

# WARRIOR

SPRING 2013





**12 Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (12 AMS) at 12 Wing Shearwater, provides Aircraft maintenance and engineering support to the operational, and training squadrons assigned to the Wing, whether operating from Shearwater or deployed.**



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

*Joseph Howe , 31 August 1871*

The Banshee .....pg 9

1945 to 1970 by Eddy Myers Lcdr (P) RCN Ret'd....pg 15

Life in PMQ's .....pg 42

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Graphics are best submitted electronically, they should be 300dpi and a .tif file. A jpg file at 300dpi is acceptable if no compression is used. We will attempt to use any pictures, whatever the format.

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**SAM Foundation**  
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**Deadlines for receiving submissions are:**

Spring	1 March
Summer	1 July
Winter	15 October

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#### **FRONT COVER**

#### **McDonnell F2H-3 Banshee**

The Banshee was a rugged and reliable, all-weather, fleet defence and ground attack fighter. During one annual exercise at Rivers, Manitoba, VF 870 Squadron, flying Banshee Aircraft, spent five weeks during which they: flew 506 sorties; expended 10,000 20mm shells; fired 1,092 three and five inch rockets; dropped 912x11.5 pound practice bombs; 30x500 pound bombs; and spotted for 450 rounds of 105 mm artillery fire. During this time, ground crews serviced 720 snags and maintained a 70.5% Aircraft serviceability rate.

***Photos are provided by several sources: DND, SAM Archives, 12 Wing Imaging, SAMF website and those sent in with an individual's submission.***

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## Early US Navy Operations at Shearwater

The first aircraft to fly from Halifax were US Navy Curtiss HS-2L biplane flying boats. The seaplane base was actually established at Baker's Point south of the city of Dartmouth overlooking Eastern Passage but was known as "US Naval Air Station Halifax". Lieutenant R.E. Byrd (USN) was the station's first commanding officer who also acted as the liaison officer between the American and Canadian governments on naval aviation matters. Lieutenant Byrd later became an Admiral renowned for his polar exploits. The US Navy (USN) flew six HS-2L's from Halifax from August to November 1918 on anti-submarine patrols to protect convoys from lurking German submarines outside Halifax's strategic harbour. The USN also operated a seaplane base at Sydney NS where an additional six HS-2L's flew anti-submarine patrols to protect convoys en route to or from Halifax. The HS-2L's at both Halifax and Sydney flew approximately 400 hours on patrols and were augmented by several kite-balloons also used for anti-submarine duties. It was intended that the USN conduct the aerial anti-submarine patrols until the fledgling Royal Canadian Naval Air Service could be formed and assume the air patrol duties. However, the First World War came to an end before the Canadian Naval Air Service became operational and subsequently disbanded. After the war ended in November 1918 Byrd returned to the United States and the USN donated the 12 HS-2L's that were stationed at Halifax and Sydney, the associated spares and ground handling equipment to the Canadian government. These aircraft formed the nucleus of the newly formed Canadian Air Force in 1920 and subsequently became Canada's first bush planes.



The photo of HS2L #1876 is LCdr Byrd's former aircraft. The photo was taken after the USN's departure from Shearwater; it is being launched from the seaplane hangar at Baker's Point into Eastern Passage. Standing in the cockpit is Stuart Graham, generally

acknowledged as Canada's first bush pilot, and his wife, also his navigator, is seated in the nose of the HS2L.

Lieutenant Byrd returned to Halifax on May 8, 1919 when two US Navy-Curtiss (NC) flying boats, NC-1 and NC-3, landed at the former US Naval Air Station Halifax, then under the control of the Canadian Air Board, on their historic world's first trans-Atlantic flight. Three of the four NC flying boats that were built, NC-1, NC-3 and NC-4, had taken off from the US Naval Air Station at Rockaway NY on the first leg of their trans-Atlantic flight, however, the NC-4 developed engine trouble and had to divert to the air station at Chatham Mass. Therefore, only the NC-1 and NC-3 remained overnight on 8 and 9 May at Halifax, their first scheduled stop, before proceeding to their next stop at Trepassey Newfoundland. Lieutenant Byrd was the "Trans-Atlantic Team's" navigation project officer and one of two navigators on NC-3. His task was to verify the performance of the navigation instruments on the Rockaway-Halifax-Trepassey legs. Much to Byrd's disappointment the plan called for him to remain behind in Trepassey and not accompany NC-3 on the trans-Atlantic legs to the Azores, Lisbon and on to England.

Shortly after take off from Halifax on 10 May one of the aircraft developed a crack in its wooden propeller and had to return to Halifax to be replaced, but it was discovered that neither aircraft carried spare hub plates. Byrd's previous duty in Halifax proved helpful as he recalled that when he turned the 12 HS-2L's over to the Canadians he had also given them spare hub plates. Since Byrd had left only a short time ago he still had many friends in Halifax and was able to call on them for the required spare hub plates. The aircraft was quickly repaired and departed for Trepassey with minimum delay. Due to fortunate weather delays in Newfoundland, NC-4 caught up, with an intermediate stop at Halifax, to NC-1 and NC-3 at Trepassey on 15 May. The next day all three aircraft departed for the Azores.

Because of a fortunate sighting of land through a hole in the undercast only NC-4 arrived at its intended destination, the island of Horta in the Azores. The NC-1 landed on the water in fog several hundred miles from Horta and broke up in the rough seas; the crew was rescued by a USN destroyer that had been pre-positioned in the area. The NC-3 also landed on the water because bad weather obscured the mountainous islands in the Azores and the crew was afraid of flying into the peaks. Similar to the NC-1, NC-3 encountered heavier seas than anticipated and after a harrowing two days of riding out a storm a very badly damaged NC-3 water taxied into the port of Ponta Delgada on the island of San Miguel



in the Azores. Only the NC-4, commanded by Lt. Cdr. A.C. Read, was able to continue on and successfully complete the first trans-Atlantic flight from the North America to England, arriving in Plymouth on 31 May 1919 via the Azores, Lisbon and Ferrol del Caudillo (Spain). Total flying time from Rockaway NY to Plymouth England was 57 hours 16 minutes.

*Post Script:*

*Two weeks later British Capt. John Alcock and Lt. Arthur Brown made the first non-stop crossing of the Atlantic from St John's NF to Galway Ireland in a Vickers Vimy bomber on 14/15 June 1919. Total flying time was 16 hours 27 minutes.*

*On 20/21 May 1927 Charles Lindbergh made the first non-stop solo crossing of the Atlantic from Long Island NY to Paris in the Ryan built "Spirit of St. Louis". Total flying time was 33 hours 39 minutes.*

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

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## FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

By Christine Hines

With the turn of the calendar into 2013, we are firmly in Sea King 50 mode! Exciting projects are being planned at the SAM to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of a fixture in Maritime skies. The museum's own commemorative projects are coming together nicely: we are planning a unique art display featuring the art applied to the FOD covers of the Sea Kings, which are generally short-lived and specific to an Air Detachment's given mission or operation. The images have been tough to collect for this project, and we are always looking for pictures of this relatively unseen art form. Several of our interactive displays are in the final stages of preparation, which, given the success of the Swordfish interactive project, will be a great interpretive too. One of these will be dedicated to the Sea King, and will be complementary exhibit component for an actual Sea King example.

