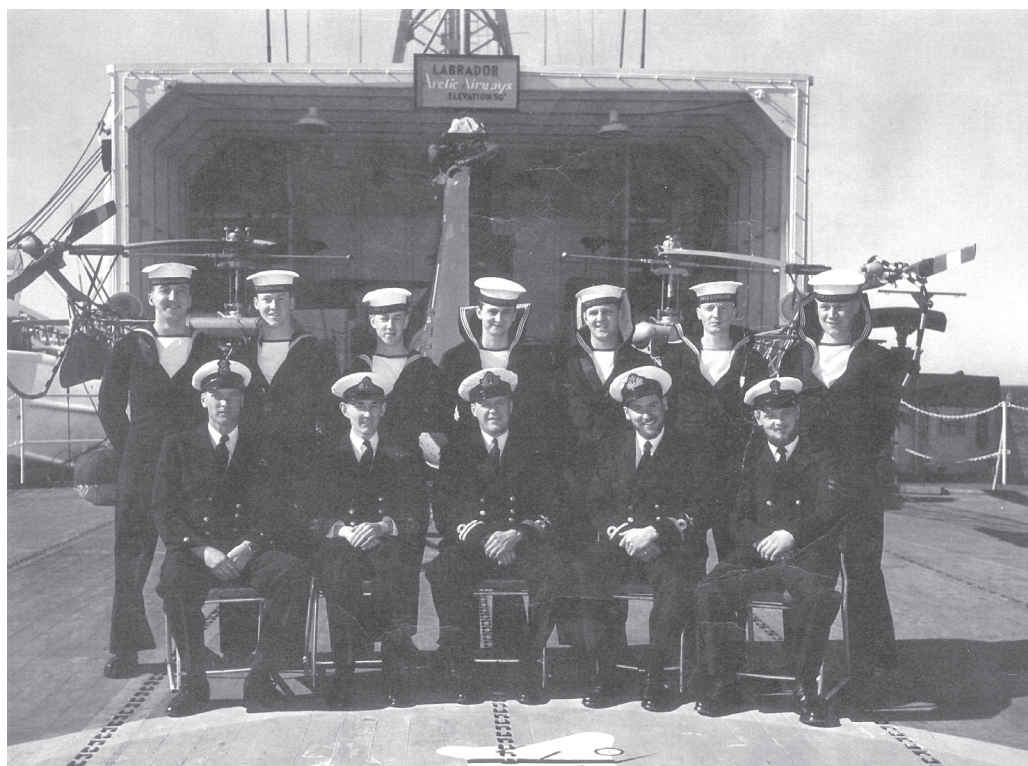
At that time, the ship had on board several civilian scientists with their equipment. Throughout that deployment period from June until October, they conducted various tests of Arctic waters and other scientific exercises. Our Squadron pilots flew a number of sorties over the arctic and the land in areas of Baffin Island, Frobisher, Fury and Hecla Strait etc.

The ship also went into Fox Basin and made several trips to the shore landing area of the DEW Line site 30, with the ships LCP (Landing Craft Personnel).

HMCS LABRADOR, under the command of Captain T.C. Pullen, sailed through Fury and Hecla Strait on Sunday 16 September to become the first ship to navigate this narrow body of water from east to west. The ship sailed through the strait with no difficulty and subsequently returned through from west to east. At that time, the USN ice breaker EDISTO was in heavy ice west of the strait having lost her starboard screw, making the Labrador's second traverse all the more notable.

Another task given the helicopter det was to fly men and equipment to the low islands in the Arctic areas to install radar reflectors. These reflectors were mounted on steel pipes some thirty feet long and supported by cables to the rock terrain fastened from the top to "dead heads" sunk into the rock by gasoline engine driven rock drills. The four by four foot square magnesium reflectors were mounted on top. As the arctic islands are so low these reflectors provided the necessary navigation guidance. There may be some still standing! These aids to navigation were called "Cavanaugh's" after, I presume, the inventor.

(Some 50 years or more, all names cannot be recalled, some can as follow after photo.)



Rear Row: U/K, Butch Bouchard, Ken Cann, L. Rau, John Kowalski, Gord Foster, John Cribb.

Front Row: CPO Lou Turner, U/K, Lt. McNeil, Slt Fitzgerald, PO Hab Brownell.

Lt. Hampton Gray, VC, DSC RCNVR

- Flew Corsairs in 1841 Sqdn. from HMS Formidable.
- Led flight against Japanese warships in Onagawa Bay 9Aug45.
- Although his a/c was in flames, pressed his attack and sank Destroyer.



Courageous deeds were accomplished by many of our Naval Air family. These noted are just a few of their courageous deeds:

LCdr(P) John Henault BEEMAN, pilot, LCdr Francis Roger FINK co-pilot, PO 1 Lawrence William VIPOND crew, and LS Paul Arnold SMITH, were jointly responsible for saving the 21 members of the crew of the Liberian Freighter 'SS KISMET II' which had run aground on the rocky coast of Cape Breton Island against a cliff which rose almost vertically from the sea to a height of some 400 feet and was being pounded to pieces by heavy seas.



Lt. J. A. Chisholm

HMCS BONAVENTURE(22) While under refit at St. John, NB, a fire was reported on 5 deck F section. There were reports of explosions, intense heat and volumes of black and nauseating smoke issuing from the affected compartment. **Lt John Allister CHISLHOLM RCN** took charge, with volumes of dense black & nauseating smoke issuing

from the compartment. There were reports of explosions, intense heat, and in view of dangerous material in nearby compartments, dressing in Chemox breathing gear, entered the area to assess the situation, he heard cries from an adjacent smoke filled area and found a stranded workman in a

state of panic. He led the man to safety. Returning to the fire area he found another workman trapped & also led this man to safety. Again returning to the area he found a third man who had succumbed to asphyxia, lying in the furthest corner of the burning compartment. With assistance, he carried the body from the area and then directed fire fighting at the scene.

HMCS NIPIGON Word had been received by HMCS Bonaventure that the destroyer Nipigon was on fire and urgently required medical assistance, fire fighting equipment and wished to evacuate eight seriously burned members of her crew.

Citations for LS K.F. Bowen and Lt's Blanchard and McDermott read as follows - in part: "Ldg Sea Bowen was employed as aircrewman hon helicopter 'Pedro' which made three flights between the two ships delivering supplies and equipment and returning with the eight injured crew members. Entirely on his own initiative, Ldg Sea Bowen stationed himself in the main cabin door and directed the aircraft from ship to ship." "Without this steady stream of information, the pilots whose vision was restricted by darkness and rain would

have found the mission extremely difficult to complete." The citation concludes by stating that he exhibited a high degree of initiative, airmanship and courage which reflected great credit upon himself.

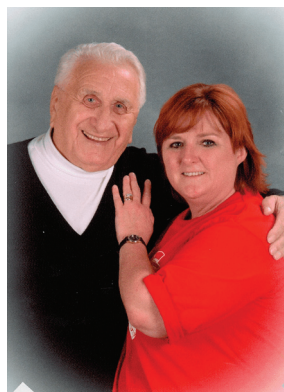


W/C Gazley, Lt P. Blanchard, Lt. J. McDermott, LS K. Bowen

Lt's. Blanchard and McDermott were, respectively, Pilot and Co-Pilot of the helicopter "Pedro" and the citations to their awards stated that the three flights "were made despite the hazardous conditions that existed at the time, a dark night and visibility reduced in rain, and flying a helicopter that was not designed for low flying over water at night under instrument conditions." The citations praise the skill of these two Officers and their devotion to duty and complete disregard for their own personal safety.

9-3-55 **Lt (P) Douglas Albert 'Duke' MUNCASTER**, with disregard for his own safety, was instrumental in saving the life of S/Lt(P) John Victor SEARLE, RCN, who was trapped inside his flaming Sea Fury A/C which had crashed and broken in two in a heavily wooded area approximately one mile from the Naval Air Station at Shearwater.

Muncaster, the Co-Pilot of a BELL Helicopter had arrived about three minutes after the crash. The Pilot could not land the helicopter due to dense bush. The Pilot hovered the A/C about 50 yards from the crashed A/C and Muncaster jumped to the ground from an approximate height of 8 feet. As Muncaster ran towards the crash site, one of the fuel tanks exploded. On nearing the crash, from the sounds inside, it was evident that the Pilot was alive. Muncaster, with a rock, broke the canopy open and extricated the Pilot, assisting him from the scene. Shortly after, the remaining fuel tank exploded.



A courageous deed of another kind. Many will recognize one of Naval Air's own in this photo - George Saleski - but not the lady - Karen McHarg. In late 2009 in a local store in Dartmouth, George's heart decided it was time to quit working. Karen was there and provided CPR until the arrival of the ambulance and medical staff. Although there was medical staff in the store complex, they were not permitted, by law, to assist

George until after the ambulance and it's medical staff arrived. Had Karen not taken on the task of CPR, the Saleski family Christmas may not have turned out to be a happy one. *(Karen is a daughter of our Editor..)*



THE WHITE ENSIGN AND THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

I am sure that all Naval Officers and Men know the history and meaning of the white Ensign. But then there are those who read the WARRIOR who are not Naval, so a little background.

The White Ensign representing allegiance to the Crown consists of the Red Cross of St George on a white field with the Union flag in the upper canton. The make up of the Union flag may be of interest. It is England's Cross of St George overlaying Scotland's Cross of St Andrew which overlays Ireland's Cross of St Patrick.

In the early 1800's the White Ensign in conjunction with the Red and Blue Ensign were flown to indicate the rank of an Admiral. All ships in the Admiral's squadron would fly his White, Red or Blue Ensign.

In the mid 1800's the Admiralty considered the three Ensign practices had many drawbacks, one of which was the use of the Red Ensign by British Merchant ships. In the result it was decided in 1864 that all ships in the royal Navy would fly the white Ensign. The blue Ensign was to be flown by ships in the royal Navy Reserve and the Red Ensign to be flown by British merchant ships. Subsequently, it was agreed that dominion warships would use the Blue Ensign with the country's Coat of Arms.

On January 12, 1910, the Canadian Government introduced the Naval Service bill, the official title of the navy to be The Naval Service of Canada. The bill received royal Assent on May 10, 1910.

On August 10, 1910, HMS Rainbow was the first ship commissioned into the Naval Service of Canada. On October 1910 HMS Niobe joined Rainbow.

In January 1911, the Canadian government asked the Admiralty for permission to fly the White Ensign and to change its title from Naval Service of Canada to Royal Canadian Navy. It was not until March 1911 that permission was given for Canadian warships to fly the White Ensign at the stern, and the distinctive Blue Ensign at the Jack. Not until August 1911 did King George, by royal proclamation give approval to change the designation Royal Canadian Navy. The tardiness may well indicate that the Admiralty had some reservations in

recommending approval.

On December 16, 1911, the Privy council set forth regulations that all ships and vessels of the royal Canadian Navy shall fly at the stern the white Ensign as the symbol of the authority of the Crown, and at the Jack Staff, the distinctive flag of the Dominion of Canada; such distinctive flag being the blue Ensign with the Arms of the Dominion inset in the fly. The White Pendant will be flown at the masthead.

In early 1914, British Columbia purchased two surplus Royal Navy submarines. On August 7, 1914, they were bought by the Canadian government and commissioned into service. It is interesting to note that in 1917, the submarines CC1 and CC2, together with their tender HMCS Shearwater, after patrolling the Pacific became the first warships to transit the Panama Canal flying the white Ensign.

In September 1945, authority was given by the Canadian government to fly the Red Ensign with the shield of the Coat of Arms in the fly on all government buildings within and outside Canada; this provision to apply until such time as action is taken by the Parliament for the formal adoption of a National flag.

This order in Council specifically stated that nothing therein should be deemed to alter the regulations for the white Ensign, and the blue Ensign with the shield of the Coat of Arms of Canada on Canadian naval vessels or with respect to the flying of the Red Ensign on Canadian merchant ships. Shortly thereafter, a submission to the Canadian Naval Board to deface the white Ensign with the Canadian Coat of Arms was unanimously rejected outright with appropriate harrumphs.

In 1949, Admiral Rollo Mainguy was appointed to head a commission of enquiry into the incidents in the RCN. Among the commission's conclusions, three would seemingly have future ramifications on uniforms, customs/traditions, flags and ensigns.

1. The absence of a distinguishing Canadian identity in the Navy.
2. Deterioration in the traditional relationship between Officers, Petty Officers and Men.
3. An uncaring Officer corps harbouring aristocratic attitudes inappropriate to Canadian democratic sensitivities.

As is well known, there has been and continues to be a struggle between the RCN and the RCAF for political

power and fund allocation, a struggle, which the "RCAF insidiously and constantly is winning. As noted by Stu Soward, this particularly applied to the transfer of HMCS Shearwater to the RCAF, the demise of Aircraft Carriers and Canadian Naval Aviation.

As a sign of things to come, in 1951, the RCAF questioned Naval supremacy in Maritime Warfare and wanted co-existence with the RCN; even more alarming was CNS Admiral Rollo Mainguy's rebuttal of Commodore Lay's recommendations, that more emphasis should be placed on the growth of Naval Aviation and that the Naval Board should plan for the adoption of all Maritime air Operations, Mercy! Admiral Mainguy stated it was the task of the RCN to convince as many as possible of the importance and place of Maritime Air and to encourage the RCAF to build up an efficient Maritime Air. Submission by Commodore Storrs, similar to that of Commodore Lay was also rejected. It is difficult to understand - agree with those who maintain that Canada is now better defended by MARCOM than if it had Naval Aviation.

Despite many setbacks like these, the RCN seemed to be keeping an even keel, albeit losing political power. Nonetheless, whilst not singing "Hearts of Oak", the Naval sentiment to retain Naval traditions, inherited from the royal Navy and those evolving from the RCN's world War I and world War 2 experiences and triumphs, seemed to be in vogue.

However, with the desire to be identified as "Canadian" the use of the Canadian Blue Ensign at the Jack was not considered satisfactory, as the Jack is not flown when underway. Canadian ships could not be distinguished from those of the royal Navy. To rectify this, in 1961 a policy of wearing the Canadian Red Ensign from the masthead, in addition to the Canadian Blue Ensign at the Jack staff when appropriate and the White Ensign at the stern Ensign staff was established.

On February 15, 1965, The Canadian government established the Red Maple Leaf flag as the flag of Canada, which replaced the white, blue and Red Ensigns. I was unable to find out where and when the new flag was flown on Canadian warships. However, the Union flag also remained an official flag in Canada representing Canada's membership in the Commonwealth of Nations and Canada's allegiance to the Crown.

As a personal comment, replacement of the white Ensign representing the authority of the Crown seems out of order. Is the Queen no longer the Commander in Chief of the Canadian Armed Forces? Are Canadian Naval Officers no longer Commissioned into Her Majesty's

Canadian Fleet? Are Canadian Ships no longer commissioned and known as Her Majesty's Canadian Ships? Replacement of the Canadian Blue Ensign designating Canadian ships is logical as it is redundant. What flags Canadian merchant ships fly, now that the Red Ensign is not used. I don't know and can't find out.

Also in 1965, we had Mr. Hellyer and his disastrous concepts for the Armed Forces. Despite early denials that total unification was planned, he implemented it and on February 1, 1968, the Royal Canadian Navy was merged with the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Army to form the Canadian Armed Forces with their green uniforms. Mr. Hellyer certainly bears the major responsibility for the chaos then and now. However, notwithstanding that there were those like Landymore and Stirling, would it be reasonable to assume that like the rejection of Commodores Lay and Storrs submissions, that Hellyer required some complaisant Senior Naval Officers to develop and implement his grand strategies. Holy Cow! I find it difficult to understand how any Senior Naval Officer would agree to change the designation Royal Canadian Navy to whew Canadian Forces maritime command. Although, unofficially referred to as Navy, an edict was issued that it was not correct to use the designation "Royal Canadian Navy".

However, is the directive out of order, since the Royal designation of the Canadian Navy was executed by a Royal proclamation, which has never been revoked? The Canadian Government and the Canadian Forces will be required to use the designation "Royal Canadian Navy" if the expression Canadian Navy is used in any official capacity.

As for the current MARCOM, use of Flags and Ensigns in Canadian Warships, I was unable to determine a definitive description. Local Naval Establishment, Armed Forces College, Naval Information Ottawa, Library Ottawa, History Ottawa, were vague to no knowledge. It would seem that a MARCOM Ensign was developed for Canadian Warships; a White Ensign without England's Cross of St George with the Canadian Maple Leaf flag in the canton and a fouled anchor beneath a Crown in the fly.

I understand that the MARCOM Ensign is flown at the Jack and Canadian Maple Leaf flag at the masthead and or the Ensign Staff at the stern. Perhaps a serving MARCOM Officer (Naval) could clarify this. Perhaps he could also explain the capricious changes to the Naval cap badges.

Insofar as removal of the "Executive Curl" to preclude any notion that the wearer was Naval comes in line with the

demise of the Navy as an identity, i.e. in becoming MARCOM. The removal of the Executive Curl also prevents one knowing whether the wearer is a fireman, custom officer, policeman, and transit inspector, et al, all of whom wear gold stripes without the Executive Curl. Could it be that other Navies of the World are laughing up their sleeves, particularly those with Naval Aviation and Aircraft Carriers.

T. Goddard



(Gee, I don't know any 'old sailors' only 'better' ones. K.)

SHEARWATER SPORTS

Throughout the period of Canada's Naval Aviation, team sports and individual athletic participation played a very important role in day-to-day activities at RCNAS and HMCS Shearwater. Base personnel, both Naval and civilian, took part in the various sports that were provided for their enjoyment and physical fitness. In turn, this also provided great entertainment for the fans from the Base and surrounding communities.

Ever so many Naval Air personnel took part in this myriad of sports that were generally organized by the Base Physical Recreation Department. Competitions took place at a variety of levels, with Inter-departmental and Inter-Mess rivalries being extremely active, while Base representation in sports of local, Maritime, National and International levels thrived. All sport and recreation activities were strongly supported by Base Commanders,

Squadron/Unit Commanders and supervisory staffs, and I cannot emphasize how important this was for those involved. It must also be pointed out, that flying operations and associated military roles always came first. From my perspective over the years as an active sportsman and fan, both athletics and service duties blended well together at Shearwater and in the carriers, thanks to the excellent support.

I want to point out that Base Commanders, Captains Welland, King and Ryan were exceptionally supportive.

In writing this article, there is nothing that I would like better than to name all those who took part in the various sports, but that would be a monumental task. For instance, the Shearwater Flyers Football team alone has a list of nearly five hundred alumni players. However, I am going to list some people/teams whose names come to my mind while writing down something about each sport activity, along with some of the accomplishments that took place during the heyday years of Naval Aviation.