We anticipate the arrival of a Sea King in the museum for a short period during the Sea King 50 celebrations; this "limited engagement" will be a treat for us all, and a great opportunity for our visitors who don't have the ability to work with the aircraft on a daily basis to appreciate the

theme-specific exhibit that will surely be impressive. You may recall their show at SAM in 2010, commemorating the Canadian Naval Centennial from a Naval Air perspective; beautiful pieces from talented artists. These are just some of the planned projects at SAM to commemorate SK 50; there will be more to see at SAM this year, and we're pleased and proud to help the community celebrate this noteworthy event, and document the history of the Sea King's legacy in Shearwater.

I can assure you that the celebratory events being planned by the Sea King 50 committee are shaping up to be wonderful; for details on how to participate, please visit [www.seaking50.ca](http://www.seaking50.ca) or call me at the SAM for more details.

Additionally, the restoration projects have seen great progress in the quiet winter months. The last bit of paint on the last Tracker wing is curing as we speak, and we'll soon see the crane in the museum to help us replace the wings. The "new" TBM-3, Navy 303, has had its engine inhibited, and work started on replacing the lexan in the windscreen. A special team has been working on drawings for the new bomb-bay doors, and we'll soon be able to remove the fire-fighting equipment from the aircraft. The Firefly project team has successfully repaired some lingering fuel line problems, and as a result had a great ground run in late January, which, I can tell you, was inspirational to see. After winter vacations are through, I am confident the team will be back in force to make further progr

work done by Shearwater personnel all these last 50 years with this incredible helicopter. What would an anniversary be without an art show? The Canadian Aviation Artists Association is again providing us with a

Without a doubt, it is the people at the museum and Foundation that make this museum improve every year, with the hard work and commitment to every project we undertake. With this in mind, I would like to take a moment to congratulate SAMF's own Kay Collacutt on her award of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal this winter, for her stalwart support of the Foundation and SAM, and all of her efforts to ensure the growth of this museum. A more deserving candidate, I can't imagine. Congratulations Kay! I would also like to publicly thank Jessica Goreham-Penney for all of her great work with the museum over the years. I am sad to report that Jessica, our collections manager and administration assistant, will be leaving the museum at the end of March; I know you join me in wishing her every success in the future and appreciate her efforts on our behalf.

It is my hope to see you at the end of July as official Sea King 50<sup>th</sup> celebrations unfold; drop in to the museum to share with us your Sea King memories and memorabilia! We love to hear about your adventures and milestones in this amazing community.

All the best, **Christine**



### SAMF President's Report

2013 has every indication of being a year with many changes and challenges, but of course we will work through them and come out better and stronger. The manner in which DND is supporting SAM is changing, as a result the curator Christine Hines had to enter a competition for the job which she aced, well done Christine. Patti Gemmell will be under contract and can therefore not remain as Vice President after 1 April, however she will continue to do her good work with the fund-raising committee. The other employees will also be under individual contracts but that should not have any effect on the operation of SAM.

The wall containing the Venture and JAObTC tiles has been rebuilt, thanks to Jim Elliot & Duncan Mason and it looks great.

Sea King 50th Anniversary celebrations will be the highlight of this years activities, surplus will be directed through the Foundation for the museum, so please do everything you can to support these important events.

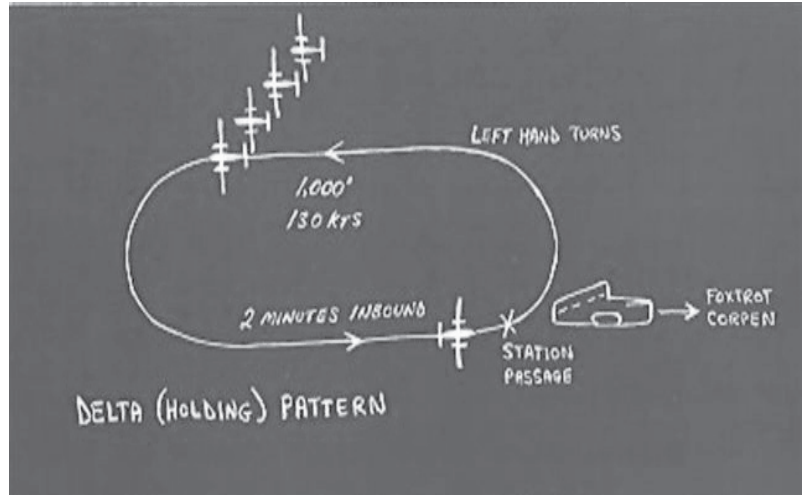
On the 6 Feb. During the Wing Commanders medal & awards ceremony held at SAM, two of our own were presented with the Queen's Jubilee Medal, Kay Collacutt our longtime SAMF secretary and defender of "Naval Air", also John Cody co-chair and driving force behind the SeaKing 50th Anniversary Committee. Congratulations to both of you on the much deserved awards.

See you at the Sea King 50th Anniversary.

John Knudsen  
President SAMF

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***Please renew your SAMF membership.***



### IN THE DELTA

**BELL, Douglas Wilfred 'Dinger'**

**BONNER, Len**

**FAIRBAIRN, Sidney (Sid)**

**GAUTSCHI, Phyllis (nee Gray)**

**HARRALL, Jack**

**LOURME, E**

**LUNDQUIST, Pauline**

**PALMER, Robert**

**PATTERSON, Michael**

**PYPER, Roger**

**TAYLOR, James**

*(Cdr (Ret) Fred Fowlow asked that we note that Hal Pickering passed away several years ago.)*



## FIRST RCN HELO RESCUE

*from Dave Tate*

On 21 September 1953, as a pilot on VF 871 aboard Maggie, we were part of a Task Force in the North Atlantic participating in a large maritime exercise called Exercise Mariner. 871's role was to conduct dawn to dusk combat air patrols in air defence of the fleet and the convoy. On this particular day four of us had launched to carry out an interception of some suspected "bad guys".

I was the last Fury to launch and while joining up on the other three I noticed that at the higher power settings required for join up the fuel pressure began dropping and the engine started to wind down. I immediately throttled back and at a lower power setting (approximately normal cruise) the engine began running normally with speed and altitude being easily maintained. Any advancing/increase in power caused the engine to once again wind down until I throttled back. It was quite apparent that if this unusual engine malfunction persisted I would have a problem getting back aboard in the landing configuration, where much higher power settings would be required. While waiting for the recovery of our launch I had about an hour to do some experimenting as to how many seconds the engine would run at landing power and how that time translated to what position in the landing pattern ie 30 degree, 45 degree or 90 degree etc. I should drop gear and flaps and increase power.

After all the other aircraft had been recovered I was cleared to attempt a landing, with Bob Williamson as the LSO guiding my attempt. I started the approach and having predetermined that the 30 degree position would be about right I dropped gear and flaps and increased power to hold airspeed and proper rate of descent. However, my timing estimate was not enough and at about the 10 degree position the engine started to wind down, the aircraft stalled and the starboard wing dropped. My attempt to level the wings and ditch normally was unsuccessful, the starboard wing hit the water, broke off and the aircraft came to rest almost totally submerged astern of Maggie.



*Pilot Dave Tate being greeted back aboard ship.*

When I extracted myself from the cockpit there was Angel the plane guard Sikorsky helo, with pilot Ian Webster and co-pilot Frank Harley , almost directly above me and the "horse collar" on its way down. I was picked up unhurt ( after what someone timed as 32 seconds) and the honours for accomplishing the first such RCN recovery by a rescue helo went to Ian and Frank. As an aside I think it is worth noting that I was no doubt saved from serious injury by the newly issued crash helmets (hard hats) we were wearing on this cruise (at Mike Wasteney's insistence). The life saving properties of these helmets was vividly displayed when I saw my helmet floating away from me, in two pieces. Shortly after that I was deposited on the flight deck and subsequently escorted to the Chiefs mess by our Squadron chief Roy Findlay who prescribed an issue (or two) of medicinal Pusser rum.

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### **McDonnell Banshee F2H-3** by Carl Mills

The Department of National Defence, in April 1952, had committed to the purchase of a new aircraft carrier, HMCS Bonaventure, and clearly the aging Sea Fury would not be a suitable aircraft.

The McDonnell Banshee, with its twin engine long range performance and airborne intercept capabilities, was a prime candidate for the RCN. The RCN was interested in a jet carrier fighter with capabilities for fleet protection as well as ground support, and the Banshee provided both. Although other aircraft were considered, it became obvious that the Banshee, then in service with the US Navy and Marines, could be quickly and fully supported. The added feature was the potential for arming the Banshee with the then new USN air-to-air Sidewinder missile.

Although the RCN preferred a production run of the latest -4 version, political blundering resulted in a delayed order. The production line was shut down and the RCN had to be content with 39 used -3 versions from the USN. These were to be acquired by the RCN as they became surplus to USN requirements.

In March 1954 VF870, with its aging Sea Fury fighters was paid off and the squadron began preparing for re-equipping with the F2H-3 Banshee. The pilots and maintenance personnel underwent extensive training at various locations in the US prior to the arrival of the aircraft. VF871 continued to fly the Sea Fury until August 1956 when it also began to re-equip with the Banshee.

During 1956 and 1957, both squadrons worked hard at achieving and maintaining operational status. They were involved in armament delivery training at CJATC Rivers, Manitoba, and airborne intercept training at USNAS Key West. The Banshee could be armed with a variety of bomb loads up to 4x500 lbs or rockets, and was equipped with four 20mm cannons. The airborne intercept radar had target search as well as a lock-on feature, which enabled the pilot to blind fire giving the aircraft a reasonable fire control capability.

HMCS Bonaventure was commissioned in January 1957, the Banshee tested in the UK by VX10 in April, arrived at Shearwater in June, and finally took VF870 in its first carrier qualification and cruise in October. In 1958 VX10 began the Sidewinder missile acquisition program and VF871 went on its first carrier qualification and exercises in February. The first Sidewinders were fired by VF870 in the UK during a November cruise. Soon after this, in March 1959, VF871 was paid off and VF870 was expanded from 8 aircraft and 10 pilots to 12 aircraft and 18 pilots. One half of the squadron acted as the combat ready team while the other half was the training section. VF870 supported their own aerobatic team, the Grey Ghosts, and they participated in many air shows, including Toronto's CNE. The squadron was also a proud member of NORAD, intercepting B-47s and B-52s regularly.

A replacement for the Banshee had not been programmed, and with the airframes approaching expiry it was decided to pay off the squadron at the end of 1962. This was accelerated, and they flew operationally for the last time on August 3. The squadron was officially paid off on 30 September 1962. The last Banshee flight was in January 1963 when an aircraft was air delivered to Calgary and given to a technical school for training purposes.

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## 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



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

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, 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.

*Frank C Willis  
Colonel (Ret'd)  
Served 1952 to 1989  
Flew Banshees 1955 - 1958 and 1959 - 1962*

\*\*\*\*\*



**(1945 to 1970 as recalled by Eddy Myers LCDR(P) RCN Ret'd.**

***Please note that the anecdotes are written in the order in which each was recalled. The numbering, on the other hand, is the chronological order of occurrence.***



**Seafire**

#### **No 4 The day a Seafire 'Prang' was cause for applause Sept 26th 1945**

R.N. 883 Seafire Squadron was formed at Arbroath, Scotland on the 18th of September, 1945 with some 25 Ex-RCAF, newly minted S/Lt's (A) RNVR pilots under the Command and Control of 4 R.N. Pilots.

Within a day of forming, we were each given dual check-outs by our respective Flight Commanders in a Miles Master, similar to a Harvard, in preparation for conversion to the Seafire.

Three days later, we started first solos on the MKIII Seafire. This was quite a leap in power and performance for us all and it soon began to show. By the time I first soloed on Sept 25, the Squadron had suffered a number of rather spectacular accidents during both take off and landings. The narrow undercarriage coupled with the unaccustomed power caused a few to leave the runway on take off and ground loop, bending wing tips and in one case almost cartwheeling. Landings were no less spectacular with numerous ground loops and nose ups.

After each incident, 'Duke' Wardrop, using his famous wry wit laced with sarcasm, rode the poor pilot unmercifully. I started recording each incident as they occurred in my Pilot's Log Book, but after 3 days gave it up as there was insufficient space available. As can be imagined, Duke's constant haranguing built up resentment amongst those who had soloed, with or without incident, and those that had not as yet soloed.

The measure of the ill feeling manifested itself when, on

Sept 26 it was Duke's turn to solo. As usual we were all gathered outside the Dispersal Hut to witness our Squadron Mates' first solo. Duke took off expertly with not so much as a waver as he changed hands to raise the undercarriage. He came around the circuit and executed a curved approach like an old hand, rounded out and landed smoothly. You could almost hear the groan as everyone felt this would lead to even more brovado. We watched him roll out straight down the runway and were turning away to go back into the hut, when there was a shout and we all turned in time to see Duke run off the end of the runway and end up on his nose. The yells and applause from the group was deafening and the smiles afterwards were sheepish to say the least. When Duke eventually arrived at the Dispersal with his parachute over his shoulder and a grim scowl, he muttered to us all ``Don't anyone say a f\*\*\*\*\*g word``.

A Post Script to this series of first-solos that racked up a dismal record of one bent Seafire for every two solos, was added with the Squadron CO, LCDR King-Joyce RN, gathering us all before him. An impressive man, tall and muscular with a dark swarthy complexion that emphasized his perpetual scowl, he quietly but sternly informed us that, in his opinion, the Squadron had damaged more Seafires in 10 days than the Luftwaffe had in the weeks leading up to D-Day. Whether true or not, we got the message and it was a day for which we were not proud.

It was shortly thereafter, that a team of pilots, lead by LCDR 'Big Jim' Hunter RCN arrived to interview and select candidates from 803 and 883 Seafire Squadrons to form the nucleus of the fledgling Canadian Naval Aviation. On Oct 18th, our Squadron was reduced from 30 to 15 Canadians amidst unfounded speculation that the reduction was precipitated by the Squadron's ignominious first-solo record.

Thankfully between then and the Squadron's decommissioning at the end of February, 1946, there were no further incidents.

#### **No 6 Disbanding 883 Seafire Squadron**

During February 1946, we received orders that 883 Squadron was to be disbanded. By the 20th all arrangements had been completed and that evening we hosted a humungous farewell party in the Wardroom for the entire Nutts Corners Air Department.

The next morning, the 21st of February 1946, hung over as all get out, we reported to the Squadron dispersal to be briefed on our up coming flight to Machrihanish on the West coast of Scotland, where we were to hand over our aircraft for disposal.

Recognizing, I'm sure, the not too bright condition of his pilots, the CO decided we would make the 30 min flight in Squadron-Line- Astern. In retrospect it was a very wise decision.

I cannot recall the exact number of aircraft but figure it must have been no less than 12. In any event I was the second to last with Rod Bays bringing up the rear. Until he passed away, Rod used to claim that I tried to kill him that day.