During the twenty plus years that I spent at Shearwater, many venues were used by the various teams and individuals. First and foremost was the old gym on the Base, which is now part of the Shearwater Aviation Museum. This is where basketball, badminton, boxing and wrestling, and floor hockey was really popular. There were many local locations for football, hockey and baseball, and they included Dartmouth Arrows Park, Dartmouth Rink, Halifax Wanderers' Grounds, Dalhousie University's Studley Field, Shirley Street Arena, Halifax Forum. Also, Centennial and Stadacona swimming pools, and in later years our own new gym, pool and Flyers' rink.. Of course our representative athletes also competed in their respective sports in numerous other locations throughout the Maritimes, Country and foreign lands. All through those years the fan support at these locations for all sports was great, but I must admit that the attendance at the hockey and football games was always exceptional.

Many awards and accomplishments were achieved over the years by teams and individuals,. The senior football teams won seven Nova Scotia and Maritime titles, with the 1957 Canadian Intermediate Championship as their highlight year. Fans will I'm sure remember Mike Milovick, Danny McCowell, Harvey "Moose" Mills, Wayne Fairbairn, Dale Klassen, Gord Cahill, Bill McKinney, Bruce Walker, Bill Gourley, and Clint Halfkenny to name but a few. Our hockey teams provided great entertainment for the Base. Especially in the Maritime Armed Forces Hockey League in 1957-58 where they advanced to the Canadian Allen Cup playdowns. Players to note were Lou Darche, George Saleski, Les Shatford, Kerry Briard, Stu Mingo, and Dick Beazley.

Baseball and softball teams were very prominent over the years, competing in local and service leagues about the

Province. Players of note were Fulton Zwicker, Tom White, Emery Gagnon, Dave Trinder and Dick Dupchuk. Basketball was a big favorite over the years with the likes of Dave Leclair, Ron Heath, Gord Gillies and Ron Caudle who played for the Flyers. Soccer was also a very popular activity at Shearwater. Names that stick out in my mind are Hugh Cutler, Johnny Pike and Al Ardern.

For those who liked to watch sports in the ring, boxing/wrestling bouts in the old gym were well-attended by the fans during the 1950s. Sam Johnson and Bob Matchett were boxers of renown and two wrestling "stars" were Bill (Turk) Knatchbell and Bill (Russian) Melenchuck.

With the new gym came the squash courts and this activity brought many new participants. Two regulars who I always think of are Len Sperling and John Salmond. Another gym sport that was very popular was badminton, with John Eden and Ken Brackley always active. Volleyball was one of the most successful of team sports ever to come to Shearwater. Headlining that sport were Ivor Axford and Doug Dunham, whose participation helped in the winning of numerous local, Provincial and National championships. The bowling alleys at Clarence Park were always very busy, with the likes of Ralph Glass and John Scott on the lanes.

Other successful sports activities that took place during those memorable years at the Base, were curling, track and field, broomball, water polo, swimming, figure skating, and golf. Following lists a few of those people who took part in these activities, Ed Smith, Hugh McLelland, Jim Davidson, Bob Cormier, Nancy Garapick, Tony Reaume, and Rod Lyons. One sport that was extremely popular in the carriers was deck hockey. Games between the flight deck ACs and the stokers were always "rock-im-sock-im" events. Hockey, baseball games and golf tournaments were organized when the carriers visited foreign ports. Squadron and air department personnel along with ship's company people participating.

I must say that the success of so many sport activities on the Base and in the carriers would never have happened without the efforts of the coaches, managers, trainers, equipment managers, water boys and cheerleaders. Consistently, over the years, these volunteers donated their time and individual skills to ensure that their particular sport did well. I know that all those who played and competed, appreciate their contributions.

This has been but a brief history of organized sports that were active during my days at Shearwater.. I would liked to have named more of the athletes who participated during that time, but as you readers can appreciate, space is limited. However, all of us I'm sure, have great memories of the times spent either taking part or as a spectator, when the cry of "Go Flyers Go" was ever so prevalent in and around the Base.

Rolly West

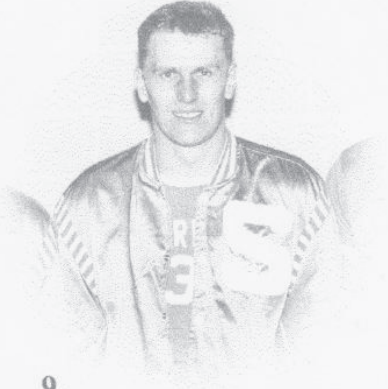
(Names for collage - pg 81.)



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5.



9.

**SHEARWATER'S
GOLDEN ERA
SPORTSMEN**



2.



6.



10.



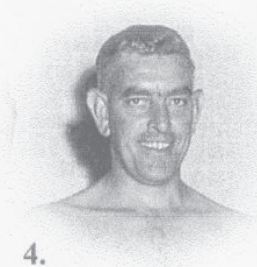
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13.



THE BANSHEE

Introduction

This article is intended as a very brief overview of the seven years of the Banshee's existence

between 1955 and 1962; its beginning, challenges, people, major activities and its retirement. The Banshee became the Royal Canadian Navy's first, and only, operational all weather jet fighter/interceptor aircraft. The article will only cover the highlights of the Banshee and its major activities.

Regrettably, space does not permit the telling of more than a couple of the thousands of stories involving the Banshee and the hundreds of people involved. A note at the end of the article will guide the interested reader to a pair of wonderful references where many of the stories can be found, and which were invaluable resources to supplement the dimming memories of the scribbler of this sketch.

The Beginning

In the late 1940's - early 1950's, naval planners turned their thoughts to a replacement for the marvellous but ageing Sea Fury. The evolving Cold War and the Korean War, along with technological advances in aviation, which dramatically increased the threat to the fleet and to Canada, dictated that a quantum leap in air defence capability for the Royal Canadian Navy was essential.

The principle attributes of a replacement fighter were decided. It must be an all weather jet powered interceptor which could be operated from shore and a Canadian aircraft carrier, and be capable of: destroying reconnaissance aircraft before they could discover the presence of the fleet; destroying attack aircraft which were attacking the fleet; and conducting ground attack activities in support of ground forces. It was assumed that the carrier based capabilities would also be applicable to land based operations.

A parallel operational requirement study into the need for a replacement aircraft carrier incorporated, amongst many other considerations, the required operating characteristics of a fighter replacement and resulted in the acquisition of HMCS Bonaventure with key new capabilities including an angled landing deck, a more robust arrestor wire system, a stabilized mirror landing aid system and a steam catapult.

The Aircraft

After a comprehensive search, the United States Navy

F2H3 Banshee was selected as the replacement aircraft. It was a development from the F2H2 which added a lengthened fuselage, allowing for a radar detection and attack system plus an increased fuel capacity. The principle drawback of the upgrade was that the engines were unchanged – the loss of performance of a much heavier aircraft with the same amount of thrust was a foregone conclusion.

It was chosen, in part, because it would be able to carry and utilize the Sidewinder missile system which was under development at the time and would be installed later. It was also a relatively inexpensive aircraft as the USN was in the process of developing a newer, faster replacement and the Banshee would be considered surplus in the not too distant future.

While the Banshee seemed to meet the minimum objectives of the operational requirement, it certainly had a number of potential drawbacks. Being a "used" aircraft, it was anticipated that there would be plenty of maintenance challenges. Also, the question of the adequacy of spare parts for the foreseeable future was a concern. And the chosen aircraft carrier replacement, HMCS Bonaventure, was seen by many as being too small for such a fast and heavy aircraft.

As to the details of the aircraft itself, it was constructed by McDonnell in St Louis, Missouri. It was a straight wing airplane powered by two Westinghouse J-34 – WE34 turbines of approximately 3,250 pounds thrust each. The crew was a single pilot. It was approximately 48 ft. long with a wingspan of some 42 ft. The rated ceiling was about 50,000 ft and it had a terminal velocity of Mach .96.

It could carry wing tip fuel tanks which widened the wing span a bit and significantly increased its range and provided endurance of nearly 3 hours. It was built for the rigours of aircraft carrier work therefore had strengthened components, folding wings and an arrestor hook. The maximum allowable all-up weight was some 27,000 pounds which, due to various limitations, especially during carrier operations, was rarely utilized.

It was equipped with a rudimentary radar acquisition and control system including a joystick which could tilt the antenna up and down. An occasionally functioning autopilot sometimes helped the pilot during radar intercepts. Its weaponry was impressive. Four 20mm cannons were embedded behind the radar dome. Up to eight wing racks could carry numerous bombs of up to 500 pounds each or an assortment of rockets. Two of the racks could be, and were later, modified to carry missiles.

The People

Enter the maintenance, logistics, aircrew and support personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy's air branch. With their long history of innovation, determination and

professionalism in the face of challenges, they determined that the Banshee would be a resounding success. And they succeeded far beyond the sceptics expectations.



Back: L-R Ray Gould, Don Dine, Eric Britnell, Ray Sherwood, Mike Matton, Doug Mortlock, Ed Larose, Bill Gratto, Dave Leclair, Jim Ramsay, Arnold Herder, Les Birks, Gord Coldham, Ed Hornseth, George Dance, Ed Smith, Fred Kuhn.

Front: L-R George Davis, Jack Iavardure, Bert Bates, Bill Bovey, Lt Gord Cummings, Norm Ellison, Frank Aquanno, Al Darwin, Charlie Cann. Missing Zock Cant - photo USN via Don Dine

The first group of Banshee maintenance personnel undertook familiarization training with the USN in Florida and North Carolina during the summer and early fall of 1955. They were led by Lt. Gord Cummings, the first Air Engineering officer of the newly equipped VF 870.

The first group of Banshee pilots trained on all weather intercept techniques and learned to fly the Banshee with USN squadrons during the summer of 1955. Most of

those pilots are shown here in a photo taken at the MacDonnell plant in St. Louis about a year later. They were led by Lt. Cdr. Bob Falls, the first RCN Banshee Commanding Officer. intercept techniques and learned to fly the Banshee with USN squadrons during the summer of 1955. Most of those pilots are shown here in a photo taken at the MacDonnell plant in St. Louis about a year later. They were led by Lt. Cdr. Bob Falls, the first RCN Banshee Commanding Officer.

The Squadrons

The first squadron to receive the new Banshees was VF 870. VF 871 changed from Sea Furies to Banshees a year or so later. Each squadron was assigned 8 aircraft. The usual good natured rivalries prevailed between the squadrons. A couple of years later, for a variety of reasons involving low serviceability, the lack of spare parts, crowding in the carrier etc. the two squadrons were melded into one, VF 870, with 12 aircraft. A Banshee was also assigned to VX 10 for modification testing and evaluation purposes.

Carrier Operations

The first few Banshees were flown by Canadian pilots from Quonset Point, Rhode Island to Shearwater in late 1955. As expected, they were in awful shape. And the only maintenance expertise was contained within VF 870.

The first few months were a frantic time of fix/test fly – fix/test fly over and over again until, finally, after superb efforts by the maintenance crew, the Base maintenance support group and Fairey Aviation, the Banshees were in fairly good shape and sported their distinctive new paint schemes. As Bob Falls said, “It was a tremendous feat of skill and dedication” for the maintenance team to get all the systems working and the aircraft flying again successfully.

Finally, by the end of 1956, the aircraft, pilots, maintainers and logistics systems were considered capable of commencing carrier operations. HMCS Bonaventure had recently been commissioned and flight deck trials had been successfully completed.

The Banshees were a tight fit on “Bonnie”. The arrestor gear was pretty well stretched to its maximum capability. At least one wire (No.6) had to be removed as the combination of the Banshee’s landing speed and weight plus the relatively short length of the landing area resulted in the very real danger of the aircraft going over the side after landing.

And the catapult was also sorely tested. Even with the aircraft fairly lightly loaded,



Lieutenant-Commander Bob Falls, Commanding Officer VF 870 Banshee Squadron, 1957. Jake Birks.

the catapult had to be pushed to its maximum and some wind over and above the ship's speed was required for a successful launch. However, flight deck operations proved to be workable, but extreme accuracy on the part of the pilots was constantly required, and the flight deck activities had to be ever so carefully orchestrated.

There were other challenges with "Bonnie". With both Banshees and Trackers, plus the rescue helicopter "Pedro" embarked, the ship was not only bulging with aircraft, requiring complex scheduling and manoeuvring to conduct flight operations, but the quantities of spares needed to compensate for frequent repairs were enormous requiring every nook and cranny of available space for storage.

Intercept Operations and The Sidewinder

The air intercept and destruction capability was the most important of the Banshee's activities. A great deal of time was expended practicing this critical task, from both Shearwater and Bonaventure. However, the aforementioned power limitations, and the lack of a serious air-to-air weapon capability seriously hampered the ability to satisfactorily perform this role.

The answer, it was hoped, lay with the Sidewinder, an infrared guided rocket missile with a range of from about ½ to 5 miles being developed for the USN. It passed its acceptance testing and was made available to the Canadian navy a couple of years after the Banshee was acquired. Proper launch racks were acquired (2 per aircraft) and fitted to the Banshee. The result was a quantum leap in the Banshee's intercept and destruction capability.

The Banshee suddenly became much more capable than the Canadian Air Force's CF 100 which was far more powerful but only had pods of conventional rockets which had to be fired at very close range. The Banshee, for the next few years, played a significant role in the protection of the North East, and routinely conducted successful interceptions against the CF 100, B 52, and B 47s.

The relatively mild weather at Shearwater occasionally resulted in the tasking of Banshees to fulfill NORADs air defence responsibilities when other airfields in both Eastern Canada and the north-eastern USA were shut down by bad weather and/or icing conditions.

The Sidewinder was normally only used as a dummy rocket (no warhead or propellant, just an active guidance system) for practice. Occasional live firings were arranged at Key West, Florida against towed targets during annual deployments for night intercept training.

One live firing, however, merits its story here. On one cruise, a Banshee ditched after a cold Catapult shot in the Irish Sea. The Banshees were offloaded and flown to the Royal Navy base at Yeovilton in southern England. The

Sidewinder was brand new and the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm were anxious to see it demonstrated. They simply did not believe its advertised capabilities.

After some debate during which the RN offered to 'rent' us some remote controlled Fairey Fireflies with infra red emitters on the wingtips to simulate jet engines, and our Naval Headquarters refused to provide any financing, the RN were so desirable to 'see it in action' that they offered three of the targets free, figuring they would only cost them a bit of gas and oil.

The first firing was a failure. The RN personnel gleefully gloated. Our investigation quickly revealed that the missile had been fired too close to the target thus the guidance system was not fully enabled until the Sidewinder had passed the target.

The next three flights were totally successful, destroying the three Fireflies with one missile each. The RN could not quite believe their eyes and offered two more targets. These, also, were totally destroyed with one missile each. At this point, the RN suddenly became believers and shut off the supply of the expensive target aircraft. We were all a very happy and proud bunch.

Ground Attack

The naval air fighters had always had an excellent working relationship with the army, and this continued with the Banshee. Ground attack sorties with guns, rockets and bombs were flown frequently at the Chezzetcook range east of Shearwater and annually at Rivers, Manitoba on annual training exercises. A number of exercises took place in CFB Gagetown and were flown from both Shearwater and Bonaventure. The aircraft proved to be a fine platform for ground support activities.



The Grey Ghosts – The Fun Part

Fighter pilots are forever anxious to demonstrate their skills to the general public as well as to their fellow military friends and families. Formation flying is one of those skills which can best be demonstrated. Accordingly, time was found in the very busy operational readiness exercise schedule for formation practice and demonstrations.

With their great color schemes, and the smoke making capabilities invented by the ever helpful technical personnel, the Grey Ghosts, as they soon became known, were a great morale booster for squadron personnel and a hit with the public. The Grey Ghosts, while never organized as a permanent aerobatics team, became well known, and were widely respected, particularly in Atlantic Canada, but also in many parts of Eastern Canada.

Other Activities

Many other flight activities were conducted by the Banshees. Air to air combat (including dog-fighting) was constantly practiced. Air to air gunnery was an occasional treat. Low level navigation exercises were necessary to support ground attack activities. Instrument flying was constantly practiced. Instrument rating re-qualifications, safety drills and survival training were regular features of the readiness training.

The list seemed endless and the requirements of the operational readiness standards required seemingly endless repetition. Throughout all, the technical crews and logistical staffs were sorely challenged to provide sufficient hours, but they came through magnificently.

The Sad Part

Flying fighter aircraft and conducting carrier operations are both inherently dangerous occupations and the combination can be even worse. We lost some very fine people to quite a few deadly Banshee accidents, and nearly lost quite a few more.

The causes were numerous. Mechanical failure (a wing broke off during a high speed low pass) killed one pilot. Oxygen deprivation at altitude caused a death and the loss of the aircraft. A flight deck accident killed another. An instrument malfunction (compass) is thought to have resulted in the loss of a pilot. Pilot error also resulted in a few deaths. A flight deck crewman died when the cannon of a Banshee on the flight deck went off while being cleared after a gunnery exercise.

Bird strikes, slippery runways, slippery flight decks and pilot error resulted in several accidents from which the pilots, fortunately, escaped. And, of course, any flight deck activity on an aircraft carrier is always considered an accident waiting to happen. For example, the previously mentioned cold catapult shot at night resulting in the loss

of the Banshee, but the safe recovery of the pilot. However, these dangers were always considered present and were taken into account. The Banshees continued to operate fairly successfully.

The Ending

All good things must come to an end. In the early 1960s, it was becoming more and more apparent that the overcrowding of Bonaventure seemed to be becoming more and more of a challenge. The Banshees were becoming more and more difficult to maintain as it was getting older and parts were more difficult to come by. And technological advances of potential enemy aircraft were indicating a further quantum leap in the operational requirements for a fighter/interceptor.

Not the least of the concerns, by far, was the obvious conclusion that, to operate a bigger and better fighter, a far larger, more capable and, of course, far more expensive (to acquire and operate) aircraft carrier would be a necessity.

Accordingly, the decision was made to retire the Banshee during the summer of 1962, almost 7 years since it had first arrived in Shearwater. While eminently logical, it was a sad day for those involved with fighters in the Canadian navy. In spite of its challenges, the Banshee did its job well and was much loved by both pilots and maintainers.

The Banshee did not go out quietly. It featured in a number of ceremonial fly-pasts which were seen by many in the Halifax – Dartmouth area. It also featured in not a few “beat – ups” of Shearwater for the faithful technicians and others who loved them.

One of the last events was the flight of the “Last Punch”. The squadron technical staff prepared a Banshee with as much of its weight as possible removed, gave it the smoothest wax finish possible, filled it with only about a half – hour’s worth of gas, and asked the squadron test pilot to give it a go to see if it still had some guts. Indeed it did! It climbed to over 50,000 feet very nimbly. Then, when flipped over and pointed straight down with full power, it easily reached, and stayed at, its terminal velocity of Mach .96. Further, it handled like a dream in aerobatics and the necessary high speed pass or two over Shearwater. Thus the Banshee saga ended.