It was a hectic flight for all. (Maybe not so for the CO as he could not see what was transpiring behind him). Picture a dozen Seafires in line astern flown by a bunch of hung over pilots with sluggish reactions. It could be likened to the rhythmic contractions and expansions of a Piano Accordion. One moment you were reducing throttle to stay behind the aircraft ahead and in the next moment wide open to catch up. On several occasions I can recall having to bend my head as far back as I could to keep the tail wheel of the guy ahead in sight as I slid forward under him. My throttle movements were extreme and not too smooth. Rod of course in the Tail-end Charlie position was hanging on for dear life and had every reason to think I was trying to do him in.

There were several times when I saw aircraft up ahead pull laterally out of the formation no doubt to avoid a collision. When that happened the following aircraft would have to fall back to provide space for him to regain his position and so on down the line. We all arrived in one piece at Machrihanish in Scotland and, reluctantly, handed over our almost new Seafire XV's to the civilian contractor for disposal.

### **No 7 Vain Attempt to keep the Engine Cowling of my Seafire XV**

After turning our aircraft over to the contractor, we learned that they were to be guillotined and reduced to scrap. On hearing this I made a request to remove and keep the left engine cowl of my Seafire aircraft C476. My Rigger and Fitter and I had sketched and painted a full colour replica of Pegasus, the Winged Horse, (based on the logo of one



Corsair aircraft on HMS Victorious

of the Gas Companies, I believe Supertest) on the left

engine cowl, and I was proud of the result. It was not to be. I was informed the aircraft had to be turned over to the contractor who in turn was responsible to ensure that the aircraft was in tact for destruction.

### **No 8 Dave Blinkhorn had a similar experience involving a Corsair**

Dave, before being appointed to 883 Squadron, took advantage of an opportunity to sail aboard an RN carrier for a one day trip. The purpose of the sailing was to dispose of aircraft leased from the USA under the wartime Lend/Lease Agreement. The terms stipulated that if equipment, be it an aircraft or a typewriter, was being retained, the UK had to pay for it ; otherwise it was to be returned to the USA or disposed of accordingly to an agreed protocol. Thus the Carrier on which Dave sailed was loaded with Corsairs and other US Lend/ Lease aircraft with orders to sail to deep water out in the Atlantic and shove the lot of them overboard.

Dave thought this was a wizard opportunity for him to lift an 8-Day clock from the cockpit of one of the doomed aircraft. This he did by borrowing a screw driver from one of the flight deck crew. (Bear in mind that to get an aircraft 8-day clock was a cherished goal of many an aviator.)

With clock hidden in his Burbury pocket, Dave proceeded to watch the aircraft being pushed over the round down. Suddenly, all activity on the Flight Deck stopped and an announcement was made requesting that 'whoever had removed the clock from Aircraft #..... please return it to the Flight Deck Officer so that operations may resume'. As an incentive it was added that if it was returned within 10 minutes there would be no repercussions. Dave felt the pressure and recognizing the seriousness of the situation, descended to the Flight Deck and handed the clock over the Officer overseeing the operation. Pitching it into the cockpit he the wave the aircraft over the round down and into the ocean.

It does seem wasteful but as I have learned since, if all wartime produced items with peace-time usefulness were fed into the economies of Nations, post war production would have been stalled or at least seriously impacted. Therefore 'Tis better to trash the old and build anew for the sake of jobs'.

Mind you, it still hurts to think that a WWII Corsair or Spit/Seafire goes for a million or more dollars today.

### **No 3 Follow my cigarette**

I am not picking on Duke Wardrop , but just dutifully recounting anecdotes according to my memory. This event took place when we were at RAF Station Tern Hill

for our advanced flying training on Harvards before forming the Seafire Squadron.

There was a nice Pub in the Town of Market Drayton, a short distance off base that we Canadians frequented . It was customary to walk or if you owned a bike, cycle to Town. Ken Nicolson (Big Nick) had purchased a bike and

Duke had borrowed one, so on one black-a...d night the two of them decided to bike to town. ( I must pause here to explain to purests amongst you that in those days Big Nick smoked cigarettes and not the famous cigars he smoked later in life).

When Duke advised that he was unsure of the way, Nick devised a plan for Duke whereby he was to keep an eye on and follow the glow of Nick's cigarette. So off they went in the dark.

The road to town was curved and descending, with 4ft hedgerows on each side covered in brambles. So with a burning cigarette clenched and glowing out of the right side of his mouth, Nick started down the hill, closely followed by a trusting Duke. As they descended and speed built up, the cigarette began burning closer and closer to Nick's face. When it got too close, without thinking, Nick took the butt out of his mouth and flicked it into the hedgerow at the side of the road. Well, I'm sure you are ahead of me, the unsuspecting Duke followed the trail of sparks right into the bramble bushes covering the hedgerow.

Nick of course heard the commotion braked and turned around to face a very irate Duke who commenced calling his recent leader a series of names unprintable in these pages.

Several days later, after Duke had cooled down, Nick took great delight in giving his deep-throated chuckling account of the incident to all around the bar to our collective delight.

#### **No 5        **Unscheduled landing on the Isle of Man - Nov 30,1945****

While based at Nutts Corners, about 15 miles West of Belfast, Northern Ireland, I was scheduled to fly as wingman to our Senior(P), 'RIP' Petrie, an Aussie in the RN, for formation practice, oxygen climb and section drill. After an hour or so we were out over the Irish Sea, above cloud, and uncertain of our bearing to base. So RIP called Tower for a VHF/DF Let-down Approach and we were switched to their frequency.

We followed their usual procedure of transmitting for bearing and afterward turning at right angles to eliminate the resultant 180 degree ambiguity, we were vectored toward Nutts Corners with instructions to descend in stages in preparation for landing. When we broke through the undercast, however, we were still over water and

approaching what looked like an island. We were now running low on fuel and RIP spotted an airfield and we landed. A man in coveralls came up to the aircraft and advised us that the airfield had been closed to traffic for a number of months and there were no military services available. We also learned that we had landed at Ronalsway on the Isle of Man.

Needless to say RIP was pissed off with the VHF/ DF we had received and stormed off to talk to Nutts Corner and arrange for fuel. Meanwhile, I kept watch on the aircraft. It wasn't long before RIP returned and shortly thereafter a civilian fuel tender, he had arranged, arrived and refuelled us and we were on our way home. I wasn't privy to the meeting RIP had with the VHF/ DF people

After we landed but I can imagine he gave them an earful for endangering us. I had no idea how the situation came about, except to speculate that the D/F operator, likely working two aircraft at once, gave us the headings appropriate for the other aircraft.

LATE BULLETIN I'm delighted to report that whilst double-checking the above account against maps of the area, and after almost 67 years, I am now convinced of the probable cause. The Isle of Man is between 60 and 70 miles ESE of Belfast which was likely close to the bearing we were on when RIP called for the VHF/DF vector to Nutts Corner. The operator likely failed to interpret correctly the results of our right angle turn (to eliminate the 180 degree ambiguity) and gave us the ESE bearing, rather than the reciprocal, which caused us to fly away from Base toward the Isle of Man. It's disturbing even now to think that, had we been forced to ditch, Base wouldn't have had a clue where we were and would have searched to the West.

#### **No 9        **Balmoral Castle****

While attending Operational Flying training on Seafires with the RN at Lossiemouth Scotland from September to December 1947, I was briefed for a 100ft low level cross country flight. As Balmoral Castle (vacation residence for the Royal Family) was within 5 miles of my track I was cautioned to avoid it. You've guess it, after a half hour of barrelling along at 100ft or less at 200+ Kts over Scotland's mountainous and hilly terrain, my first recognizable pinpoint was Balmoral Castle. While I didn't go right over it , I was less than the margin of avoidance I was briefed. I had visions of the King and/or Queen taking down my number.