There were a couple of final flights after the squadron officially disbanded. One Banshee, the Last Punch, was flown to Calgary for display in the naval museum there. Another was flown to Ottawa for display in the National Aeronautical Museum. One more Banshee was kept. It was mounted on a pedestal at Shearwater for several years until finally it was rescued from the elements and now resides in the fantastic Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Fighter aviation in the Royal Canadian Navy was no more.

Wally Schroeder

Very few Naval Aviators can say they did not know and like "The Animal". His fresh, outgoing personality charmed most of the people he encountered in his service life. Wally always saw the best in people, and took them at face value. Many stories circulate around "The Animal" and, like most stories, become embellished with time.

One such story concerns an incident in 1954 whilst at sea in "Magnificent" when VS881 Guppy Flight had a Mess Dinner. This story has already been recounted on several occasions. The authors had, however, selective recall and got their facts mixed up a bit.

This is the real story.

The forecast (by "Rabbit" Bristow, Met man) was a blanket fog or a howling gale; ideal time for Mess Dinners! The Flight at that time consisted of; Pilots, Joe Davis (RN), Flight Commander, Wally Schroeder, Weldon Payton and Tony Cottingham; and Observers, Pete Needs (RN), Ted Kieser, Pete VanFleet and Colin Macaulay. It was decided to invite "Uncle Bruce" Vibert to be our guest. The "Before" picture below was taken by Bud Service. (Pete Needs was still trying to get his cummerbund tied on).



'Before'

Much wine was consumed along with other potent potables after. At some time, Bruce was invited to stand on a coffee table to recite umpteen verses of "Rangy Nell" to the varied interest of the wardroom.

After bar closing, the party moved to M55 (6 bunk cabin aft, home of the Glorious Guppy Flight). There, more booze was consumed and the accompanying "After" Photo was taken about 3AM just before, to everyone's

surprise (including Bristow's), "HANDS TO FLYING STATIONS" was piped.



'After'

The weather was CAFB! Two Guppy crews duly reported to the briefing room giggling and a little unsteady. CDR (Air) took one look at us and we were grounded! Great, everyone went back to bed.

Next morning, Joe Davis, who had already been wrung out by CDR (Air), came to the door of M55 and proceeded to chastise the occupants about drinking at sea, being ready to fly 24 hours a day, etc. He had not, at this time, even turned on the light and everyone was in their bunks. As Joe started to repeat himself, Wally leapt up to his feet in all his naked glory and shouted, "WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR 30 BUCKS A MONTH, BILLY BISHOP?"

That is the story as recalled by one who was there, Ted Kieser.

The Guppy Flight (881) produced its share of humour during its short life, and more than a little of it was due to the wit of Wally (The Animal) Schroeder. What do you want for 30 bucks a month? Billy Bishop? - was one of the best shots. Another came at a Board of Inquiry hearing after a wheels up (or collapsed) landing at Shearwater. Wally was flying the Guppy and Ted Kieser was instructing me in APS 20 interception. We landed after a normal flight, but as we touched down at shearwater, the scanner was ground to powder as the gear collapsed and we came to a sudden stop. Ted and I were out fast, and as we turned to look at the cockpit, there was some frantic activity there, as Wally tried to make "some adjustments". One of the Inquiry Members asked Wally how or when was he aware that the landing was not going as it should. Wally's answer was sheer inspiration. He said, "I heard a very expensive noise". Right to the point! Well done, Walt. Colin Macaulay



The First Helicopter Air Detachment (Annapolis)
From 4 April to 28 November 1967

*Text Provided by J. Véronneau
Photos by Garth Gordon*

The Helicopter Air Detachment (Helairdet) joined Annapolis (commanded by Cdr Dan Mainguy) for the first time for sea duty on 26 May, 1967. The Helairdet had the distinction of being the first HS-50 detachment to join a DDH for operational duties. The members of the detachment were: *LCdr Jean Véronneau, Lt Collin Neal, Lt Loren Reynolds, Lt Norman Lovitt, and SLt Garth Gordon*. To the best of my recollection, the following is a short narrative of our accomplishments.

From 6 to 12 June we were heavily involved in a large joint USN/RCN exercise called "New Look" a fairly large anti-submarine exercise which combined many of the resources of the US and Canadian Navies on the East Coast of North America. The next significant event took place that month when we had the pleasure to take part in the Naval Assembly in the Halifax harbour from 21 to 26 June.

Our next assignment came at the beginning of July when the Annapolis, with its Helairdet embarked, escorted the



royal yacht "Britannia" which was transporting the Queen Mother on a tour of the Maritimes. At the end of it all, Annapolis paid its respect to the Queen Mother by doing a sail past while the helicopter followed with a fly past. To this day I can still see the Queen Mother standing on the quarter-deck of the Britannia waving at us through the lifting fog.

On the 26th of July, while temporarily ashore in Shearwater, I was dispatched by Annapolis to pick up a submarine crew member who was suffering from acute appendicitis. The submarine was located about 200 miles east of Annapolis, and Annapolis was about 100 miles east of Halifax. After picking up the patient, I had to make a hot refuelling stop on Annapolis prior to flying the ailing sailor to a Halifax hospital where he underwent a successful operation.

The whole of August consisted mainly of weekly periods of sea training. Then during the first week of September we sailed from Halifax to Montreal to provide a naval presence at EXPO '67. I gave one demonstration shortly after our arrival there and, a few days later, flew the helicopter back to Shearwater to do some light training while we waited for Annapolis' return.

Things were busy again in October and during the first half of November with the usual sea training. By the 18th of November our tour on the Annapolis had ended. We all returned to Shearwater and the Helairdet was disbanded.

During that period the Helairdet flew approximately 250 hours and completed over 150 accident-free landings. Needless to say, this rate of operation put a great deal of pressure on our small maintenance crew as we used the same Sea King (4030) throughout the period. They did a marvellous job of keeping us going without fail for the entire period of detachment.

Our detachment was also responsible for writing the first manual of "Standard Operating Procedures for DDH Operations". These procedures were approved by HS-50 with minor modifications.

As far as I know, our detachment was also the first to require the urgent air delivery of a Sea King spare part while we were at sea. A Tracker aircraft flew from Shearwater to deliver the part the following day. The Tracker flew alongside the Annapolis and dropped its precious cargo in the water near a waiting boat crew who had no problem retrieving the well identified floating package.

I couldn't have been prouder of our little group. Each of us did our jobs to the best of our ability applying the lessons of good airmanship, craftsmanship and seamanship we had been taught since joining the Navy as naval airmen and naval air technicians. And by doing so, we achieved very good results

throughout our period of attachment to Annapolis. And so stated Cdr Mainguy in his final report about our attachment to his ship.

But unbeknown to all of us in Naval Aviation, the Army was watching us and was getting ready to recruit many of us, naval airmen as well as naval air technicians, to help them plan, raise, develop and train the Army aviation group, that would eventually be known as 10 Tactical Air Group, that they were planning to coincidentally launch with the advent of Unification. But that's another story altogether.



The Demise of Old Yeller
by Larry Willits

Back in May of 1959, the late Sub Lt (P) Dave Matheson, LSAO Larry Willits and ABAO Claude Saindon took off into the wild blue to do a target tow for Osborne Head gunnery Range in what was known as Old Yeller, a converted Avenger TBM for Drogue towing.

After take off and on the way to the range, I proceeded to the aircraft well and started to launch the drogue. Claude then moved into the observer's seat to act as lookout. Once all was ready we started in for our run, when the aircraft began to lose power. At that time the pilot said I had better release the target and he started broadcasting MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! As I cut the target cable Claude asked what MAYDAY meant. I told him to head for the mid upper position as we were going to ditch. I then realized it was better to get him secured where he was; I then went to the mid upper, just got turned around and started to pull the shoulder straps over my head when we hit the water, so I just hung on for dear life until we settled in the water. I immediately evacuated the aircraft, pulled the life raft out, inflated it and tied it to myself and proceeded to get Claude out. He was somewhat confused, as the hatch wouldn't release due to jamming which must have happened on impact. I told Claude to kick like hell at the hatch, while I pulled. Finally

it popped open and a very relieved Claude jumped out onto the wing and into the dingy. All three of us sat and watched Old Yeller sink beneath us as we waited for our rescue. The reason we waited so long was that Dave, who usually stuttered, gave the MAYDAY perfectly, but only over the intercom.

The Gunnery Range Tower Officer saw us going down and cleared the area thinking we might crash there, but as it was we crashed far short so he went back and called the Shearwater Tower to tell them that their aircraft was down in the water south of the range. A short time later a helicopter arrived overhead. On board was "Little F" (flight operations officer) looking down on us with a puzzled look, which we found out later was because Claude and myself didn't have the proper flying gear on, a matter that was corrected a short time later.

We landed back at the base and were taken by ambulance to sick bay to be looked over by the doctor who cleared us for duty. We were served a beer then driven back to the squadron in the Base Captain's staff car. Now for Claude that meant he had an a/c ride, crashed at sea, had a dingy ride, helicopter ride, ambulance ride, served beer by the Base Captain and given a staff car ride back to work all within an approximate two and a half hour period, and this was his first time ever to go flying. Now who else could or can claim that experience?

The next day we had Young Pup (the other aircraft) ready to go for another tow, but it turned out poor Claude wasn't too happy about going up again which was perfectly understandable; so I went up by myself with another pilot and tested out the new equipment, which worked very well as it did from then on.



FIRST HELICOPTER DETACHMENT EMBARKED IN
HMCS PROVIDER *from Bob Findlay*

In May 1966, the first helicopter detachment embarked in HMCS Provider. The Detachment Commander was Lt. (P) Dan Monroe and assisted by Lt. (P) Nick Browne. The Maintenance Supervisor was P1AT Findlay (me) and P1RA Lilley, P2EA "Red" MacRae, LSAT's Dominey, Haight, Florence, and ABAT's Goller and Gavereau.

The det. had one HO4S and one fuel truck (avgas), which was parked, in the port hangar. The ship's Commander Capt. Boggild was not authorizing putting avgas in his fuel tanks. On the way to the UK we exercised with the fleet refueling, vertical replenishing, exchanging movies and delivering mail. Following about eleven days at sea, we arrived in Bootle (Liverpool) and went inside the 'locked' dock at high tide. Then, about three days later the long shore men went on strike which caused the Provider to be moved out of the 'locked port' to a pier near downtown Liverpool. The ship's company was well received by the locals, as this was the first Canadian Navy ship to visit Liverpool since WWII. Following this enjoyable stay, Provider visited Port Rush, Ireland; Bergen, Norway; Copenhagen, Denmark; and finally Portsmouth, England.

During our visit to Copenhagen, arrangements were made to top up our fuel truck. The fuel truck was parked on the flight deck and the refueller was on the jetty about forty feet below. Needless to say, there was a multitude of fire trucks and emergency vehicles with lights flashing during the uneventful crowd gathering evolution.

During our transiting in the English Channel and neighboring waters, our Detachment Commander provided ten to fifteen minute familiarization flights for ship's company personnel. Needless to say, the rapport between our detachment and the ship's company was excellent.

On our last leg sailing towards Portsmouth, our Detachment Commander was promoted to Lt. Cdr. This event was celebrated in Portsmouth by a well organized pub crawl compliments of our newly promoted Lt. Cdr. Dan Monroe.

Answers to BANSHEE Quiz

- 1 & 2 Walter Sloan
3. Jack Sloan
4. Joe MacBrien
5. Alec Fox
6. Bob Ferguson
7. Jean Veronneau
8. Ken Nicholson
9. Mac Sherman
10. Benny Oxholm
11. Frank Willis
12. Dave Tate
13. Jake Birks & Doc Schellinck

"A Cross Sticking Up Out of the Sea"

by Pat Whitby

In the summer of 1947, three of us – Jeff Harvie, Deke Logan and myself -- were sent to join the Royal Navy's Trials Unit at *RNAS Ford* in Sussex to fly the Sea Furies to gain some experience prior to reforming 803 Squadron. The Trials Unit was engaged in putting a lot of flying hours on the Sea Furies to prove out the Bristol Centaurus engine. The method was to fly the aircraft under a wide range of conditions and to do so hopefully for 300 hours. We flew up and down the south coast of England waiting for the engine to quit. One did and a Royal Navy pilot was killed. In the long run, the trials were a success and the 300-hour life was achieved. Bob McKay and Rod Lyons were the first Canadians to fly the Sea Fury and were serving with a Royal Navy Ferry Flight to *RNAS Culham*, near Oxford, and picked up aircraft from the Hawker factory for the Royal Navy as well. I had the honour of making the first flight in a Sea Fury squadron aircraft.

In September 1947, at *RNAS Eglinton*, Northern Ireland, the five of us formed the nucleus of 803 Squadron. The others were all new to the Sea Fury, hence our first task was to check the rest of the pilots out on this aircraft. This squadron, one of two that formed the 19th Carrier Air Group (CAG; the other was 825 Squadron flying the Fairey Firefly FR IV), was the first Canadian squadron of Hawker Sea Furies to be formed and was the first operational Sea Fury squadron to be formed anywhere. The CAG was ordered to *Eglinton* in order to work up to an operational level awaiting the completion of *HMCS Magnificent* in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In looking back on those days, one tends to remember the personal things – the places themselves, the trips to Packies Bar in Moville, the weekends in Buncrana, the Northern Countries Club and the Northern Countries Hotel in Derry, the living conditions at *Eglinton* with the living sites so far from the baths and the Wardroom, the food and our difficulty in adapting (I can still remember the large field of Brussels sprouts beside the Wardroom and watching all winter as we slowly ate our way across it), the parties and fellowship among us and the personal things (I met my wife there), and of course the flying.

Throughout this period we had experienced engine problems which we finally concluded were caused by fouling of the plugs in the bottom pots if not properly cleared after taxiing. Until we learned this there were a few shaky take-offs. A more serious problem arose when Jim Hunter, while practising for an air display at *Eglinton*, had a complete engine failure over the airfield at low altitude and with his canopy covered with oil carried out a forced landing on the edge of the airfield. That confirmed our view that without power the Sea Fury had all of the gliding characteristics of a brick. It turned out that one of the sleeve valves had failed and had subsequently been struck by the big end coming around, with catastrophic

results. This turned out to be a serious problem in the future of the Sea Fury's engine. The Centaurus was basically a bomber or transport engine, and the sleeve valve was fine in that arrangement. But in the fighter aircraft arrangement, with frequent and sometimes large power adjustments, lubrication and temperature variations were critical to the sleeve valve functioning. Valve failures in standard radial engines were not normally catastrophic, but in the sleeve valve they generally resulted in a noise and oily seizure of the machinery. It was a long time before this was satisfactorily fixed.

During the time that we were doing our thing in *Eglinton*, Jim Hunter had spent some time in southern England getting deck landings with the RN and consequently spent a lot of time away, leaving us to our own devices. Even though away, he was never forgotten. He set high standards for us all and expected that they be met and maintained. This included strict R/T discipline, and I can remember once being up with three others, knowing that Jim was far away to the south. We must have gotten careless, because suddenly, faintly out of the ether came a short message in a familiar voice: "This is Niner Niner – SHUT UP." We did.

At about this time, Jim and Jeff Harvie worked out a scheme to fly two Sea Furies back to Canada via Iceland. It was perfectly feasible in terms of range, etc, but the Powers That Be in Ottawa refused permission.

During the fall of 1947, we were primarily concerned with learning to operate the Sea Fury properly and in developing our skills as pilots on them. Consequently, we did a lot of formation flying and fighter tactics. We did a very limited amount of cine camera work and some air-to-ground firing, but nothing like the amount we should have. No air-to-air firing at all. We also had to prepare for the deck and ran a program of ADDLs. This was interesting since there was little knowledge of the subject as far as the Sea Furies were concerned.

Not long after 803 formed, the Royal Navy formed a Sea Fury squadron at *Eglinton* and there were some interesting comparisons to make. For example, there was a lot of interest being generated over the question of the best approach speed for deck landings. The RCN arrived at a speed of 95 knots and the RN had decided on 90 knots. Both of these speeds were at or near the "dirty" stalling speed, and the RN's lower speed provided some interesting spectacles. At those speeds, the flying was a bit tricky and I can remember watching the RN types literally staggering around the circuit and making some horrendous arrivals. They finally came around to the RCN's way of thinking and they were much safer. The Sea Fury was pretty good at that speed, but one had to be careful when suddenly applying power to go around again because with that big five-bladed prop the torque was

fierce and the aircraft tended to rotate in the opposite direction.

During this time our only serious accident was Bob McKay's bail-out. He and Jimmy Pulfer had been doing a chase-me-charlie over Rathlin Island (northeast corner of Ireland) when they came together. The damage to Pulfer's aircraft was slight, but McKay's would not fly and he was forced to bail out. He was not quite sure what happened, but thought that after some judicious kicking, he was ejected. In the process he injured his arm and shoulder and was not able to fly thereafter. He landed in the sea and was observed by Pulfer to be OK. He was quickly rescued by some Irish fishermen and returned to us. That was the first time we had an idea that the Sea Fury was going to be a brute to get out of when in dire straits. Bob McKay was the only Canadian Sea Fury pilot to successfully bail out of a Sea Fury.

We had barely settled in when we were asked to put in appearances at a couple of RAF stations for Battle of Britain ceremonies, one in Northern Ireland and the other at Jurby on the Isle of Man. I took the Jurby job and Deke Logan went off to the other one. We were looked upon as something of celebrities since the Sea Fury was still a rare bird. I arrived at Jurby on the morning of the day, along with an RN fellow called "Porky" Meadowcroft in a Barracuda. At the briefing, the CO of Jurby told us all that there were to be no aerobatics so Porky and I worked out a skit where he would fly past the crowd as slowly as possible all "dirtied up," wearing a great long muffler with his crewman in the back flying a large White Ensign while I went by as low and fast as I could. No one had seen the Sea Fury before and when I was taxiing out for the take-off I was recalled because the tower thought that a panel had fallen off. However, it was only the cooling shutter open. In any event, I managed to pass the Barracuda at the appointed spot after the Spitfires and such had their go, and was doing 455 knots which was the fastest I had ever gone. As I started the pull-up I pushed the stick over to the right, forgetting about the assisted ailerons and went around very rapidly about six times before I could cage my eyeballs.

Others were not so fortunate. On 17 January 1948 at the Winter Experimental Establishment, Gerry Quarton was killed piloting a Sea Fury. He was one of the original 33 ex-RCAF pilots that formed 803 Squadron at *RNAS Arbroath*, Scotland in the spring of 1945. He decided to leave the Navy in late 1945 and returned to Canada. He subsequently rejoined the RCN not long before he was killed. He did indeed miss on a loop. Apparently, he was only about a foot too long, since only the prop actually struck the ground; but with the high speed involved, the gross imbalance created by that big prop with damaged blades caused the aircraft to literally vibrate to pieces and it was spread over a large area.

In the spring of 1948 we went down to *Yeovilton* to do some work with the British Army in artillery-spotting in pursuit of our expanding role in Army co-op work. While there we had an unfortunate incident when one of our ground crew (Alford) was struck by a prop while starting aircraft and was seriously and permanently injured. In April we left *Eglinton* with a glorious flypast at very low level and made our way to Belfast where we were hoisted aboard *Magnificent* and set out for Halifax. The squadron returned to Canada in *Magnificent* in the early summer (June) of 1948 and were based at the Naval Air Section at RCAF Station Dartmouth. Upon arrival we expected to fly off but the weather was against us and only one aircraft got off (Bird) and thus the *Sea Fury* arrived in Canada. We thought we had a pretty good aircraft and were anxious to see how it stacked up against the Grumman Bearcat operated by the USN. I think we had the better aircraft. It's little known and not likely acknowledged by the RCAF that during those early *Sea Fury* days the RCN had the only operational fighter squadron in the country.

I remember Jim Hunter and myself flying off the carrier just north of Bermuda and heading for *Shearwater*, a long jaunt over a lot of water. We had a long trip to Wakeham Bay in Ungava and a cessation of all flying because the carrier fuel system was contaminated. When we went on the southern cruise in the spring of 1949, I was on my personal swan (easy duty) as Jim Hunter's permanent Number Two. I had recently returned from the School of Naval Air Warfare course in the UK and so took on a role of developing plans for various exercises during the cruise. I had no duties but to fly with Jim every time he flew (and he loved to fly) and to plan and write the orders for some CAG exercises. On one occasion I was leading the eight *Sea Furies* for the morning flight so I was first off and "Doc" Schellinck was next as my Number Two. It was a grand day; we were about 10 miles west of Nevis which was clearly visible. As I climbed out expecting to see seven *Sea Furies* all swinging up to join me, I was surprised to see no *Sea Furies* and the ship stopped, with the destroyer stopped not far away as well. I was finally informed by the ship that "Doc" had been recovered and was OK. I flew around enjoying the spectacular scenery for 30 minutes or so and finally we got the morning task done. Interestingly enough, one of the pilots who had been in the morning range decided after seeing "Doc" disappear over the side that he was no longer interested in that kind of occupational pursuit and declined to fly. The Air Group Commander, not wanting any kind of rot to set in, had the gentleman involved out of the ship that afternoon. He shortly thereafter left the Navy and lived happily ever after.

The strike on *HMS Jamaica*, *HMCS Ontario* and Red Force on 14 March 1949 was another interesting morning

in which I happened to participate. As an aside here, bear in mind that the only aircraft on the carrier were *Furies*; we had no recce aircraft on board. Anyway, about eight of us were sent off to scout to the southwest out to 200 miles for the opposing force. We were spread out on a line about a mile between us and flying above about a 8/10 deck of stratus without much hope of any luck when suddenly, right on ETA, there they were through a small hole. We were very pleased with ourselves, made the appropriate sighting report, and a strike was launched.

The ship subsequently made her way to Colon in the Panama Canal Zone where we had a bit of a run ashore – the less said about that, the better! The interesting point here is that after we left to go about our business, we obtained permission from the Americans – a unique case – to fly over the entire length of the canal, so Jim Hunter and I had a rare view of the whole thing.

On the night of 21 March 1949 I had a vivid dream of a cross sticking up out of the sea. The next morning I had just stepped out onto the quarter deck and there framed through the ship's side and silhouetted against the early eastern sky was the tail of a *Sea Fury* sticking up vertically out of the sea exactly as I had seen the night before. Of course, it was J.J. MacBrien, who was alright. I have not had that experience before or since, and can't account for it. I think I mentioned before the nasty tendency of the *Sea Fury* at low speed and high power to want to rotate one way while the big 13-foot, five-bladed prop went around the other way.

The 1949 trip to *CJATC Rivers* was another interesting interlude for us. We fitted the long-range tanks which gave us over three hours in the air. Sitting on those dinghy packs for three hours was not fun – they were carried for safety, not comfort. We duly set off for the far west and were doing nicely on the first leg just past Montreal, near St. Eustache -- a closed WW2 EFTS, in fact -- when Johnny Runciman abruptly dropped from the formation and landed unscathed in a farmer's field with a dead engine. The farmer's first words to Johnny were, "Why didn't you land on the airfield over there?" That was the first of a series of engine problems that led to our being grounded when we arrived at *Rivers*. We had gone there to do some training in Army co-op and ended up doing a bit of work in some Harvards they had there, and finally in some Army Austers after we were able to convince the pongos that their airplanes would be safe in our hands.

Finally, it was arranged that we would do the "jump" course. George Marlow, one of the RCN pilots, was on exchange duty at *Rivers* and had done the full course. He was to take us through the thing, the difference being that we would drop into Lake Wasagaming since water would likely be our landing area for real. We went through the whole thing, running and all, but just before the big day HQ

vetoed the idea. I think it fair to say that that was one HQ decision not taken too hard by us peasants in the field. There is an interesting photo of the bunch of us all rigged out as paratroopers, helmets and tight harness prominent, as were all the family jewels. They did insist on the harness being tight!

Fundamentally, oil pressure problems and coring were the cause of the engine failures and the subsequent grounding of the Sea Furies. Modifications were made to the Centaurus engine for fighter use, that is, higher oil pressure and bigger pipes, thus eliminating overspeeds, engine seizure and coring. The aircraft were then flown back to *Shearwater* in November 1949.

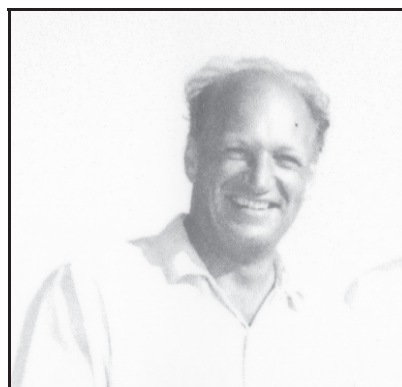
The Middle East Furies did not have these failures. As it turned out, they never flew their Furies as real fighters, but only got to full power on take-off and landing – otherwise it was straight and level. The Centaurus engine was installed in the Bristol Freighter, the Brabazon and other commercial aircraft without any apparent problem. Obviously, when the engine was used as a fighter engine as were the Rolls Royces, etc, something had to give until it was basically rectified. The test pilot for Bristol, who was at *Rivers* after repair and mods of the aircraft, was Frank Murphy who, although slightly crippled, could make that Sea Fury sing.

On 3 July 1949, M. (Butch) Hare disappeared while ferrying Sea Fury TF 997. Butch was the Naval Test and Liaison Officer at Avro in Malton while they were doing the Fury overhauls, and was bringing one back to the coast. He stopped at Quebec City and put on an informal airshow after take-off, then set out for *Shearwater* without refuelling, thereby starting out with a serious fuel shortage. The weather was also marginal at the time. It was a late Friday afternoon, because I remember we were sitting around the crewroom at the Training Air Group in our smelly flying suits having completed the week's work, and anticipating the upcoming visit to the Wardroom when the phone rang. We were ordered off to *RCAF Station Greenwood* immediately with all serviceable Harvards to assist in the search. We were in *Greenwood* several days flying back and forth twice a day across the Bay of Fundy and up into New Brunswick, without success. We almost got used to the smelly flying suits, having had to live in them for several days before our logistics caught up with us.

The Sea Fury was a good aircraft and a great machine to fly. There were difficulties in terms of engine problems and there were fatalities regrettably, but it was the ultimate piston-engined fighter and consequently demanding and unforgiving. Operating from the deck of the Light Fleet

Carrier was always right at the limit – indeed, it was as nearly impossible as was the Banshee/Bonaventure combination of subsequent years. The fact that it was done says something for the skill and drive of those that did it. The one thing missing in the Sea Fury, it seems to me, was some kind of ejection seat such as the FW 190 had. Might have saved some lives.

A final anecdote to illustrate the point about the tight fit on the carrier: a parliamentary committee on defence had decided to see us operate, so they arrived in Halifax and we laid on a day trip in *Maggie* for them to see some flying. We were only a few miles off the coast and launched eight Sea Furies to do a fighter direction exercise and then land on and go home. In the time-honoured tradition, the MPs quickly found their way to the Wardroom and the bar, and were not interested in anything else. In the fullness of time, the aircraft were back in the circuit and the word was passed, but by the time the MPs finished their drinks the aircraft were all down. This caused some consternation and so we decided to launch one aircraft just to do a quick circuit and landing for the MPs' edification. Stu Soward had been last down and so was easiest to launch. Off he went and on landing things didn't go quite right and he ended up in the barrier. Afterwards one of the visitors asked, "How long do you have after you realize you've missed the wires and are going to hit the barrier?" Stu quickly said, "Well, sir, how long does it take to say, "Oh shit?"



Shearwater 1958 -59 and 60

***Captain Robert Welland
Commanding Officer***

In the summer of 1958, when I arrived on the Station it had already been developed to a high level of operational efficiency, there was little to do in getting more of the vital things, aircraft, runways, hangars and housing, those had been accomplished over the 15 years beginning in

1943 when the Canadian Naval Air Arm was initiated – principally by admirals Nelson Lay and Harry DeWolf.

In 1958 the Shearwater complex was a major Nova Scotian industrial and operational enterprise: the Navy had 105 aircraft on the Station, 700 married quarters, 600 sailors living in a new high rise building, two churches. Four airlines operated from its runways, the major one being Trans Canada Airlines flying North Stars, Viscounts, Vanguard and the Trans Atlantic three-tailed Boeing's, Shearwater to London direct. Counting everyone who lived or worked on the Station we numbered about 5,000. I was proud to be the Captain.

Visitors were a large part of my activity; all aircraft carriers and other big ships secured at our 1,000 foot wharf, which involved me in official visits, sports and parties and great fun it was. A visit by the Royal Navy carrier, Bulwark, is a memorable event. Well before she arrived our Commander Air, Hal Fearon, organized a mock battle between the carrier's fighters, DeHavilland Vixens, and our Banshees as the ship approached Halifax. I wanted to take part and was loaded into the back seat of a T33 with Ray Creery flying it. The fighters, about 20 total, met a hundred miles off-shore and took on one another, flipping between 10 feet off the water to 20,000 feet and back. It went on for an hour but seemed longer. At one point a Vixen flew under our T-bird when we were only about 30 feet off the sea; at the debriefing the English pilot claimed a kill! Ray said that he'd shot down that particular Vixen down half an hour before! It was agreed that both sides won. I recall another visitor. My phone rang and a foreign voice asked if I was the Captain of Shearwater, he said he was calling from Moscow. He said he was the president of the airline Aeroflot and one of his planes would like permission to land. I asked "When?" and he said "In about an hour, it is bound for Cuba but has engine trouble." I said his plane would be welcome and we'd help out. In spite of the Cold War running hot at this time I had a soft spot for Russians, they treated me and my ship, Haida, well in Murmansk in 1944, and the second reason was that I knew we were obliged by international treaty to receive any aircraft in distress. We had a good phone system and I switched the boss of Aeroflot direct to our control tower and told the controller, Lt. Harry Swiggum, to oblige the Russian. About an hour later the big plane. An Ilyushin 18 came into view with the port outer propeller stopped; it landed smoothly and taxied up to our ramp.

The president of Aeroflot had told me that the plane was carrying Mr. Mikoyan, Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union and would I look after him. I recognized Mr. Mikoyan's name as he was frequently in our newspapers on the subject of Cuba (four years later the Cuban missile crisis nearly brought on WW3) and said I would look after him and his party. About 20 people preceded Mr. Mikoyan down the ramp (owned by

TCA); I saluted him and said who I was. He said, with a big grin, and in English, "I cause you trouble Yes?" I gave a one word reply "Yes". He translated our conversation for his group who all burst out laughing. So we were off to a good start. We had our Soviet guests for about eight hours; the various messes looked after the party and I looked after Mr. Mikoyan and his chief of staff; Stephanie laid on a couple of meals in our house and he amused our children – by teaching them Russian. Cdr. Spike Morris, head of engineering and his crew repaired the engine, flew for a brief test hop, fueled the plane and had them on their way. Some weeks later I got a personal letter from Mr. Mikoyan, he ended it with, "I cause you trouble , Yes?"

Shearwater's prime task was to provide our fleet with fighting aircraft and all the support that entails. Throughout 1958, 59 and 60, Shearwater was the home of nine squadrons; VS 880 was equipped with 12 submarine hunting Trackers and commanded by Cdr. Dickie Bird and later by Cdr. Buck Buchanan; VS 881 also had 12 Trackers and commanded by Cdr. Hal Fearon and later by Cdr. Pappy McLeod. These two squadrons rotated through the carrier Bonaventure in turn. There were two fighter squadrons, VF 870 with 8 Banshees commanded by Cdr. Bob Falls and later by Cdr. Wally Walton. Squadron 871 also with 8 Banshees was commanded by Cdr. Jeff Harvey and later by Cdr. Bob Laidlaw. Then there was an operational helicopter squadron, HS 50 equipped with eight submarine hunting Sikorskys; six of these helicopters were normally on board Bonaventure and were being introduced to the new operational destroyers, the CO was Lt. Cdr. Roger Fink and later Lt. Cdr. Duke Muncaster.

The support squadrons consisted of VT 40 that had a mixed bag of planes and provided training and logistics; it had a couple of Harvards (that trained me) a couple of Beechcraft, several jet T33's and other types depending on needs, including target-towing for the fleet's anti-aircraft weapons. VT 40 main task was to convert pilots from one type to another, eg. fighter pilots to Trackers. The CO was Lt. Cdr. Whitey McNicoll for most of the period. The support squadron for the helicopters was VU 32, it also provided helicopters for the icebreaker Labrador and for the gunnery and radar schools in the Stadacona base. Lt. Cdr. Hal Welch was the CO for part of my time.

Then there was VX 10, an experimental squadron responsible for new developments and sorting out faults in existing systems. VX 10 had a mix of planes, but always a Banshee or two and also Trackers. I flew with Lt. Cdr. Jack Sloan on an occasion of experimenting with firing six 5 inch rockets in one salvo (the discharge burnt the wing boots), I also flew with Lt. Cdr. Doc Schellinck in the release of simulated atomic depth charge for which VX 10 had wired the aircraft. I flew many miles with

Lieutenant Gordie Edwards in the T33's, Shearwater to Bermuda in two hours; to Ottawa in one. Admiral Hugh Pullen was a frequent passenger in our Beechcraft when he toured his huge command; he enjoyed taking the controls.

Shearwater was a place of many parts and probably the Captain and Executive officer were the only officers to visit them all; no-one else had any reason to. Out of the way places included ammunition bunkers at Renous filled with bombs, rockets and torpedoes; an out-of-the-way emergency airport, Debert; the sand dunes of Rivers Manitoba where our Banshee fighters co-operated with the Army; and at Gagetown, New Brunswick every year when we performed live bombing and rocketry to introduce our soldiers to air-strike realities. For my time in Shearwater, Major David Gill lived on our Station to train our pilots in Army Co-op; he also provided colour at our dances and balls in his red/gold military finery. He also arranged that I got a shot at driving a 40 ton Centurian tank!

Commander Bob Timbrell was the XO when I arrived and remained so for about six months and was of great help to me in learning my way about. Bob was relieved by Cdr. Johnny Dawson who I in turn introduced to the Station. Johnny was relieved by Cdr. Peter Chance who saw me off in the summer of 1960 when Captain Tom Pullen took over the job. Tom and I had joined the Navy the same day in 1936; he was well known in Shearwater, he had been Captain of Labrador which used Shearwater's helicopters on risky missions in the Arctic (two still reside on an icy hilltop!)

I left Tom with a minor problem; Ottawa had accused me of using our heavy equipment - tractors, graders, trucks - to build an unauthorized golf course (It was really a 300 yard, dogs-leg left, military obstacle training course!) and would I explain. Tom and his successors, and hundreds of volunteers, managed to build 18 obstacle courses and the heavy equipment sure came in handy – its now called it Hartlen Point!

Shearwater was a hub in the great military organization, NATO, that had developed to counter Soviet hostile behavior beginning just after WW2 ended. Canada's Navy, Army and Air Force were already powerful in 1958 and equipped with the most modern weapons; our Army had two fighting brigades deployed in Germany and equipped with the most up to date weapons. The RCAF had fighter squadrons on the front line in Germany facing the Soviets only jet-minutes away. In Canada the Air Force CF100's patrolled our northern skies, sharing the air space with Soviet Bear bombers that ranged across the Arctic and into the Atlantic. Soviet submarines, some equipped with nuclear tipped rockets prowled the sea off Nova Scotia and New York and our ships and aircraft made a point of sharing it with them. That was an interesting time to

be a Canadian; people, now 60, will remember being taught as school kids to hide under their desks when the sirens sounded.

We who lived and worked in Shearwater in those interesting times were an important part of our great Alliance. Our Canadian armed forces had their weaponry in a high state of readiness and were willing to use it - and that in the end defeated the Soviets without a single bomb being dropped. Many of us "old timers" regret the fading of Shearwater but we ought not to – we did our job so well that it has become less important.



No 1 Drone Target Unit and Porte St. Jean
by Bill Hogg P1RA retired

I was posted to No 1 Drone target Unit in the summer of 1956. Our hanger was located on the lower station, HMCS Shearwater, close to the water. I was posted to the RadioSection and do remember a number of people from that posting. Those I remember are- Lt Cdr Sands, POs Stu Beakley, Pedro Welsh, Al Ascroft, Art Corrigan, Rip Adams, John Wiley, Carl Wright, Roger Braun, Chief Stevensen, Lts Jeff Newman, Dave Matheson, CPO Frank Busch, Owen Walton, AL Lessard.

The Drones were flown at Osborne Head Gunnery Range. During this posting we went aboard HMCS Porte St. Jean to operate with the fleet off Bermuda for long periods of time. It was important to keep the Electronic Equipment in good order as the salt spray was our worst enemy and

there was plenty of it around when at sea. I was quite concerned with the transmitter and our blade antenna. Our blade antenna was fitted to a circular ground plain, for proper wave pattern lobe form and both fitted to the top of our forward mast. After flying the Drones for some time I noticed a couple of Drones popped their parachutes for no apparent reason.

I suspected the blade antenna and as we were going to dock at the American Navy Base, I decided to check the antenna there. Once tied up at the Navy Base I put the safety belt on and went up the mast. With the safety belt on I was able to lean out, remove the antenna, clean it up.