I owned up to the incident when I landed, sure someone at the Castle would report it. There was no fuss made however, as all the instructors agreed that the Royals were not in residence at Balmoral and I had not deliberately beat the place up. WHEW!!!!

*Continued on page 36*





Grumman CS2F-2 "Tracker"  
(RCN 1577, C-FUDH)

## TRACKER IN THE SHUBIE

*Joe Paquette*

An issue of the COPA newsletter had an article and a beautiful picture of TRACKER # 1577 as it is displayed in the Canadian Warplanes Heritage Museum in Hamilton.

This article sent me off to my logbook to see what ties I had to that particular aircraft. I am former navalair pilot who spent from Sep.'63 to Aug.'70 flying that wonderful, noisy, stubby, powerful aircraft. I spent four years in VS-880 and another two years as an instructor on VU-32. During that period I acquired some 2931 hours on the TRACKER.

1577 had been in VS-880 and then VU-32 and it seems that I followed it to VU-32 when it moved as I flew it in both squadrons. Its eventual withdrawal from service seems to coincide with the cessation of operations from HMCS BONAVENTURE and the reduction in the number of TRACKERS needed to fill its new shore-side role.

All of this to lead into the story which can now be told of the crash of 1577 into the Shubenacadie River near South Maitland, Nova Scotia. This crash was duly reported in the Chronicle-Herald on August 14, 1969:

*"PLANE CRASH RUMORS UNTRUE POLICE SAY  
South Maitland - RCMP said yesterday that a plane did not crash near the Shubenacadie River on Wednesday evening.*

*They investigated a report from a South Maitland resident who believed that a plane had crashed but when they checked the river bank, along with a group of residents, they said they found no evidence to substantiate the report.*

*They said all military planes from Shearwater and Debert are accounted for. Their planes had been*

*doing maneuvers in the area.*

*Several persons in the South Maitland area said the planes were flying very low during the early evening."*

The rest of the story:

The BONAVENTURE was to be retired and there was a chance for "all comers" to get a last deck landing before she left service. This meant that we had to first re-qualify on Field Carrier Landing Practice at Debert when a simulated deck and landing mirror system was set up.

Wayne "Butch" Foster was a RCAF pilot flying the T-33 at VU-32 and he and I were trading time, me giving him instruction on the TRACKER and he giving me time on the T-33. Wayne mentioned that it would be a GREAT idea if he was to get carrier qualified before "BONNIE" disappeared ... and the plan was hatched.

We two mismatched VU-32 pilots inserted ourselves into the VS-880 landing practice schedule at Debert on August 13, 1969 and off we flew.

Well the flight took us up along the Shubenacadie River and the steep river valley was too nice to leave alone on that beautiful afternoon. We took turns seeing how low we could descend into the valley as we followed the meandering river. With a couple of practice runs and some anticipation of the turns, we managed to get the adrenaline flowing. We carried on to Debert, got our training in and returned home feeling quite satisfied with ourselves.

It was only the next day when one of the servicing crew dropped the aforementioned article on the sign-out desk in front of us that we realized that we "may" have been seen at our play time. Why he suspected it might have been us I will never know. In any event we hunkered down and waited for the proverbial %\$#@ to hit the fan but no one else ever looked our way.

The 12 VS-880 crews doing landing practice that afternoon were grilled intensively and pleaded not guilty and somewhere in the confusion that mismatched VU-32 crew was overlooked. We were certainly ready to admit our culpability IF we had been asked ... but no one asked.

AND THAT IS THE REST OF THE STORY.

On behalf of Butch and myself we belatedly apologize to any of those pilots serving in VS 880 at the time ... we really would have owned up if someone had just asked.

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**Letters to the Editor:**

**Pop Fotherington** writes:

On the day the war ended in Europe the Admiralty ordered all Dominion personnel to be returned to their home Dominion by the most direct route at the earliest possible date. At that time the RN had a Corsair squadron based in Nowra, Australia. There were three Canadians in that squadron, Hammy Gray, Stu Ruddick and Pop Fotheringham. Hammy didn't get the movement order in time. Not only did Stu and Pop avoid operations but got to spend three months on Lodge & Comp in Sidney awaiting passage home. A very fortunate set of circumstances. An interesting note for naval aviation history. *Pop*

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**Note from the Editor:**

Over the past several months, years, I've sent out the below noted note on several occasions. Finally, I did get a couple of replies. In particular "The History of Family Members in Other Armed Forces etc." You will see these articles further on in this edition of WARRIOR.

I am herewith repeating the original request and I hope to hear from YOU.

**Do you have or had relatives that served in other countries Armed Forces? Please write and tell us about them.**

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**Frank Zareski (in open jacket) and Mystery Officer**

Can you identify the 'Mystery Officer' with Frank Zareski? Frank's son John would like to know who he is. Please let us know or email John directly. [zareskijj@gmail.com](mailto:zareskijj@gmail.com)

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**Les Southwell** writes: Dear Kay, All the best to you. We recognize the wonderful job you do. The following picture is of me and my daughter "HMS" Heather May Sanft (nee Southwell). I don't know how that other fellow got in.  
Best Regards, *Les*

**Spencer Jespersen** writes: Just wanted to offer a quick "Thank You" for an article printed in your summer 2011 publication. One of the pilots at another of our bases pointed me towards your publication, saying he read a story about a Lt. Jespersen and wondered if we were related. My Dad was the "Lieutenant Jespersen" in the Sea King crash article by Master Corporal Ron Hill. I never knew the story as Stan died in a crash in Trenton in 1982 during a test flight of a T-33 that was just out of maintenance.

Anyway, thanks for the article, you never know who you're going to reach!

Spencer Jespersen  
[sjespersen@blackcombaviation.com](mailto:sjespersen@blackcombaviation.com)  
 Sent from my iPad

**Frank Dowdall** writes: Hi Kay. In the Winter 2012 issue of Warrior you asked for some 'Hairy Tales'. I am not sure if you mean hairy as in scary or as in 'hairy bag', an affectionate term often used to describe those young lads in bell bottom trousers that used to inhabit Shearwater. I have attached a techies tales that might be considered hairy. I sent this to you about three years ago but it never made it into print. Perhaps its time has come. Keep up the great work. Cheers Frank Dowdall

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**Ken Edmonds** writes: please amend your copy of the 'input listing' on page 35 of the Winter 2012 WARRIOR edition article 'Crash on HMCS FRASER Deck' to read as follows:

Input by Ken Edmonds, Fraser Steenson, Don McQuarrie, Wayne Fairbairn and Maj John Edmonds.

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**Gordon Gray** writes: I have been on a protracted search for a list of Fleet Sonar Men that served in HS 50 during the H04S years and have compiled a list and hope it is complete. However, I would like the list published in WARRIOR to see if there are any errors or additions that the readership can provide.

#### 1960 - 64 (Collection)

C2SN4 Sam Graham  
 P1SN4 Barry Howles  
 P2SN4 Ralph Villeneuve  
 LSSN3 Fogarty  
 P2SN4 Knobby Clark  
 P2SN4 Tim MacDonald  
 LSSN3 Zobatar  
 LSSN3 Harold Kemp  
 LSSN3 Ackerman  
 LSSN3 Hutchings  
 LSSN3 Ridgeway

C2SN4 Mel Stokes  
 P1SN4 Tim MacDonald  
 P2SN4 Robert Ellis  
 P2SN4 Paul Simpson  
 LSSN3 Victor Barnes  
 LSSN3 Dave Shuman  
 LSSN3 Joseph Urie  
 LSSN3 Dale Smith

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From **George Plawski**

Last autumn, Conair Aviation donated a Firecat to the Langley Aviation Museum. In the RCN, this airplane flew with VU32 with the tail number 1539. To complete a dossier on this machine's history, the Museum would like to know if, by chance, this aircraft had ever landed on the Carrier. Would you kindly check to see if any of you had ever taken this airplane to the deck.