I found it loaded with salt, treated it with Dow Corning Compound, put it back together and re install it on the mast.

The transmitter was mounted on a 24Volt trolley, the trolley was placed on the deck aft of the open bridge by the funnel, and lashed to fittings on the deck. We had lots of salt spray in this location. We had a canvas cover for this unit but I felt the need for more protection for the transmitter. I found the perfect solution. Before we were going to leave for a long stay in Bermudian waters I would go to Medical Stores in Dockyard and draw a gross of condoms to use on the transmitter plugs. At the end of flying each day I would slip the condom over the plugs and had no more worries about salt spray getting into the transmitter electrical plugs.



Gordon Edwards, Rear Admiral (P) (Rtd)

The “Best” Terrible Accident I ever Witnessed!

Yes, that is a more than contradictory title for this short description of a very near aircraft tragedy onboard a US Aircraft Carrier. It of course needs explanation.

This all happened onboard USS Intrepid in July, 1960, when I was on fighter exchange with the USN, flying F4D Skyrays in Squadron VF74. We were assigned to USS Intrepid for a year to do very special all weather and electronic warfare trials in a carrier environment.

At the same time, another pilot on the squadron, Lt. Norris Price, USAF, was also on exchange, certainly a rarity to have two exchange pilots on one squadron. In a funny way, I was MORE accepted than Norris, perhaps because of USN/USAF rivalry. And so, Norris and I became close friends.

And to set the scene, there we were on the deck of USS Intrepid, lining up for our turn on the catapult. Norris was immediately ahead of me, and as soon as he would be shot off I would move up to the catapult to be shot off right after him.

I was watching his launch, which at first seemed to be a normal Cat Shot, but then I noticed that the catapult fitting had broken loose and flew right into the back of his aircraft just as he left the deck. The Skyray was immediately on fire.

Next thing I saw was the aircraft pull up, getting to about 100 feet before starting down, and then hitting the water with a big explosion. But what was NICE to see was a parachute come down amidst all of that. Norris was taken from the water almost without a scratch, but of course somewhat shaken up.

But the real twist to this story is the fact that on this fateful day, our aircraft were being fitted with what was called a “Zero Delay Lanyard” and this was a fitting that hooked between a hook on the seat and to the parachute cord, thus meaning that a pilot would have instant release from the seat upon ejecting, and then immediate opening of the parachute.

That morning, when Norris was taxiing towards the catapult, he noticed that he did not have the Zero Delay Lanyard, thus he stopped and called to a crewman to get him one. This was of course holding up the launch, much to the consternation of the Air Boss, never very patient with this kind of event, causing delay to the overall launch. However, Norris persevered and got the lanyard, fitted it and the rest is history. That ONE small action saved his life.

Thus, it was a VERY bad day that turned out just fine. We were a happy squadron that evening, and believe it or not, someone managed to find a bottle of whisky in an otherwise “dry” ship.

RCN AVIATION 1945-1970

When first formed in 1945, the nucleus of Canadian aircrew personnel consisted primarily of a number of experienced Canadians serving in Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. An additional source came from many ex-RCAF pilots who had recently joined the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm, and subsequently transferred to the RCN when the Canadian Naval Aviation Branch was established. Air maintenance training for Canadian naval personnel with the Royal Navy was already underway, with the two Royal Navy escort carriers, manned to a considerable extent by Canadian maintenance personnel, to be part for the planned RCN force in the Pacific. By December 1945, nearly 500 Canadians were undergoing air training in the United Kingdom.

Four "Canadianized" squadrons were formed, two squadrons of Seafires and two Firefly squadrons. In January 1946, the first fully manned Canadian (CVL) Light Fleet Class carrier HMCS Warrior was commissioned and in March 1946 arrived in Canada with two squadrons embarked, 803 (Seafire) and 825 (Firefly). On a personal level, I felt particularly fortunate at that time to be a very junior Sub. Lt. pilot in 825 squadron when my carrier flying career began. At the same time a small RCN Air Section, a shore base for the embarked squadrons, had been established at the RCAF Station at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. This was to become the home of Canadian Naval Aviation for the next 25 years.

Although the early Seafires and Fireflies served well, newer and more suitable carrier aircraft were required and the Seafire and Firefly aircraft squadrons were replaced by the Sea Fury and later a MK 5 Firefly respectively. The role of the Firefly was now changed to Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and the new Sea Fury fighter, with its excellent performance, was particularly effective in the role of Fleet Air Defence. The Air Branch continued to expand and by 1.950 the two ASW squadrons began to re-equip with the USN wartime Avenger, which carried a crew of three was an excellent all-weather day and night carrier ASW aircraft, which was further enhanced with improved sonobuoy stowage and the addition of other essential sensors. The acquisition of the Avenger greatly increased the overall effectiveness of the Air Branch through its ease of maintenance and proven reliability. Although limited to a small CVL class carrier, the reputation and expertise of the Air Branch continued to grow. The calibre of the technical branch was outstanding with ever increasing standards of aircraft serviceability being achieved. In many instances RCN Aviation carrier operations, with other NATO navies, invariably outperformed them and established a reputation second to none.

By 1954 the Air Station, which was commissioned HMCS Shearwater in 1949, was a thriving naval air base comprising: four first line squadrons of two Sea Fury squadrons, VF 870 and VF 871 and two ASW squadrons

of Avengers consisting of VS 880 and VS 881. Two fixed wing second-line squadrons consisting of VU 32 and VT 40 provided fleet support, logistics, training, and transport utilizing various second-line aircraft. In addition, VU 33 was established on the West Coast to offer the same support services to the Pacific Command. One particularly important new squadron formed in 1953 was VX 10. This experimental and development squadron was unique insofar as it reported directly to the Air Technical Services Branch at Naval Headquarters and was responsible for testing, modification and development of aviation equipment as new aircraft were brought into service for the Air Branch. In 1955 advanced jet conversion and training was provided with the addition of T33 jets. HU21, a utility helicopter squadron, was also established equipped initially with the light Bell-HTL and Piasecki HUP-3 aircraft, later followed by the Sikorsky H04S. The introduction of HU21 was essential. In addition to providing a rescue capability aboard the carrier, there was great demand for a variety of training, support and rescue missions ashore. Five Reserve Naval Air Squadrons had also been established in cities across Canada. Reserve aircrew played an important role, proceeding to Shearwater annually for flying training, gaining further experience in flying operational aircraft. In the first ten years of RCN Aviation great progress had been achieved and a well organized, highly motivated, skilled and proud Aviation Branch had been created. Sadly these achievements had not been accomplished without loss of life. Over the period fifty eight officers and men, aircrew and ground crew had been killed in the performance of their duty.

In 1955 the AEW Guppy flight was formed. These aircraft, a modified Avenger were fitted with the APS20, one of the most powerful airborne long-range radar in existence. With a sweep range of hundreds of miles and a remarkably high definition, few targets could escape their detection. The same year a Reserve Squadron milestone of sorts took place in August as VC 920 Reserve Squadron pilots from Toronto, flying Avengers, successfully conducted deck landings qualification aboard HMCS Magnificent as part of their summer training.

In 1956 the first Canadian-built Tracker was delivered and the re-equipping of the ASW squadrons began. Flying intensity had continuously achieved new levels and long gone were the early problems of the late forties where personnel shortages and lack of spare parts considerably hampered the development of the Canadian Naval Air Branch.

In 1957, the most significant modernization of equipment was the replacement of Magnificent by HMCS Bonaventure. Although a Light Fleet Class, the addition of an angled deck, steam catapult and mirror landing aid, Bonaventure's operational capability and flexibility was greatly increased. The new Grumman Canadian-built ASW Tracker aircraft, and the McDonnell Banshee jet fighter which also came into service, provided a quantum

improvement in combat effectiveness. Unfortunately budget restrictions took place in 1959 and squadron reductions began. The two Banshee squadrons were reduced and combined. The two Tracker squadrons reformed as VS 880 with twenty four aircraft divided into two divisions and a system of alternating between sea and shore duty was established. This resulting organization became operationally most productive. It was a source of great pride to me as Officer-in-Charge of the twelve-plane carrier detachment in the summer of 1961 to work with such an outstanding and dedicated group of men. The air technicians worked long and hard hours, often under difficult, and uncomfortable conditions, yet they always met their task. The aircrews carried out their heavy flying program, conducting accident-free sustained flying operations around the clock. These achievements were a true measure of the remarkable increase in performance and reliability that had been attained over the years.

As the Banshees were disbanded in 1962, the new Sea King ASW helicopters came into service. This turbine-powered aircraft provided an all weather, powerful addition to the fleet. With destroyer escorts being equipped with the Sea King and six others operating from the carrier, the ASW forces of the RCN were able to achieve a remarkable improvement in flexibility and tactics. With the Sea King combined with the varied weapons and sensors of the Tracker, the two squadrons developed a close knit tactical operational team which became the operating standard for Bonaventure and her screen of helicopter-equipped destroyers. For the next seven years, in spite of an extended refit to Bonaventure, the Naval Aviation squadrons continued to increase in their operational effectiveness as new sensors and improved tactics were developed. During the on-going NATO ASW exercises Bonaventure, her aircraft and the destroyer screen was a well established "cold war" ASW asset, often setting the operational standard.

Although there had been unsubstantiated rumours of coming reductions in the strength of the fleet, current operations would continue unabated. It came to a humiliating climax on the night of September 20, 1969. Bonaventure was in the midst of a major NATO exercise when suddenly a CBC short wave radio broadcast announced that the carrier would be retired from service. Even Maritime Commander Vice Admiral O'Brien was not given the courtesy of advance notification. The demise of the carrier sounded the death knell for VS 880 one of the finest ASW Tracker squadrons to serve aboard a carrier. The requirement for shore-based fixed-wing supporting air squadrons was short-lived. The naval aviation infrastructure so painstakingly established would be methodically dismantled. By 1970, Canadian Naval Aviation, a proud, dedicated and successful force was effectively gone. The total number of lives lost over the twenty five year history of the Branch was one hundred and one. They are not forgotten. Their names are inscribed forever.

*Stu Soward,
Lieutenant Cdr. RCN (Retired) December 2009.*

The SUSTOP

(From Hands to Flying Stations pg 405)

.... the Canadian ships sailed for an intensive period of workups followed by a 10 day period of SUSTOPs. This involved the carrier as part of the covering force for an amphibious exercise. In this particular phase, a rather unique success was achieved by VS880 Crew commander, SLt Ken Millar, who nailed a USN nuclear submarine.



He sighted the craft boiling through the clear water, obtained a MAD confirmation, then dumped a few practice depth charges (PDC) on it for good measure, just to let the submarine know it had been clobbered. The crews of the nuclear subs were an elite group, and the skipper, believing he was immune below the surface, was more than somewhat embarrassed to have been caught visually by a young Tracker Pilot.

(Ken tells me that after his three attacks with PDCs, the Sub Commander was so p..... off, he came up to periscope depth, then departed the exercise area .)

A SALTY DIP

What is a Salty Dip? For those readers who might be strangers to Canadian naval slang the term "Salty Dip" is jargon for the relating or describing of a usually humorous, sardonic or ironic event or incident, which has occurred involving naval personnel either on board a ship or within a barracks or some other naval environment. I have heard it argued that the term "Salty Dip" is incorrect and should actually be "Salty Dit" -- short for "Salty Ditty". Regardless, any "Dip" or "Ditty" you read or hear invariably occurred several years ago or perhaps not at all because -- as they say -- nothing is lost in translation. Readers, interested in the following discourse, will probably be "matelots" (sailors) or people who are or were services or military oriented. Therefore, early clarification of the legality, the correctness and the classification of the tale or tales being heard, are of utmost importance. For example, is the story being heard a "Salty Dip" or a "Fairy Tale"? The introductory statement should immediately inform the recipient of that important detail. For a matelot the difference between the two was instantly discernable, because we all knew that a "Fairy Tale" began "Once upon a time..." While a "Salty Dip" always started with, "This is no shit..."

Several years ago, while attending a C.N.A.G. (Canadian Naval Air Group) reunion in Winnipeg, someone suggested the numerous and humorous "Salty Dips", concerning people and past events, which we had known and had occurred during our early service years, should be documented. It was agreed that the actions of some of our Messmates; the awkward predicaments of others; along with the absurdities which we had tolerated and at which we had laughed, should not be lost. But, who could or would do the writing? Who amongst us could satisfactorily describe and document those situations which we believed so ludicrously humorous? The *raison d'être* therefore, in writing these "Salty Dips", is an attempt to fulfill that suggestion of year's ago and to capture or describe those real or imagined incidents and events which we retell and relive during our reunions.

The person relating a "Salty Dip", depending upon their vocabulary or descriptive skills, may embellish or expand the truth of the actual event. Regardless of truth, exaggeration or rumour, there is always something factual or circumstantially humorous to the story. Usually a "Dip" is both sardonic and humorous with its irony. Throughout the "Dip" either something or someone is looking silly or the circumstances are just too absurd to be real. It is that silliness and absurdity which makes it humorous. When there is absolutely no truth in the described event or in its description then it simply becomes a "Fairy Tale", a rumour, or just a "Buzz". You may not believe the "Dips" which follow. There are some however, who will swear to the truth of these occurrences.

Messmates; I do not profess to be a writer of quality. I am merely trying to serve as a collector and a relater of times

gone by. I am not attempting to convince anyone of how pleasant it was to serve in the transitional post war Canadian Navy or, to make any political statement or criticism. My intent is merely to relate a few anecdotes of our Naval Air life. Hopefully these "Dips" will bring a smile, or stir some pleasant memories which may in turn serve to remind you of how we felt early in our Naval Air careers. I believe we are all - or should be - mature enough to admit that we enjoyed each other, the laughter, the absurdities and the "bullshit".

I apologize to those whose names have been used without consent or approval. I can not request or get your permission because I do not know where you live or if you are alive or dead. One can only assume or hope you would/will not disapprove. You were willing participants and did not object to the situation when it originally occurred so why would you object now? Certain numbers or figures used in the descriptions of the 1946 R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth are estimates or general in nature. Do not discard or cease reading the remaining "Dips" because you perhaps disagree with any approximations. I assure you the estimated numbers are or were as near as "damn it" is to swearing.

Your Grand children, if and when they read or hear these "Dips" -- will probably view you with newly discovered knowledge or respect. They will recognize that you were once like them - a young, vital person. With a smile they may turn to you and say, "Granddad is this true?" "Did you guys really do stuff like that?" Therefore, to those of you - my messmates - who made the early years both bearable and unforgettable, I shall attempt to relate a couple of memories, in which, many of you were directly involved and all most certainly shared. At the time of this writing we are more than mid way through 2009. Over the years our Naval Air "thing" has changed. As we have aged the active membership in C.N.A.G. has dwindled. Attendance at the annual reunions has decreased and regretfully, many remembrances of people and past events are waning.

During the forthcoming 2010 Centennial celebrations of the Royal Canadian Navy praiseworthy historic events will be recalled and commemorated. But, what of the events which could possibly be overlooked? I ask this because perhaps the principal and most important development period which could be overlooked is the 20 year era of Canadian Naval Aviation. I say "could be overlooked" because regretfully "Naval Air" and the role we played, while significant -- or at least we thought it significant - at the time, was one which a very large percentage of the Canadian populace, plus a majority of our present Canadian armed forces personnel is totally unaware! Canada no longer has anything that might claim to be, or even resemble, naval aviation. Therefore, if you served in the Royal Canadian Naval Air branch between December 1945 and September 1966, be proud! We were and will always remain a vital piece of Canadian Naval history. You lived - you experienced - you still and you will forever

represent that period of Canada's naval history which disappeared in 1966 – more than 43 years ago!

Certain portions of this narrative contain "Naval Jargon". For those not familiar with Canadian naval life and for a better comprehension or understanding of that life with its idiosyncratic surroundings, a brief explanation or description of our habits, our expressions and practices, is probably required. Hopefully you will not find these details too boring, verbose, prosaic or confusing. However, this brief digression plus a few embellishments is necessary to either describe or explain the situation, the time of the event, plus the class distinctions which loomed large and impacted upon us daily.

A FEW DEFINITIONS

"Pussers", for example, means an official action. A "by the book attitude" or a Government issued item.

"Tiddley" refers to appearance both personal and the surrounding environment. One was wearing his "Tiddley" when dressed in his #1 uniform which was especially tailored made from good quality serge, with gold badges and medals. When one cleaned up or prepared for inspection - the person or place could be referred to as being or looking "Tiddley".

To be "Drafted" was to be transferred or "Posted" to a different ship, a different squadron or another place of duty. "Divisions" were our formal parade. Over the years, depending upon the personal preferences of our various Commanders or Captains, "Divisions" were usually a weekly or sometimes a monthly occurrence. Even the day or time for "Divisions" – Friday afternoon or Saturday forenoon – depending on the Captain or the Commander's preference - could vary. However, for "Divisions", the entire Ship's Company was "fallen in" on the parade square or tarmac in the hangar area, inspected and then "Marched Past" the saluting dais.

The "Master at Arms" along with his "Regulating Branch" personnel was the police force and prosecuting attorneys of the navy.

To "Secure" was to finish work or cease what ever one was doing.

A "Killick" is actually a wooden sea anchor and considered to be somewhat useless. Naval tradition has it however, that all Leading Seamen were referred to as "Killicks".

To "Jump Ship" was to improperly leave the ship or barracks.

One was "Adrift" if he was late for anything.

A "Black - Listman" was a person undergoing punishment which had been awarded for some misdemeanour.

The twenty-four hour clock was used to describe time. For example if it was 10 AM one said Ten Hundred or for 10:30 AM one would say One Oh Three Oh. For the same times but, after 12 noon, one described the time as Twenty-Two hundred or Twenty-Two Thirty. We did not use the term "hours" following a statement of time. The word "hours" was deemed redundant and therefore left for use in the Army or Air Force.

There were proper methods or protocols for addressing or approaching a senior person. If one wished to speak with a person senior to themselves one prefaced any opening statement with the person's rank. Chief Petty Officers were addressed as "Chief", Petty Officers as "PO", and Officers were "Sir". The only exceptions to this were if one spoke to the Master at Arms or the Coxswain. While they usually carried and wore the rank or insignia of a Chief Petty Officer, if one had occasion to speak to either, they were addressed as "Master" or "Cox'n" respectively. If someone erred and called either of them "Chief", it was not unusual to hear: "Did I hear you address me as Chief? Good Christ! You'll probably be saying Bollocks to the Commander next."

Regardless that a Gunner's Mate would turn the air blue with his descriptions of you and your actions when handing you a "blast", it was considered impolite or tactless to use certain four letter Anglo-Saxon expressions in front of, or to, a person of higher rank - especially if speaking to or while addressing an officer.