With thanks and best wishes to you all, George.

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### Please note!

#### **50/50 DRAW**

The 50/50 draw for 2013 will be held 15 Nov. It will be the only draw this year.

Tickets will be \$2 each or 6 for \$10. If you wish tickets you may order them over our toll free line with your credit card - it's the easiest way to play. You call us and we put the tickets in for you. If you wish tickets sent to you, you may order them the same way.

You may call toll free 1-888-497-7779 or locally 461-0062 or you may email us at [samf@samfoundation.ca](mailto:samf@samfoundation.ca)

Or mail us at:

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

**Tickets must be in our office NLT 10 Nov.** If your mail is slow, then mail early - don't miss the date.

Good Luck!



## **CAPTAIN EUGENE PLAWSKI, POLISH NAVY 1895-1972**

Eugene was born in Novorossiysk, on the Black Sea, in 1895, where his father commanded a Tsarist cavalry squadron. Due to his mother's Alsace-Lorraine origins, French was the lingua franca in the household, but his father brought him up to feel not as a Russian, but as a Pole as befitted his own ancestry.

[You may recall that Poland had been divided up between Russia, Prussia and Austria at the end of the 18th century, and ever since Poles tried to maintain their culture as best as they could while living under the occupying powers.]

Eugene was five years old when a Russian General arrived to inspect the squadron. That evening after dinner, the satisfied General lifted him up onto his knee and said; you are going to grow up to be a fine young Russian. I am not Russian, responded the boy, I am Polish. After a momentary silence, the General set him down, and nodding to his staff wordlessly left the house.

A few weeks later my grandfather received orders appointing him as the garrison commander at the furthest eastern outpost of Siberia, between Harbin and Vladivostok. The Trans Siberian railway was not yet completed, and the journey during that winter of 1901 took 32 days. Once settled, however, they discovered a land of unbelievable fecundity stocked to the brim with fish, fowl and game.

After completing his schooling, my father enrolled in the Naval Academy in St. Petersburg, graduating in 1914. His first appointment was to a destroyer in the Black Sea as a mine and torpedo specialist; in December of that year, he was severely wounded in a skirmish with the Turkish cruiser Mecidiye, which caused him to be hospitalised for four months. On returning to the fleet, he spent some time as the adjutant to the famous Admiral Kolczak, but then he had a change of heart. As he wrote in his memoirs; "I had spent the first 22 months of WWI serving in destroyers of the Tsarist Imperial Navy on the Black Sea in operations against the Turks, Bulgars and Germans. I had logged 110,000 nautical miles in the defence of our fleet as well as in offensive blockades of enemy shores and other strategic targets. My ships took part in invasive raids, shelled the defences of the Bosphorus, sank dozens of freighters and hundreds of sailing vessels which supplied the Turkish armies on the Caucasian front, laid mines, took part in night skirmishes, participated in artillery battles with the German battle cruiser Goeben, light cruiser Breslau, Turkish cruiser Mecidiye, and in the sinking 2 Turkish gunboats. I had earned the respect of my superiors, received several battle decorations, lived a life filled with adventures and my future appeared particularly rosy. Suddenly, in September of 1916, acting entirely on a whim, I decided to push all of it aside and requested a transfer to Naval Aviation."

After being accepted, Eugene was sent for flight training on seaplanes, mostly army rejects or restored wrecks, near St Petersburg. At the onset of winter the schooling continued on the ice free Black Sea where he began to take part in operational flying.

He described one such episode as follows: "Sometime around the start of March I was sent to the Bosphorus on a photo mission. A downward pointing camera was mounted beneath the fuselage equipped with a timer which, once started, automatically tripped the shutter at per-arranged intervals.

I was ordered to fly at 2000 meters and start the photo sequence over a particular geographic location. I decided on arrival that, though I risked much more accurate anti-aircraft fire, I could get better pictures from a lower altitude. Accordingly, I descended to 1000 meters, started the camera over the prescribed location, and brazened it out in the teeth of the opposition without sustaining a hit. I was very pleased with myself when I returned to the ship and delivered the camera.

Later when the film was exposed I was called in to report to the CO. Expecting a commendation, I was very surprised to be met by particularly hostile expressions from the Commander and his staff. "What altitude were you ordered to fly at?" "2000 meters, Sir." "And from what altitude did you take these pictures?" "1000 meters, Sir, I thought I could get better resolution..." "Come over here and have a look." I approached the table and saw the strip of photos. They didn't seem to join up. "The intervals were calculated to provide an overlap from 2000 meters. From 1000, you provided us with nothing but a series of gaps!" I was marched back to the airplane and had to repeat the whole exercise.

The Germans were now better prepared, and right at the end of my mission I was attacked by a Taube. With luck, I managed to escape, but on approaching our fleet, I was almost shot down by our own artillery.

At the onset of the October Revolution, with its attendant anarchy, he was ordered to fly a patrol; as his airplane was unserviceable, he signed out the executive officer's machine. As he taxied out, he felt his aileron controls to be unresponsive. On return to the dock, he discovered that the cause was wooden wedges driven into the mechanism. What is the meaning of this? He enquired of the chief mechanic. Sorry Sir, the man replied casually, we didn't know you'd be flying this machine. We were trying to kill the Executive Officer.

This awkward complication of an already sufficiently dangerous occupation convinced him to abandon aviation and return to the fleet.

He was appointed as Executive Officer to a destroyer, but as a result of the now rampant anti-authoritarian drive for

democratisation, ships began to be run by revolutionary committees which elected their officers. In his case, the CO and the Engineering officer, recognising they were not popular, left the ship before the election, and my father was chosen to assume command. He was twenty two years old. [Details of these fascinating times can be obtained from information I will append to the end of this biographical sketch.]

In 1918, having barely escaped the revolutionary chaos with his life, my father made his way to the now Independent Poland, and joined the forming Polish Navy.

He was instrumental in its development and commanded a succession of surface vessels, but when the Navy decided to purchase submarines, he was chosen to be the first commanding officer. This was 1925; he was now married to my mother, Maria, and along with his son Witold, the family was sent to France where he and the future boat crews spent several years learning their craft. Subsequently, with no previous submarine experience, he commanded the first boat, then the squadron of four, and in 1936 became OIC of underwater operations.

He happened to be in Paris with a military mission when the war broke out. Unable to return to Poland and desperate for news of his family, he made his way to England where he became engaged in the creation of the

Polish Navy in exile. It was some time before he learned that, on finding his uniforms in the house, the Germans burned the place to the ground leaving his family homeless. In 1940, he was given command of a brand new "N" class destroyer rechristened the "Piorun", Polish for thunder.

Endless convoy escort duties followed, until in May of 1941, Capt. Vian's destroyer squadron, to which he was assigned, was dispatched to intercept the Bismarck. Around midnight on that squally black ass night, Piorun acquired visual contact with a large ship. With HMS Sheffield's position unknown, he sent a recognition signal. The reply in the form of a salvo neatly solved the identity problem, and for the next hour, the Piorun manoeuvred desperately to avoid being hit while drawing the enemy's fire, thus hoping to present the Bismarck to the other ships for a torpedo attack. Contact was eventually lost, and by morning the Royal Navy was in a position to overwhelm and sink this gallant, though poorly commanded ship. Under my father's command the Piorun continued escort duties which included a convoy to Malta and a visit to Halifax.

In 1943 he was sent to Stockholm as Naval Attaché, following which he was given command of the cruiser Dragon, and by 1945 he was appointed as Chief of Staff. Until the disbandment of the Polish armed forces in 1947, he commanded the Resettlement Corps, the purpose of which was to find immigration opportunities for those who chose not to return to Communist occupied Poland.

In 1946 my mother facilitated my escape from Poland by signing me up for a trip to Denmark sponsored by the Danish Red Cross, who conveniently permitted me to be "liberated" by my father. A year later, my mother succeeded in a harrowing escape which required the crossing of two defended borders, and joined us in London. There were only three of us as my brother Witold, who fought in the underground army, was executed in Norway in 1944 during an unsuccessful attempt to escape to Sweden from a German work camp. He was barely twenty, and the world was sadly deprived of an exceptional artistic talent.

In 1948, as a result of an invitation from Adm. Mainguy whom my father had met during the war, we came to Canada and moved to Duncan where we lived on this generous family's property for a year.

During this time my father held numerous positions, starting as first shoveler of a septic tank excavation team [in tandem with another decorated Polish Navy Captain], followed by a promotion to janitor in a car dealership, eventually rising to the status of a unionised labourer on a green chain at the Chemainus lumber mill. Concurrently with the latter job, he formed a partnership with another family of Polish DP's with whom it was hoped to establish a guest house on a recently acquired property fronting Somenos Lake. This once genteel and elegant domicile, which included vast gardens and orchards which years of



neglect returned to their original state, required a complete overhaul, which could only be accomplished on weekends and evenings after work. Several rooms were ready within a few months, but all too frequently the few visitors who took advantage of the splendid location and opulent Polish cuisine took the meaning of the title "Guest House" too literally, and departed without bothering to remunerate the hosts for their hospitality.

Just to round out the workload, my father's patriotism did not permit him to refuse the offer to produce a weekly Polish radio program every Sunday from Nanaimo. This meant that both parents prepared the show the night before, after which my father travelled by bus, which was cheaper than driving, but which removed an entire work day from the schedule.

In 1952, concurrent with his failing health, collapse of the business and the terminal unravelling of the partnership, he was literally saved by the cavalry which arrived in the form of an offer from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Would he like to accept a job offer as a translator in the Special Branch? Sometimes, as Tennessee Williams wrote, there is God so quickly! The family moved to Victoria where they acquired a fixer upper, which after six months of break back toil stood ready with two rooms for rent. A more respectable long term clientele moved into the house, and along with a faithful Lab and a flock of chickens the family started to elbow into the coveted ranks of the middle class.

In 1955 the RCMP moved my father's job to Vancouver, and the now familiar routine of fixing up an old house and preparing rooms for rent started all over again. After the age of 65, his contract was renewed annually till he was 76, as his knowledge of Polish, Russian, English, French and German plus a host of Slavic languages, coupled with a lifetime of experience, rendered his service in the Special Branch indispensable.

My father was a gifted raconteur and possessor of a photographic memory; the accounts of his naval exploits and adventures, which are both historically fascinating and anecdotally hilarious, were published in 2003.

Not many people can boast a career which included aviation as well as command positions in surface ships and submarines, and participation in two world wars.

Added to this was his indomitable sense of character, which he exuded regardless of whether attired for ditch digging or a formal reception.

He was recognised for his loyalty by his compatriots, and held a particular lifelong respect for the non commissioned men under his command.

During their life in Canada, both parents wrote for Polish publications, and were continually active as leaders of

immigrant organizations.

Although they were proud Canadians, I knew that they would have wished to be buried in Poland. Accordingly, in 2004, I took their ashes to Gdynia where they were interred in the Naval Cemetery with full national honours.

[Anyone wishing to obtain my translation of the chapters of my father's memoirs dealing with naval aviation and service during the Russian revolution, please contact me at [plawski34@gmail.com](mailto:plawski34@gmail.com)] **From George Plawski**

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Storm Party Shearwater Wardroom 1959**

From Bud Jardine

Took the picture then had to catch a train - I missed a good one!

Count the stripes - military and civilian - which this crew later acquired.

Front: Jim Todd - (Airline Captain)

Middle: Pete Hamilton (Colonel)  
Gary White (Airline Captain)  
Jim Macintosh (Lieutenant Commander)  
Glen Potter (Commander))

Top: Keith Sterling (Airline Captain)  
Glenn Brown (Colonel)

\*\*\*\*\*



## GENERAL KAZIMIERZ SOSNKOWSKI, POLISH ARMY



*from George Plawski*

On the passing of our friend Joe Sosnkowski, I decided that you would find it interesting to be introduced to his father, **General Kazimierz Sosnkowski**, who played a decisive role in Polish as well as European history until his death in 1969, and his exceptional mother Jadwiga.

Kazimierz was born in Warsaw in 1885 when Poland was just a geographical expression. Sovereign Poland ceased to exist in the late part of the 18th century having been annexed and divided up by Russia, Prussia and Austria. During this time the Polish language and culture were systematically suppressed, which the Poles fiercely opposed, causing the land to be submerged in a state of continuing revolt lasting 123 years, eventually ending in 1919 with the restoration of Polish sovereignty at the Treaty of Versailles.

Sosnkowski was thus brought up in this tormented climate which deeply affected his youth and early manhood. After high school, he began to study architecture, but soon his time was absorbed by underground resistance activities. One of the most famous Polish freedom fighters who believed that independence could only be achieved by force of arms was Jozef Pilsudski; he was subsequently to become the Chief of State [1918-1922] and eventually, through a coup d'etat, the ruler of Poland. [1926-1935]

Sosnkowski met him in 1906, and though 19 years his junior, his skills as a superior organizer as well as a military leader soon became apparent to the leader who accepted him as his closest collaborator and appointed him as Chief of Staff.

During the course of their long partnership, Pilsudski entrusted Sosnkowski with increasingly important responsibilities both administrative and diplomatic, at which he excelled, eventually becoming Minister of Military Affairs and Vice President of Poland.

In 1920, Sosnkowski took an active part in what today is a scarcely remembered war against the Soviets, a highly complicated affair which Pilsudski started with a misguided attempt to liberate the Ukraine. This adventure by an economically and militarily weakened Poland was exploited by Lenin who attacked the overextended Polish flank. After initial gains, the Poles were driven back to the vicinity of Warsaw where the Russians had assembled an army of more than 5 million men whose 70 divisions were faced by

20 on the Polish side. Though some Poles were highly trained WW1 veterans, they were augmented by hastily organized and untried reserves.

No one gave the Poles a chance, and in fact the Western Powers, highly critical of Pilsudski's belligerent act, maintained an almost total boycott of vital military supplies.

Lenin was convinced that by crushing Poland he would establish a Red Bridge to Europe, particularly to Germany which he surmised was ripe for revolution. With a vastly superior Bolshevik army gathered around Warsaw, Pilsudski understood that to fight a defensive war of attrition would guarantee defeat.

Against all rules of warfare, he removed the troops from the Warsaw defences, assembled them in secret and delivered an unexpected blow on the flanks of the Bolshevik army. This caught the Russians completely by surprise; it caused them to disperse and retreat, and following one of the most decisively lopsided defeats in military history, forced them eventually to sue for peace in 1920. Poles have ever since referred to these events as "The Miracle on the Vistula".