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1946, Canada had 3 navies; – one on the West Coast in Esquimalt, B.C. (referred to as the Yacht Squadron); a second - on the East Coast, in Halifax, N.S. (referred to as the Fish Head navy) and the third - R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth, also on the East Coast, 5 miles south of Dartmouth, in Eastern Passage (referred to as the Air Dales of Coward's Cove) . Some 'wag' once remarked that, "Halifax was the asshole of the world and the naval air people were 5 miles up the passage."

Regardless of our rivalries each of these navies has had its share of characters, events, incidents, stories and traditions. I doubt therefore that anyone will ever remember and/or capture all the "Salty Dips" of our now 100 year old Royal Canadian Navy. Salty Dips are told and re-told, time and time again, wherever "matelots" meet or assemble - be it in a pub (the Peacock Lounge in Halifax or the Tudor House in Esquimalt), a hotel room, a mess, or during a reunion. Every group of "matelots" whether they are from different ships, or different barracks, on the East or West Coast, have and will gladly relate their own favourite "Dips". However, the events related in this particular collection of "Dips", with the exception of two, occurred in H.M.C.S. Shearwater, between 1946 and 1966.

The 20 year period that marked the life of Canadian naval aviation. Regardless of location or time, all the stories,

with one exception, involve Canadian naval aviation "Lower Deck" personnel; the Chief Petty Officers (Chiefs), the Petty Officers (PO's), plus the Leading Seamen (Killicks) and below.

In late 1945 or very early '46 the Royal Canadian Air Force (R.C.A.F.) base in Eastern Passage N.S. was closed and officially became the Royal Canadian Naval Air Station (R.C.N.A.S.) Dartmouth. Sometime in 1947 R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth was commissioned as H.M.C.S. Shearwater and became the home of Canadian Naval Aviation. From May through September 1946, the ship's company of R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth numbered perhaps 300 officers and men. Leading Seamen and below lived in one of several two storied buildings referred to as "Blocks". The configuration or shape of a "Block" was like a large or capital letter "H". Each "wing" of the "H" served as sleeping quarters or dormitories. Located in the centre or cross section on each level of the "H" were the "heads" (toilets), showers and wash places. In 1946 each dormitory of "62 Block" billeted 20 men in bunk beds. Later as Naval Air grew (1947 - '49) more "Blocks" were opened and the "dormitory" numbers were reduced to 10 men per dormitory - in single beds - and later still (1950) these dormitories were divided into cabins with two men per cabin.

In 1952 McKenzie House was opened and billeted the first 9 members of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRENS) to serve at H.M.C.S. Shearwater.

By 1955 our old wooden living quarters were razed and replaced by Warrior Block.

In the military environment of 1946 life was easy because it was completely controlled. Just for the moment try to recall your Naval Air life in R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth when we were 17 and 18 years old. Young servicemen - and in 1946 we were young - did not have to think. A person under 20 years of age was referred to as "UA" (Under Age). Being UA and an Ordinary Seaman the young serviceman was told when to wake up; when to sleep; what to wear; when and what to eat; what he may or may not do in any given circumstance; when he might go ashore; when his leave expired and at what time he was expected back aboard. He did not and was not expected to think for himself. It was not unusual to be told or hear, "Don't think! Wrap up! (Shut up) Just do as you're told!" If one was classed as "UA" - as we all were - one was not allowed into the "Wet" canteen where beer was available. However, there were many ways around that. Also, while one was "UA", or had less than a year's seniority, shore leave expired at midnight.

Special permission was required for any participation in any event, not described or normally permitted in the Ship's or Barrack's Standing Orders. To gain such permission a properly filled out and completed "Request Form" with the correct wording and phrasing, was submitted to, and through, a person's Divisional Officer. If the request was

beyond the Divisional Officer's authority, you were referred to and later paraded as a "Requestman" before the Commander. Commander's Requestmen were held at 08:30 every day in the Administration Building. Commander's "Defaulters" were also held daily but they were dealt with after any "Requestmen".

A "Defaulter" was some one who had been disobedient; insubordinate; insolent; or was guilty of some violation of military conduct and for which some senior person felt punishment was necessary. One could become a "Defaulter" for any violation, not only of the Ship's Standing Orders, or their Squadron's Standing Orders, but also the more serious rules and regulations found in K.R.A.I. (King's Rules and Admiralty Instructions) - later Q.R.A.I. (Queen's Rules and Admiralty Instructions). These "Rules"- in effect since the time of Nelson - governed and controlled every moment or aspect of a service man's life - eating, breathing, awake or asleep. For example, an insolent or "dirty look", was considered "Silent Contempt" and as such a chargeable and therefore a punishable offence!

A "Defaulter" was paraded before the Commander who, depending on the severity of the charge, deliberated and passed judgement. His judgement was the type and amount of punishment the "Defaulter" must fulfill. Certain violations had laid down or standard amounts of punishment. For example, a person would be awarded 3 days "stoppage of leave and pay" for every hour they were "adrift". This punishment was referred to as "3 days scale". At 08:30 every morning the Requestmen or Defaulters would "Fall In" (line up) outside the Commander's office, on either side of the hall - Requestmen on one side and Defaulters on the other - facing each other. When a name was called by the Master at Arms or the Regulating Petty Officer on duty, one replied loudly; "Sir!" and took one pace forward; turned either right or left and doubled (ran) into the office; halting and coming to attention in front of the Commander's table between all assembled officers or any others who might be involved. The principle difference between a "Requestman" and a "Defaulter" was that as a Requestman - after "doubling" into the Commander's Office - one was ordered: "Salute!" following which one stood - at attention - while the "request" was read aloud to the Commander. When and if asked, one could explain the reason for or any circumstances surrounding the request. The atmosphere, while formal and strict, was not unpleasant. Any logical or reasonable request was not usually denied.

A Defaulter however, after doubling into the Commander's office, was ordered: "Off Cap!" The Defaulter then remained - at attention - bareheaded and silent - while any charge or charges were read aloud by the Master at Arms to the Commander. The "Defaulter" remained bare headed and unspeaking, throughout any discussions or investigatory comments which might occur between the Commander, the person responsible for making the charge, the Defaulter's Divisional Officer and the

punishment decision. While the Defaulter might be asked for an excuse he normally was not spoken to. For a brief period, H.M.C.S. Shearwater did have a Commander who, when asking the Defaulter for his excuse, would preface the question with: "Tell me something I have never heard and I'll dismiss your case." The Commander would then rebut the excuse by relating when, where and how often he had heard the story. Not many cases were ever dismissed!

During the investigation portion of "Defaulters" any statement or comment resembling a question was usually rhetorical in nature. Therefore a reply was not expected. If the "Defaulter" attempted to speak without permission he was loudly and sharply ordered by the Master at Arms to: "Keep Silent!" If a request or violation was beyond the Commander's sphere of authority the Requestman - or the Defaulter - was referred to the Captain. A person could be a Commander's Requestman or Defaulter any day of the week. Captain's Requestmen and Defaulters however, were held just once a week - on Thursdays.

Throughout the entire discipline aspect of our lives there were rank and class levels with privileges and obligations attached. The Canadian Navy's philosophy was; if one became envious of the privileges and pay afforded to a higher rank, then one would strive to be promoted to that rank and gain those privileges. Shore Leave for an Ordinary Seaman for example, expired at Midnight while an Able Seaman was permitted to stay ashore all night.

As members of the Canadian Naval Air Branch we saw R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth grow from approximately 300 officers and men in 1946 to over 3000 by 1966.

During the summer of 1946 - when 18 CAG (Carrier Air Group) - with their 18 aircraft and perhaps 150 officers and men were embarked in H.M.C.S. Warrior - there remained ashore - not counting Officers or Chiefs and Petty Officers - only 16 files, 3 deep, of Leading Seamen and below. From May through August - all 48 of us would "Fall In" twice a day, out side 62 Block, and march to work.

Excluding 18th CAG, with their 9 Seafire and 9 Firefly aircraft, R.C.N.A.S. Dartmouth's assortment of aeroplanes was varied and few. One Ten hangar housed 743 Squadron; which consisted of 3 Fairey Swordfish; 1 Supermarine Sea Otter; and 1 Supermarine Walrus. They were all that remained of the Royal Navy's war time Wireless and Air Gunnery School. In another hangar there were a couple each of Ansons and Harvards. These, plus a few Seafire and Firefly aircraft - perhaps 18 or 20 aircraft in total was Canadian Naval Air.

From that few, Canadian Naval Aviation grew to two Carrier Air Groups with four squadrons; two Helicopter squadrons (HU 21 and HS 50); a Training squadron (VU 32); an Experimental squadron (VX 10); a Naval Air Maintenance School (N.A.M.S.); an Observer Mates school; a Central

Maintenance Hangar (Z-2) with Pneumatic, Hydraulic and Propeller shops. Sheet Metal and Machine shops (5 Hangar) ; a new Armament Sect'n; a new Electrical Bldg; a Safety Equipment Sect'n; A new Gymnasium complete with Squash Courts and swimming pool; A new Wardroom (Officer's Mess) and a new barracks building - Warrior Block - Shearwater's large central living quarters - all this by September 1966 - 20 years.

As time passes it is becoming more and more difficult to recall the names and faces of the many people, who served in H.M.C.S. Shearwater, between 1946 and 1966. Some served for longer than those twenty years. Some served only three. Perhaps the people and times one remembers most are those with whom one served during their formative or introductory naval years. For me that was, 1946 through 1951 -- my first five years of Canadian Naval Air. Some of my mess mates served their whole career in the Lower Deck while others became officers and moved to the Wardroom (Officer's Mess). It matters not because in my memory's passing parade, when at different times some reminder occurs, I think of yesteryear and those simple carefree days. I recall the faces and hear again the voices. Once more we are eighteen - all the same rank and all immortal - again.

While I remember and dedicate these reminiscences to all, there are a few who particularly stand out. I especially remember "Red" - who dove off the Dartmouth Ferry on a \$2 bet; and "Ernie" - who went to jail because of the Ferry incident. Or "Blackie" - who bailed us out of the Dartmouth jail after the Ferry incident. Then there was "Moose" - who loudly called out and told the waitress as she walked away, in the "Green Latrine" (Lantern) restaurant to make sure there were plenty of "shit-bags" in his "shit bag soup" (Clam Chowder). I remember "Norman Edward", who would drink a bottle of vodka before he became brave enough to see the dentist, and cried at every funeral. Or "Arthur H." who gave the Cuban policeman 50 cents for his horse and then rode the horse into the bar in Quantanamo City, Cuba.

Do any of you (my readers) remember the Saturday night dances in the old gym? Can you remember the North Woodside girls who attended every weekly dance? Does any one remember "Elsa", the Butcher's daughter, who looked like and came dressed as "Daisy Mae" to our Sadie Hawkins dance? Do any of you recall the trainee nurses from the Nova Scotia Hospital? Remember, the draft beer in the "Wets" was only 10 cents a glass and the quarts only 50 cents each? We would drink three quarts; then buy a fourth and put it in our Burberry pocket and stagger down the road to the dance in the gym. A large packet of "Players" cost only a quarter. On dance nights we would splurge and smoke "Tailor mades". Not the normal self rolled "Sailor mades" we smoked every day. We could have a hell of a night on just \$3.

Messmates, though many of you are gone, none are really forgotten. The Naval Air we knew may have - like the old

soldiers in that Barrack Room ballad – just faded away. However, as long as the happy times live in your memory, as they do in mine, our Naval Air will never die.

Our Base - Shearwater or Dartmouth - which ever you wish to call it has changed. The old wooden “Blocks” those fire traps in which we first lived, are gone. The entire hangar area is changed with new more modern permanent facilities, replacing the old spooky, eerie, wooden hangars. Remember those long, long winter nights, fighting to stay awake, while standing Hangar Sentry?

If you can not recall these things, there is perhaps another place to visit which could refresh your memory. Take a few minutes and quietly walk through Shearwater’s Museum. You might remember it as two buildings -- the RC Chapel and the old gym. As you walk through, study the displays. Closely peruse the photographs. View the different aircraft. Look at the various Squadrons or Ships’ crests. Recognize and acknowledge that what you are re-visiting was your life! Read the names on the wall tiles. Reach out. Touch and run your hands over those wall tiles as you read the names. Do you recall the faces? Memories will crowd and flood your brain while you remember your past. Images will flow through your mind. You may as I did, feel a few tears of remembrance. You will think of the associations. You will recall faces and times gone by. Even though you may “choke” up a little listen closely and I guarantee you’ll hear and recognize a friendly voice, softly whispering in your ear..... “I’m tellin’ you, this is no shit.....”

Living on the Edge - *nostalgia*

by Bob Bissell

On one recovery onboard Maggie, all seemed well after we took the cut, but the line-up was not quite right. Luckily we caught a wire and it held but we gently fell over the starboard side before coming to a halt in the starboard sponson just aft of the crane. We ended up at about 80 degrees on our starboard side. The bright side was we were all OK and Doc Kierstead introduced us to brandy in his private wardroom. The downside was that the last of our wooden montague sailing whalers was stored in the starboard sponson, now reduced to matchsticks. The turkey was repaired and flew again.

Finally the squadron fly off to Shearwater. As junior crew we were last in the queue for the free deck launch and the engine was nicely carboning up. No real problem, but facing aft I was able to do a good inspection of the hawse pipe and down below Midnights eyes were wide and white! All 14 cylinders eventually developed full power and we eventually climbed away to join the squadron.

In due course I was moved up to the front seat and a similar event occurred in a Tracker. We were in Scotland and leaving for BV and asked if we could also deliver some spares to EAGLE enroute. We found her OK and were invited to join the circuit and landed on board. All went well until it was time to return to BV. There were no hold back strops on board that were suitable for the tracker so the deck was prepared for a free deck launch off the angle. Luckily it was the Cod and fairly light at the time as planning to refuel onboard BONAVENTURE, nevertheless, with slightly more flap than usual we fell off the angle but sufficient ground effect to keep flying.

On another recovery onboard BV, we certainly felt that we had earned our keep. On a beautiful day we were picked up by their radar, and as we were flying north and the foxtrot Corpen was also north we were handed over to CCA for a beautiful straight in approach. What wasn't mentioned at the time was the cloud tops were 500ft which meant to the surface FOG. The CCA was perfect and it really was time to wave off, when out of the clag was the meatball and there we were. Even on the flight deck it was difficult to see anything, but we could just make out the silhouette of an RFA tanker on the starboard side!

The Mistress

The first time that I saw her
She was sitting in the sun
And as I looked upon her
We became as one
She smiled at me derisively
I will be your mistress said she
But I require lots of time
And if you treat me properly
I'll be true and kind
But if you treat me poorly
I will be benign.

So I treated her as best I could
And she became robust and true
She was tough and powerful
And loved to show what she could do
She worked for many many years
And then many many more
She still is working for us
Always there for sure
Both at sea and on the shore
So if you should see a SEA KING flying
You should stop and stare
Because you see a fine old lady
Doing more than her fair share
Bud Ayer



1952 McKenzie House W.R.C.N.S.

In October 1952 ten members of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service {Wrens} were drafted from H.M.C.S. Cornwallis to H.M.C.S. Shearwater. Upon arrival they were billeted in the recently renovated and re-decorated McKenzie House located half way up the hill between Shearwater's original main gate and the operational and administrative functions of the base. McKenzie House has gone but the surnames of the original ten Wrens has not. The maiden names with nicknames in brackets were:

COLLINS, Lillian (Lil); TURNER, Dorothy (Dot); ANTOINE, Sarena (Satch); CUNNINGHAM, Sylvia (Peanuts); KAY, Vivian; BECKWITH, Audrey (Becky); SCOTT, Sheila; REESE, Betty; MCDOUGAL, Verna and KRUPSKI, Bernice (Bernie).

By 1959 the number of Wrens in Shearwater had more than doubled. Those who arrived between 1953 & 1959 were:

ANGEVINE, Donna; BATEMAN, Beryl; ROWLEY, Inez; GALLANT, Marina (Spud); DAWS-KNOWLES, Sherry; KERR, Liz; OWENS, Dorothy (Dot); WILLIS, Patricia (Patti); McKENZIE, Alma; BARRYMORE, Lynne and Wells, Norma. For a brief period in 1958 FRASER, Joyce (Scotty) a Regulating Branch Leading Wren was added to the complement in Shearwater. There is one more whose christen name has not been recovered – AITKEN. The maximum number of Wrens at Shearwater never exceeded twenty-four and by 1966 the complement had reduced to sixteen.

The original ten Wrens of H.M.C.S. Shearwater were employed in different trades and different departments throughout the base. One was employed as an Air Traffic Controller in the Tower. Another was a Medical Assistant in the Sick Bay. One more was a Safety Equipment mechanic. It is thought that another two (names unknown) were Radio Mechanics employed in VU 32 hangar. Four of Shearwater's original Wrens were "Cine Assessors" & therefore employed within the armament section. As such they were responsible for the administration & operation of the pilot's "Link Trainer" program plus the Skeet shooting range and its practice schedules.

Later there were at least two Wrens – Willis & Gallant - employed in secretary-like duties in the Administrative building. People assigned these duties were called "Writers" and could be either Pay or Administrative Writers. Wrens employed in Administrative positions wore their regular naval uniform.

The Wrens of the Armament, Safety Equipment or Electrical trades however, wore dungarees as did their male comrades and worked in hangars or around aircraft.

Responsibilities of a Wren in the Safety Equipment trade ranged from the packing of parachutes to the maintenance; testing & servicing of all aircraft safety equipment items & materials plus the maintenance of equipment records. The equipment a Safety Equipment mechanic was responsible for were aircraft cockpit harnesses, parachute harnesses, helmets, Mae West life jackets, floatation dinghies and life rafts. A WREN in this trade worked between the Safety Equipment section and a Squadron's Safety Equipment workshop.

The Wrens in the Electrical or Radio trades maintained, tested and installed electrical and radio equipment for and in the aircraft. They were also responsible for the "logs" or records of the items tested, repaired or installed. These

duties required them to be either in the Electrical Department's main building or as required in a Squadron's Electrical or Radio shop working with other Squadron personnel.

The Armament Section Wrens worked beside their male counterparts maintaining the aircraft cannon; machine guns; bombs; rockets; belting ammunition; administering, maintaining, issuing, & recovering Shearwater's rifles & hand guns. As "Cine Assessors" the WRENS wrote & prepared maintenance manuals for all weaponry used throughout Shearwater.

During a squadron's bombing & gunnery exercise the Armament Section Wrens sometimes worked at the "gun butts" supporting and assisting Squadron personnel in arming the aircraft's 20 MM cannons; loading bombs or rockets preparatory to an aircraft's "take-off". Prior to the start of and during a squadron's Bombing & Gunnery exercise "Cine Assessor" Wrens travelled by Jeep to the gunnery range in Chezzetcook N.S. to work in the "Sighting Towers" where they would calculate the "fall of shot", "misses" or "hits" of the bombs or rockets from the aircraft attacks & in turn communicate this information to the Squadron & the pilots involved. The era of wrens in the Canadian Naval Air Branch ended with the Integration of Canada's armed forces. Though their tenure did not last more than fourteen years the Shearwater Wrens earned the respect of their male counterparts; received the same pay; were considered and treated as equal while working side by side with their comrades in Canadian Naval Air.

Dorothy Carver (Nee Turner) WLCA 3

Seconded?

In early 1962, I was pier-headed to the Bonnie as a P1RA and seconded to the shipside electronics section. Having worked on the Height Finder at Shearwater, I was the logical one to go to the Bonnie to help out, however, the promised "short trip" turned out to be 2+ years and a host of headaches. The "L" section was made up of 6 LT's under the supervision of one C1LT (Acid) Johnson. After a short turn over I was astonished to be told that my duties were to maintain the Carrier Control Approach (CCA) radar (SPN-8) and the Height Finder (SPS-8) radar, both of which were not working at the time. I took a quick look at them on the first day but made little headway as I found it very difficult to get decent echoes while tied up at the dockyard. We sailed the next day for Bermuda and I spent most of my waking hours trying to urge these two beasts back to life. Before reaching Bermuda, I had the SPN-8 partly operating much to the great pleasure of the CCA Officer Lt. Robert (Bob) Hogg and the NA staff under the Supervisor of P1 Art Morton.



P1RA John Eden working on SPS8 Radar - Bonnie 1963

The SPS was another story as it has an absolutely huge magnetron that was unserviceable and I needed help just getting it into the transmitter unit. No matter what I tried, the radar still would not come up to full power until it was determined to be a problem with the wave-guide system. The SPN-8 antenna weighs over 3 tons

and is located just over the bridge structure and not a pleasant place to work when at sea and it was there that we finally found and fixed our problem. On arrival in Bermuda it presented a much better opportunity to assess the radar's operation and I was fortunate enough to get both the units working to nearly 100%.

Eventually my responsibilities grew to include the ships radar stabilizers (SSQ's), the flight deck end speed recorder and the ships air intercom system. On return to Halifax I was thrilled to have Dave Springer and Patty Bennett join my little crew. They both proved to be excellent technicians who I could rely on at any time during the night or day. As one might guess both were a bit reluctant to work on the SPS-8 antenna but eventually one would see them climbing up the "sail" with no fear. On one of our trips to England an incident occurred in the CCA - "They shoulda got a medal" when Dave and Patty were instrumental in helping to land on 3 aircraft with 11 crew members during a very heavy rainstorm.

In the summer of 1963, the dockyard installed a Tacan Beacon and my section was responsible for the trials and set to work with the manufacturers representative. To make a long story short, we spent 6-7 weeks trying to find the problem and finally discovered that the "dockyard maties" had reversed the transmitter and monitor cables at the bulkhead gland. The language in our report regarding Dockyard "maties" is unprintable. In early 1964, Paul Cochrane replaced me but I left the ship with some small regrets, as it was one of the most challenging jobs of my entire career in the RCN.

Oh for the life on an "Airedale" under the tutelage of a "Fishie"
-John Eden-

Sports Collage Names

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------------|
| 1. | Andy Swan | Football |
| 2. | Mike Miljus | Hockey |
| 3. | Ed Hill | Bowling |
| 4. | Colin Armson | Water Polo |
| 5. | Gil Shepherd | Football |
| 6. | Len 'Torchy' Smith | Football |
| 7. | Stan Brygadyr | Softball |
| 8. | Johnny Pike | Soccer |
| 9. | Pete Davidson | Volleyball |
| 10. | Fred Hallas | Basketball |
| 11. | Ray Belliveau | Football |
| 12. | Alf Nicholson | Football |
| 13. | Dave Trinder | Baseball |



UNIFICATION

Canadian Naval Aviation and its VX 10 Squadron, initiated and perfected the operation of ASW helicopters from escort ships. Subsequently it developed the ability to track a submerged nuclear submarine from the air. It is difficult to imagine either of these developments emanating from a group of naval ships or from the Royal Canadian Air Force. I have no recollection of VX 10 ever receiving so much as a Bravo Zulu from any Canadian source. Finally the whole of Canadian Naval Aviation was discarded in order to facilitate unification. Amen.

May I be allowed to grieve the loss of a component of our service responsible for a major aspect of our present capability? *Pop Fotheringham*



Severed Affiliation The Demise of Naval Aviation

Brant Fotheringham

February 1, 1968 marked a significant date for all members of the Canadian forces. On that date the government implemented its intent to do away with three separate services and to have just one unified service. While the changes were somewhat drastic, different uniforms, different

ranks etc., these eventually were partially and gradually modified over time so that the appearance was that an army, navy and air force still existed. There was, however, a special group for whom the changes were extensive. That group formed the members of Canadian Naval Aviation.

During the war, the RCN was given approval to man two escort carriers, *Nabob* and *Puncher*, with their embarked RN air squadrons. Various proposals having naval aviation implications were being considered but it was not until 19th December 1945 that the government approved the formation of the naval air branch. Thus began a period of 24 years during which Naval Aviation formed a part of the RCN and the Maritime Element. Henceforth these years will be referred to as the Naval Aviation Period.

At the end of the war the complement of Canadian personnel forming Naval Aviation came from a wide variety of sources. The odd one was a Canadian member of the Royal Navy who decided at some point to train as an aviator. Many Canadians, following in the footsteps of a previous generation, decided to serve in the air element of the Royal Navy. A distinguished member among that group was Hampton Gray, a native of B.C., who became the only Canadian naval recipient of the Victoria Cross. In 1944 after the RCN had considered the likelihood of operating aircraft carriers, executive officers serving in Canadian ships, were invited to volunteer for aviation training. In 1945 after the end of the war in Europe, some 500-odd ex-RCAF aircrew joined the RN to serve in the Pacific. At the same time, technical ratings were being trained in the RN to perform maintenance duties in RCN squadrons. When the war ended, members from these various groups elected to serve in Canadian Naval Aviation and formed the complement of the first Canadian squadrons. The first connection with the navy by each member of these groups was via some aspect of the Naval Reserve.

Career officers in the Royal Canadian Navy received at least a portion of their training aboard Royal Naval ships

and establishments. The RCN formed and maintained close relations with the Royal Navy, adopting its philosophy and traditions. It should be noted that not a single permanent career officer of the RCN is included in the above group of Naval Aviation.

Problems immediately became apparent in Naval Aviation. There were no senior officers in the RCN with either aviation qualification or experience to fill the positions required for the administration of the new element. The problem was solved by the loan of officers from the RN. The same situation applied to the position of carrier command and this was solved selecting RCN officers on the basis of their seniority. Aviation appointments within the carrier and ashore were filled by RN loan officers. The command of air units were filled by officers granted early promotion or acting rank on the basis of appropriate naval seniority combined with adequate aviation experience. It was not until the final years of the naval aviation period that the command positions of the carrier and the air station were filled with Canadian aviators. There was little requirement for non-aviators to fill positions in aviation and hence there is a very small percentage of RCN officers who gained any practical knowledge of naval aviation.

Canada considered the acquisition of a partially completed wartime carrier hull which had been lying in Belfast harbour. The Royal Navy suggested in lieu a later and larger Hermes class carrier for similar financial arrangements. It was suggested that the planned option had little potential for the operation of aircraft of the future. The RCN, forecasting its regard for aviation, declined the suggestion and proceeded with the more readily available solution of *Bonaventure*.

Exciting developments in anti-submarine warfare occurred in naval aviation. The concept of operation of a helicopter from an escort ship proved to be not only feasible but practical. Other countries soon accepted the same conclusion. Combining submarine detection with tactical navigation capability resulted in the ASW Tactical Navigation System which allowed the tracking of a submerged nuclear submarine, a system readily accepted by the USN and subsequently by RCAF maritime patrol aircraft.

The foregoing does not pretend to be a history of the achievements of Canadian Naval Aviation and has omitted many significant factors. The purpose is primarily to form some background to the developments encountered when the government launched a program in the mid 1960's designed to replace the traditional three Canadian services with unification. The RCN by that time had found naval aviation to be expensive in both dollars and manpower to the extent that it impacted on future hopes and aspirations for the fleet of the future. While the navy proved to be the strongest opponent of unification that opposition was not based primarily on manpower and dollar considerations. An argument difficult to oppose was

the idea that all portions of the services involved with the operation of aircraft should be transferred to what would form the air element of the unified force. That was in fact one of the results of unification which occurred on 1st February, 1968. *Bonaventure*, however, remained in service in the Maritime Element for another eighteen months.

Much has been written of what followed unification in terms of personal upheaval. Little mention has been made of the implications to the 2,000 plus members of Canadian Naval Aviation which ceased to exist when the RCN was terminated as a separate service and *Bonaventure* was paid off. These members suffered more severe effects than any other identifiable group. The aircrew members underwent a change to a new rank structure, new uniforms, a different philosophy of service with attendant variations in career prospects. The ground crew members not only suffered all of these but in addition were required to fit into a variation in the trades for which they had been trained and employed to that point in their career. Indeed, for them all, it truly represented a severance in affiliation. These members found their employment at sea was extended by virtue of now being members of a service element whose members were not required to serve at sea.

Another aspect of affiliation was affected by that termination. Over the years the technique for deck landings had been changed from British to American. USN aircraft had replaced British. Pilot training had been changed to the USN. On one occasion, a Canadian Navy Tracker aircraft embarked for a few days in a USN aircraft carrier resulted in the adoption of Canadian equipment and technique by the USN as mentioned above. The whole affiliation of naval aviation had been changed from RN to USN although the same connections for the balance of the RCN with the RN remained. After the Cuban missile crisis the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations made a personal visit to the Chief of the Naval Staff expressing USN gratitude for the assistance of Canadian ships and aircraft. In 1962/63 a proposal was made for the acquisition of an available Essex class carrier for a modest sum. The *Banshee*, with its air-to-air Sidewinder missile, had been held in high regard in NORAD for its capability but this ended when RCN fighter operations were discontinued. The RCN attitude toward naval aviation showed little regard for its status or improvement. Finally USN/RCN ship-borne aviation affiliation was terminated by unification.

It must be noted that ASW helicopters transferred by unification to the Air Element survived longer and in a healthier state than had they remained under Maritime Element control, which had demonstrated a low priority for the preservation of that portion of the service which had comprised naval aviation. Today the Canadian Maritime Element contains no aviation at variance with the composition of naval forces world-wide.



The Day the Navy Died

Brian Worth

'The Day the Navy Died' was a memorable but sad event for all those who had invested their lives and careers in a concept that we knew was fading.

Wednesday, 31 January 1968, was the last day the Royal Canadian Navy was to exist; the next day 01 Feb 68 the Navy was to become the Sea Element of the Canadian Armed Forces and we Naval Airmen were to disappear into the Air Element; very impressive, eh? I'm sure all sailors and naval airmen everywhere gathered to mark the sombre but by no means sober occasion and I'm pretty sure our Admiral had piped 'Splice the Main Brace'; if he didn't, he should have.

The ritual at HMCS Shearwater, augmented by copious quantities of rum, had started early in every mess on the base. On the lawn in front of the wardroom a grave had been dug and a symbolic and solemn burial of the Royal Canadian Navy had been carried out complete with a 'well over the bay' Lt. Gus Gower, VS880's Electrical Officer, tipping ever so gracefully into the pit taking LCDR Ted Gibbon's new Gieves cap, complete with shiny new wire hat badge, with him. Of course Gus was recovered; couldn't leave him there, far too good guy and besides, far much paper work involved but Ted's cap was interred, (he still wants it back). I do recall Gus, head bandaged from

his fall, demonstrating at least a 'sea state 5 or 6' for the remainder of the afternoon.

Aside from the drinking and carousing, there were two other demonstrations that day. A well respected Naval Aviator, Sean Carrigan, had gone off to fly the Argus with 415 Squadron in Summerside with the 'Crabfats' (the integration/unification thing) and, knowing of the 'wake', made it part of his tasking that day to rattle the chandeliers of the wardroom. With all four huge engines thundering at maximum 'wet power' blasting our ears and shaking our innards Shawn threw that massive beast around in his final salute to Naval Aviation.

I can remember one LCDR Davy Williams, then Operations Officer of VS880, greeting our course, fresh out of VU-32, in the briefing room and telling us that at all times people should be able to recognise a Naval Aviator even if he were walking down Main Street naked; the stroll would be done with dash, verve and élan.

Well, what happened next was done with that and more. Two crews, LCDR Bruce Baker and co-pilot, A/S/Lt Reg Lanthier along with LCDR Pete Hamilton and co-pilot, S/Lt Jacques Vallee had taken off ostensibly for crew trainers but both crew commanders had received authority for and had briefed a formation fly past to mark the occasion. Everyone was out on the Wardroom lawn as two Trackers, led by Bruce Baker, carved in from the south, line astern, hell bent for election and screamed over the playing field

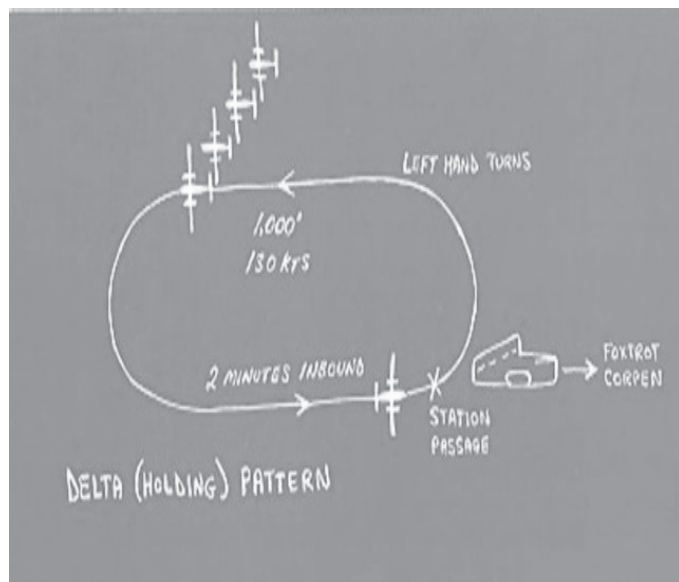
in front of Warrior Block at or below roof top level. Two Petty Officers casually strolling from the parking to their mess for a well deserved 'wet', upon seeing some 26 tons of Naval Aviation hurtling towards them, were forced to hit the dirt. Just exactly what their comments were is unknown but I'm sure it was 'salty'.

Meanwhile, up the hill at the wardroom we were high enough that we could see all this from above and as they roared past Warrior Block, banked sharply right and pulled hard up towards us. I thought I'd seen a flash but, then again, I'd had a rum or six by that time and was unsure until some other drunk asked if I'd seen a flash. No matter, the two Trackers thundered overhead and made a left 270 for a second pass from the north and there, silhouetted against the sky, we could see that the right ECM Can of Pete's 'Stoof' was missing from his wing tip.

It was at that point that someone, three sheets to the wind, stumbled out of the wardroom and muttered that drinks were going to be hard to get for a while; the power was off. What we didn't know was that as Pete banked, his wing tip severed the main power supply for the Base and that's what had happened to his ECM Can. The wire had neatly clipped it from his wing tip and it had landed in a secure compound just north of Warrior Block that involved most of the power and all the fuel transfer for the base.

Thus ended the last 'beat up' of the Royal Canadian Naval Fleet Air Arm. No one, aside from Gus, was hurt and a statement had been made with dash, verve and élan.

It had to be done.



In the Delta

Cavanaugh, John

Considine, M.A.

Dobbs, Dinah

Down, Frank

Droeske, Jean

Fink, Roger

Gaele (Ret'd), LCDR RAN 'Windy'

Gerard, Carl (AERE)

Gillis, Douglas

Herder, Arnold

Hewens, Clarence

Hoare, Curley

Holmes, Donald (Big Don)

Ireland, Bob

Jordan, Vic

Kneebone, Raymond C.

Langman, Michael

LeBlanc, Lou

Lee, Edgar

Leavens, David

Lowe, John (Darky)

MacKay, Raymond

MacLeod, Bill

Misener, George

O'Connell, C.J. 'Paddy'

Olynk, John

Osgood, Marian

Overy, Herbert "Bert"

Robinson, Doug

Roy, Edwin

Salsman, Melvin 'Joe'

Sharkey, Roy

Shorten, William

Stewart, Eva

Thomas, Gary

Troughton, Gordon

Wasteneys, M.E. 'Mike'

Woods, George



WALTER

Back at the beginning of the Fabulous Fifties decade, Shearwater had taken delivery of a spanking new crash truck. A monster of a machine, yet only so-so by today's standards, it was built on a Walter chassis with a Waukesha prime mover and a V-12 'dual everything' Bickle-Seagrave pump engine. At that era we ran a crash crew of usually 10 or 12. The cab was of such a size we manned it with the crew chief / driver, a radio man on the far right and in the centre a co-driver. This center position was necessary to assist in shifting the higher gears when the shift lever would be too far for the driver to safely handle while steering and depressing the gargantuan clutch. It was usually quite a busy workspace when on a run. Being relatively new, 'Walter' - as we all referred to it, seemed to require constant tweaking and that is the basis for this brief tale.

On the subject day Walter had again been away in the morning being serviced and was back on site alongside the tower by afternoon when we went to 'Flying Stations'. Routinely when flying was going on, the crew sat near, in or on the truck, at the ready. The understanding was such that when the alarm bell sounded, the truck left. If you weren't on it you could expect to be in the rattle.

So when the bell rang that afternoon, we left, heading down the big hill in front of the tower, which helped build speed. The killick at the radio did the usual ; 'It's your red wagon, where do you want it ?'.

At this point of telling the story I admit memory has affected some fine points and accordingly I am not positive the runway numbers which I recall are correct. Actually, that detail really doesn't matter. Fill in

your own numbers if you so desire, the results will be the same. However, I distinctly recall having relayed to me the words "Button of two-four" and that is where

I headed. This was often the destination when we were sent on dummy runs, so off we went.

We had just crossed the intersection in that direction when we were startled by a voice on the radio which we recognized as the duty controller - - a sub lieutenant who was either ex-Royal Navy or on loan or some such arrangement. Said voice, with a decidedly English accent, was quite a few decibels higher than was usual in radio communications as he plainly suggested we change our direction by not too subtly advising : "Two-zero you f...g idiot, two-zero !"

We proceeded to brake and downshift - a team operation - and then made a U-turn heading back to two-zero which we had just passed a few moments ago. It was at that point Walter began to demonstrate his individuality by coughing and . . . well, you know, and choking and gasping. It was all I could do to get him up to 20mph. But we made the turn and were chugging down the runway to where - much to our surprise -a TAG Harvard was sitting barely off the runway in a decidedly nose-down-tail-up attitude. When I saw what appeared to be smoke wafting from the engine area, frustration took over and I gave the co-driver the opportunity to do his job, got out the door stood on the cab sill and facing aft sent crew members with hand extinguishers to run to the aircraft. They got there before we did. Meanwhile the pilot walked casually toward our slowly approaching crash truck idly swinging his helmet and RT plug.

Fortunately no fire ensued and we never heard any further to do about the event. This in itself gave us cause to ponder that perhaps the misdirection had originated in the tower, and also the possibility there was some desire to keep the radio-comm 'indiscretion' under wraps.

All in all, our crew was unanimous in agreeing it was certainly the highlight of our summer. And of course 'two-zero, you..idiot' became sort of an "in" line with the crash crew. **From Gordon Soutter**

MAPLESPRING '69 - Portsmouth UK (Courtesy of Jon Main)



Standing

Robby Robertson, Jim Mulhall, Carl Laming, Gerry Unger, Bob MacDonald, John McGuire, Fred Illingworth, Bob Winger, Ray Heinz, Doug Oke,
 Lorne Williams, Dale Lounsbury, Jim Cope, Gord Way, Ted Seal, Renne Doll, Pat Condon, Dave Kelly, Jon Main

Kneeling

Chris Thornsteinson, Paul Crawford, Paul Balden, Fred Kean, Bob Campeau, George Gilles, Gary McLaren, Wayne Smith, Dusty Miller, Rick Casavant,
 Lawrence Moody, Les Stewart, Geoff Frusher, Al Ekholm, Jake Cox, Ken Hutton, Ray Allen, Bob Campbell, Al Burchell

THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF NAVAL AVIATION 1945 – 1970

In the post-war redevelopment of the RCN, officers and men were organized, trained and promoted in one of a number of specialist Branches. These constituted divisions of the Navy into functional groups which were essentially either “users” or “maintainers” in nature. The largest of the “users” was the traditional Executive Branch, descended from the days of sail. This supplied personnel to operate and command ships and most shore establishments. The remainder were largely “maintainer” branches for technical, training and logistic support of the Navy’s operations. These included the Supply, Engineering, Constructor, Electrical and Ordnance technical branches and others like the Medical and Instructor Branches.

Unique among all, however was the Air Branch. It had both users and maintainers to fly and support naval aircraft and their equipment. At the same time, it drew upon the Executive Branch for its aircrew officers and upon the Supply, Electrical and Medical Branches for aviation sub-specialists, both officers and men, and from the long established Engineering Branch for its Air Engineer Officers. Most of the officers serving as flyers or as technical officers in Naval Aviation thus became dually qualified in the ship and air sides of the Navy. This greatly enhanced their long term career employability and usefulness as well as versatility, a highly valuable and indispensable trait especially in a technically diverse but relatively small navy with ships of limited crew capacity operating beyond the reach of specialist resources ashore. It also assured the kind of cross-trained service and expertise essential to effective use of air power as an integral element of ships and naval operations. Most importantly, this provided an outstanding range and depth of technical and operational experience at the sharp end of aviation at sea and in planning and support organizations ashore. In terms of quality, if not size, aviation of the RCN stood tall among its counterparts in NATO. This was a source of great distinction and pride for those who served in the golden years of Canadian Naval Aviation.

High professional standards were but one of the principal reasons for the deep rooted pride and sense of community which developed in Naval Aviation over the years. This has survived the abolition of the RCN as a distinct service, and the destruction of Naval Aviation itself after 1970. Of all the former branches it is the only one that has created and sustained a strong active fraternal organization. Formed in 1970, the Canadian Naval Air Group has chapters that link centres across Canada. Yet, it has been estimated that even at its peak, little more than 2300 or 10 percent of the Navy’s strength was engaged in aviation duties at one time. Other circumstances also gave powerful support to this enduring comradeship. Originally, the RCN was to have had a light fleet carrier and naval air

station in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic Command. In those days, men recruited east of Manitoba were assigned to the Halifax Port Division, and westerners to the Esquimalt Port Division. Except as officers, they could expect to spend most if not all of their careers in either the Atlantic or Pacific fleet. However the initial plan for a carrier and a full naval air station on the west coast was scrapped because of funding and manpower limitations. Men who joined from the western provinces were therefore destined to serve out their careers on the east coast for the most part in squadrons or units at HMCS “Shearwater”, RCN Air Station Dartmouth or at sea from time to time in the carrier or helicopter equipped destroyers and fleet supply ships based in Halifax. The result was that young naval airmen from across Canada and those who had preceded them grew up, married, raised families and made life-long friendships together at HMCS “Shearwater”. This kind of close and stable association did not exist outside Naval Aviation in the purely “fish head” or ship side of the Navy. Here offices and men spent perhaps two years in a ship or shore establishment in a constant flux of partial reassignments of their crews within the Fleet. In addition, revolutionary advances in naval aircraft, equipment and weapons compared to those in ships, gave a strong sense of dynamism to the relatively exciting nature and demanding challenges of flying and maintaining aircraft at sea. And finally, naval aviation attracted the younger, less traditional officers, chief and petty officers who looked more to the future than the past. Many were mavericks and genuine characters who inspired the best in the men under their charge. They gave a leadership, colour and spirit to Naval Aviation that was absolutely without parallel in the staid old RCN heavily imbued with the great traditions of its origins in the Royal Navy. Not surprisingly, the “air side” was to develop a comradeship and self-assurance unique in the history of the Navy to the present day.

Together the complementary histories of “Hands To Flying Stations” and “Certified Serviceable: Swordfish to Sea King” are a fascinating account of the few visionaries and the many young men who created and developed a highly professional, all volunteer air arm from scratch in 1945, achieving in its golden years, a naval aviation second to none in calibre and spirit during the long Cold War. Tragically for Canada and its Navy, they and their vital expertise are gone, victims of failed leadership and the miserable politics of rampant self-interest and empire building unleashed by the excesses of Unification. But for a dedicated few, naval aviation’s proud record would have been lost to history as well. Those who read these accounts and others by Leo Pettipas, Al Snowie, Carl Mills, Stu Soward, Peter Charlton, Robbie Hughes and John MacFarlane and marvel at the photos of ships, flying machines and young men from a vibrant era of 25 to 50 years ago, will readily understand the boundless pride of having earned a place and been a part of the “air side”.

Most had no choice when against all logic and common sense, Maritime Command was maneuvered into giving up its entire aviation to a resurgent de facto Air Force, successor to the RCAF. Stripped of their careers in the Navy, abandoned sailors either accepted the forced transfer or got out. Most who survive to mark the Centennial of the Navy in 2010 will range from 60 to 90 years in age. With the abolition of the Air Branch, they have no roots or descendants in today's Navy. To a once familiar fleet, they are strangers, one time members of a forgotten branch abolished before the current generations of young sailors were even born. Yet, no other part of our post-war Navy has inspired such loyalty and pride. Nor in retirement, have any been as dedicated to the preservation of its history and heritage. The historical works of the Canadian Naval Air Group, the creation of the Shearwater Aviation Museum, and the outpouring of books and recollections bear dramatic witness to their determination that the spirit of Canadian Naval Aviation shall never die.

THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF NAVAL AVIATION REFLECTIONS

Fifteen years have passed since the 1995 publication of "The Indomitable Spirit of Naval Aviation" In the NOAC "Starshell" on the 50th anniversary of the Navy's air branch rebirth in 1945. Meanwhile, many more of our pioneers have died including old shipmate and former CDS, Admiral Bob Falls. Most survivors are now well into their seventies and eighties. They and the venerable old "Sea Kings" are the fast diminishing remnants of its once 15 regular and reserve squadrons for whom HMCS "Shearwater" was both home and family. Fifty-three years ago, "Magnificent" was paid off and replaced by "Bonaventure". Because of politicians and others who failed in their duty, "Bonnie" was to have a tragically short but vital service. Like "Magnificent", it was the spearhead of our naval forces in defence of the North West Atlantic sector of the NATO shield during the long Cold War. Their matchless versatility, readiness and capacity with three large hangars and long flight decks were demonstrated time and again in calls for sealift of Air Force planes and Army contingents to and from Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

Under the near legendary Vice Admiral J.C. "Scruffy" O'Brien, the Maritime Commander, backed by Paul Hellyer as defence minister, control of all shore based as well as sea going aviation had finally been consolidated under Maritime Command. However, it was a successor that completed their unification by a rather novel reverse approach. He simply surrendered the entire Air Branch to the new Air Command. With the last carrier scrapped, the three services abolished and fragmented, and ignoring wiser counsel he had little understanding or concern for the major role of aviation in naval or land warfare. The result was disastrous for integral air elements of both naval and ground forces, hopelessly out gunned and out maneuvered by

Air Command leadership. To this day, the miserable politics and manipulation that destroyed the air elements of the Navy and Army make angry reading in the clinical accounts by Stu Soward's epilogue of "Hands To Flying Stations".

Despite this, Canadians can be grateful that two events were to assure survival of one core capability. The first was that the practical case for helicopters as powerful and integral elements of our destroyers, supply and repair ships had been convincingly proven by prior development and trials. The second was the employment of former Navy aircrew and technicians skilled in the operation and maintenance of the "Sea King" pending their ultimate replacement by well trained and experienced Air Force personnel. By any measure, the latter have done an outstanding job, the only ones in Light Blue to meet the highly demanding task of flying and maintaining aging complex machines and systems under operational conditions in small ships on the high seas. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude. They may not stand watches, share in ship routines and will leave on disembarkations of the air detachment for periods at home in Shearwater and Comox. But they too have rendered a vital service. In a very real sense, where naval leadership's have failed, they have preserved and nurtured a core capability and priceless expertise.

It will be a powerful legacy and base for the coming renaissance of naval aviation in diversity and scale as amphibious carriers like those of the Dutch "Rotterdam", French "Mistral" and Australian "Canberra" classes finally join the fleet and provide the ocean-going transport, logistic and tactical support absolutely essential to deployments of our Forces on military, humanitarian, development aid and disaster relief missions. Collectively, over 24 maritime nations have more than 80 such vessels in service or acquisition, led by the United States, a world leader for over 70 years in their essentially dual military-civil role design and operation. A first and critically related step in this process has been effective action by the Honourable Peter MacKay, our new Minister of National Defence, to restore DND ownership of strategic land, marine and aviation capabilities at Shearwater, avoiding loss of the entire upper airfield sold to CLC for subdivision and resale. Great credit is also due to the equally "indomitable" championing by Generals Rick Hillier and Walter Natynczyk, Major General (Rtd) Lewis MacKenzie and Colonel (Rtd) Gary Rice of the need to provide the means to deploy and support our joint forces at the required scale, form and urgency from bases in Fortress Canada. And for the forthright views of our new CMS, Vice Admiral Dean McFadden, most recently at the CDAI conference March 4th, 2010 featuring Power Projection.



Commander Ralph E. Fisher, RCN (Rtd).

A FOND FAREWELL TO BONNIE AND RCN CARRIER AVIATION

On December 12, 1969 Bonnie operated fixed wing aircraft for the last time in her illustrious history. It all started when I led 12-14 aircraft from Shearwater out to meet her on a return trip from an R&R visit to Boston. The intention was to do a flypast salute and subsequently to give some of the squadron pilots their "final fling" at touch and go landing carrier landings; the other was to get Admiral Scruffy O'Brien airborne so he could be one of the last to land aboard Bonnie.

After a "daisy chain" session of touch and go landings by all of us I "trapped" to pick up Admiral O'Brien, got him settled in the co-pilots seat, and got airborne again while Pete Hamilton and Rod Lyons also "trapped" but remained aboard. Subsequently Pop Fotheringham and Shel Rowell got airborne in another Tracker, the plan being that both of us would do a few more touch and goes then the Admiral and I would "trap", allowing Pop and Shel to do the last fixed wing landing on Bonaventure. (Pop was the first Canadian to land on Bonnie prior to her coming to Canada in 1957 and therefore only fitting that he do the last.)

Before going any further I must say that for many reasons it was a great honour to have the Admiral riding shot-gun with me on my last landing on Bonnie, not the least of which is that I considered him one of the finest and most respected leaders the Navy ever had and certainly one of the best bosses I ever served under. He was knowledgeable and professional in every sense of the word, tough, hard nosed but fair and a real "people person" who cared deeply about those serving under him. He was the epitome of a leader and on top of it all a staunch supporter of Naval Aviation. A statement made by the Admiral at a mess dinner aboard Bonnie sums up his regard for Naval Air "The Hell yes we can hack it attitude of the Naval Aviator can be described as the unofficial motto of Naval Aviation. This dash is shared as a common bond by the ships company and has carried Bonaventure proudly through a lifetime of controversy. Her marriage to the Tracker aircraft is one of the most successful relationships in the aircraft carrier world."

As we were approaching the carrier for what was supposed to be our final landing, with Shel and Pop following behind us, Scruffy said "lets overshoot they'll land and we'll be the last aircraft to land on Bonnie". As might be expected Pop didn't take the bait and overshoot as well. After a couple more passes the Admiral said "to hell with it lets land", which we did, and Pop made the 20,590th and final fixed wing landing on a great ship and the last carrier landing in the Canadian Navy.

On completion of the exercise described above, the other 10 Trackers, who had participated in the touch and go session, proceeded to orbit Shearwater to await join up for a 24 plane flypast over Marcom. The four aircraft on board

Pete Hamilton, Bob Laidler, Rod Lyons and myself and an additional 10 to be launched from Shearwater would make up the 24 plane formation.

As we approached Halifax Harbour near the Breakwater the 4 of us were lined up aft of the catapult, engines running, waiting to be catapulted from the ship as it passed the vicinity of Georges Island. The "best made plans", however, sometimes go astray and our plan was no exception and just abeam of McNabs Island Shel radioed me to say we had a problem with the cat and would I come up to Flying Control. Leaving my co-pilot Brian Worth in the aircraft with the engines running I headed up to Flyco. When I got up there he said the catapult had gone unserviceable, couldn't be fixed in time, and there was no way to launch as planned. Consequently Bonnie would have to go alongside the jetty and the 4 Trackers would have to be craned aboard a barge and taken to Shearwater that way. WHAT AN INGLORIOUS FINALE THAT WOULD BE. My response was that we should turn around, head back out to sea and do a "free launch" as soon as Bonnie could get up enough speed to permit it. I also said that it would be too humiliating for the last Trackers aboard Bonnie to have to depart her by crane and barge. At this point in our discussion the Skipper, Jim Cutts, spoke up and asked "how much wind over the deck do you need for a free launch"? I said "as we've burned off a fair amount of fuel around 18 knots should be OK but where are you going to get it"? His reply was "In Bedford Basin". We all agreed on this new plan and decided to "have a go".

Subsequently the four Trackers were spotted as far aft as possible for a "free deck" launch and Bonnie proceeded under the bridge and into the Basin. Once there the Captain "poured the coals" to her and we started to pick up speed trying to get enough wind over the deck for a safe launch. Only such a superb shiphandler as the skipper could have accomplished getting the speed we needed in such confined waters, he did just that and we were ready to launch. Each aircraft roared down the flight deck and literally clawed its way into the air, including a bit of a "sink off the bow". Once all four were airborne, Rod Lyons having the distinction of being the pilot of the last aircraft to fly off Bonnie, we proceeded to do a "fair to middlin" beat up of the carrier. After this the other 20 aircraft, which had been orbiting, joined up on us for a flypast over Marcom. This "escapade" of launching 4 aircraft in Bedford Basin established yet another first for Bonnie by being the only carrier to perform such a feat (without a catapult) in such confined waters.

This was the "Grande Finale" for Bonnie and RCN fixed wing carrier operations, which have been acknowledged at home and abroad as unmatched; accomplished with pride, dedication and professionalism over 23 years. Such performance would not have been possible without the devoted, skilled efforts of all who sailed in Bonaventure, HMCS Magnificent and the other carriers before them. A

special tribute must be made, not only to the aircrew, but to all the men who kept the aircraft flying: the air maintenance trades, those who took care of them on the flight deck and the aircraft handlers.



As an epilogue and a tribute to carrier aviation the following words, written by an unknown aviator, best sum up the feelings of all who were involved in Naval Aviation in Canada over the years. "It gave us moments of fear and loneliness, kinship and challenge, joy and sorrow, pride, tragedy and triumph. It became part of us then and is part of us now. It will be with us until the end of our days----THE CARRIER EXPERIENCE." **Dave Tate**

From The Bonnie Book:

Vice Admiral Porter: It was a very sad day when she was towed out of Halifax for the final time. One of the things that they did as they started taking her away from the jetty was to put charges on her shafts and blow the propellers off and hoist them up on the deck of the ship. There was still another 13 years of life left in her when she went to the breaker's yard.

Commodore Cutts: "When I was in the Nat. Def. College Course, we went to Osaka and we went down to the shipbuilding yards and were being entertained by the senior manager. During conversation I mentioned BONAVENTURE and he said, "I don't want to hear that name!" I immediately asked, "Why?" He said: 'I bought her. She fought me every inch of the way to Taiwan. The average speed was two and one half knots. She broke her tow three times. I had to stop and refuel off Capetown in South Africa. I had to bring tugs out to hold her while I sent my main tug in to refuel. Then, when I got her to Taiwan, she broke the shipyard that was doing the breaking-up for me and I had to tow her to Osaka to finish the breaking. I lost my shirt!'

"They had blasted the screws off before she left Halifax and put them on the deck with a little diesel generator and a portable water tank to provide services for the crew. It was pretty primitive. I think they used the Captain's cabin as their headquarters - what was left of it. We had ripped most of it out. She went to Taiwan. She just wouldn't tow and took something like five and a half months to get there. She just fought them all the way across."

The final sight that Canadians did have of their last capital warship was on 28 Oct 70. On that day HMC Dockyard, historic Citadel Hill, and other vantage points overlooking the harbour from both sides were lined with residents who turned out to see the final departure of BONAVENTURE. She had become as much a part of the twin cities of Halifax and Dartmouth as the Angus L. MacDonald Bridge that connected them. She **was** the Navy to many. As the locals watched, the hulk that was the BONNIE was towed out into the main stream of Halifax Harbour by the Japanese ocean tug FUJI MARU of Fukada Salvage Company Limited, Osaka. On her way to an ignominious end in a Formosan scrap heap, the once proud Flagship was down in the bow as the initial bite of the tow dragged her along. It was a sad and pathetic sight for the onshore observers who remembered her more dignified departures as Queen of the Canadian Fleet.

"THE WAY WE WERE"



"THE WAY WE ARE"



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