During these engagements, Sosnkowski was given command of a Reserve Army, mostly cavalry, whom he characteristically led from the front on horseback, achieving significant victories over the enemy. Historians have noted that wherever he led troops in battle, starting with the pre WW1 Legions and continuing through WW2, the army under his command never suffered a defeat. At the end of hostilities, he was made responsible for the organization of the armed forces, and immediately recognized that the proposed navy would require a port. It was as a result of his initiative that the fishing village of Gdynia commenced its expansion to become the future home base of the Polish Navy.

In 1925, Sosnkowski was appointed as a delegate to a League of Nations conference in Geneva where he was elected to chair the Military, Naval and Air Technical Committee. Among his achievements in that post was his proposal and implementation of an international agreement to outlaw chemical and bacteriological warfare.

During the pre WW2 years Sosnkowski held numerous high administrative positions. A posting to a fighting command finally came ten days after the German attack in September, 1939, when he was ordered to the southern front. Though the situation he encountered was already hopeless, through skilful leadership he succeeded to organize the dispersed forces at the head of which he achieved the only victory of the campaign by defeating an elite German motorized division near Lwow.

The Russian attack on Poland\* on the 17th of September rendered the country impossible to defend on two fronts and Poland capitulated five days later. \*[This happened without a declaration of war and in spite of a current Polish-Russian non aggression treaty. It came about in

accordance with the secret agreement between Stalin and Hitler, now known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed in August, 1939, when the two powers agreed to divide up between them Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland into spheres of influence, and guaranteed non aggression to one another. We know how that ended up.]

Sosnkowski, along with as many Poles as were able, saved themselves by making their way to Hungary, and eventually to France to fight another day.

At the end of August, sensing that war was about to begin, the General's wife Jadwiga sent three of her youngest sons, Peter, Joe and Tony, in the care of a family retainer, to Bucharest. After the start of hostilities, fifteen year old John, after a harrowing escape during which the column of refugees streaming out of Poland was strafed by the Luftwaffe, eventually succeeded in joining his three brothers in Rumania from where they made their way to France.

The oldest brother, Alex, fashioned a creative escape route through Lithuania, then partly by row boat to Sweden, from where he made his way to England and enlisted in the Polish Navy in exile.

Joe's mother Jadwiga courageously chose to remain in Warsaw to work in a hospital as a volunteer nurse. In March, 1940, with the help of a double agent, a Polish Jew employed as a secretary to the Chilean Consulate in Belgium, she made her escape. This gentleman, under the protection of the German Intelligence Abwehr, was permitted to travel to Poland where he conducted a business composed of smuggling out gold and other valuables collected from Jewish families who consigned these to him for safe keeping in Belgium. For a fee, he also smuggled

out women. Armed with appropriate documentation identifying Jadwiga as his wife, [apparently Madame number six], they arrived in Belgium and shortly after this she was reunited with her husband and four sons in Paris.

On the eve of the fall of France, the Polish government in exile was evacuated to Britain, and Jadwiga with her sons secured passage on the RN cruiser, *Arethusa*.

After a short stay, she took advantage of an invitation from the Polish Consul in Montreal, T. Brzezinski, [father of future US National Security adviser, Zbigniew] and escorted her sons to Canada, whom she left in his care. Then, remarkably, she returned to England to be at her husband's side.

From France tens of thousands of Poles were evacuated to Great Britain where they formed the Polish armed forces in exile. General Sosnkowski was instrumental in their organization which at their height numbered 249 000 men and women. One of Sosnkowski's responsibilities was to act as the minister in charge of liaison with the underground army in the homeland, and was also chosen to act as the President in waiting in the event that the

person occupying this position should become incapacitated.

When General Sikorski, the Commander in Chief of all Polish Armed Forces was killed in an aircraft accident off Gibraltar in 1943, General Sosnkowski was appointed as his successor. Some of the most active engagements during his tenure in command were the capture of Monte Cassino, the victory at Falaise, and the parachute landings at Arnhem.

In the summer of 1944, Germans were being squeezed on two fronts. With the Russians approaching Warsaw from the east, the Polish underground Army [AK] was keen to start an insurrection aimed at taking the city with as little damage as possible. The Polish Government in exile had approved this plan, empowering the AK to start the action when they deemed to be ready. Sosnkowski was entirely opposed to this initiative, suspicious of treachery from the Russians, and believing that the AK could not expect promises of help from the West to materialize. He attempted to convince the Government of the inadvisability of the uprising, but constitutionally his hands were tied; he was only permitted to offer advice, but did not have the authority to issue an order countermanding the Government. His attempts to convince the AK were sabotaged by his opponents, and failed to gain traction.

The disaster he foresaw soon unfolded. What a tragic way to be proved right. The uprising commenced on the first of August, 1944.

In accordance with the plan of battle, most of Warsaw was in AK hands in 3 days. Now the Russians, who had reached the Vistula on the outskirts of the city, were ordered by Stalin to stop their advance and took no part in the fight which left the Germans with a free hand. This was of course a political decision aimed at getting rid of as many Polish fighting men as possible who were bound later to form the opposition to the communist takeover of the country.

The uprising, which was envisaged to last a week, continued for sixty three days till the totally exhausted and decimated AK was forced to capitulate; what was left of the city was then, building by building, systematically destroyed by the Germans.

Throughout the uprising, Sosnkowski's frantic attempts to organize help from the West was met with great reluctance. Although some flights with aid did get through, the fact that Stalin refused permission for the Allies to operate from any of the 100 available airfields behind the Russian front rendered the flights from distant England or Italy and back again, almost suicidal. Disinclination to undertake the massive help Sosnkowski demanded of the Allies prompted him to write a highly critical memorandum which immediately caused a political storm. Stalin, Churchill, as well as hostile members of his own government, called for his dismissal.

At the end of September 1944, in spite of spirited

opposition of the AK, the armed forces in exile, the public as well as loyal members of his government, the pressure proved too great; in expelling him from his post, the Polish President, in a quivering voice, stated: "I know I'm committing a highly immoral act, however as Almighty God is my witness, I have no choice."

In November, 1944, accompanied by his wife, the General joined his sons in Montreal. Like many refugees, he started life on a farm, which was later transformed into a guest house. For the entire duration of his life in Canada, he became an indefatigable leader of the North American Polish Diaspora till his death in 1969.

Apart from his notable military, diplomatic and political career, Sosnkowski was a man of culture and erudition. He painted, wrote poetry and was a talented pianist. His literary accomplishments included translating into Polish works of Goethe, Shakespeare, Lermontov, and particularly nearly the entire oeuvre of his favourite poet, Baudelaire.

He knew ancient Greek and Latin, and was fluent in Russian, French, Italian, German and English, and if that wasn't enough, he also became familiar with Spanish.

Men of such accomplishment are rare in any age, and it is a privilege for me to introduce him and his family to you in this unfortunately highly condensed and necessarily incomplete biographical sketch.



Sosnkowski inspecting on the Cruiser, Dragon, Commanded by my father in 1943. My father is on the left.

\*\*\*\*\*



### Daisy, Daisy

Daisy Daisy, give me your answer do.  
I'm half crazy all for the love of you.  
It won't be a stylish marriage,  
I can't afford a carriage.  
But you'll look sweet,  
Upon the seat,  
Of a bicycle made for two.

Michael, Micheal, here is your answer true.  
I'm not crazy all for the love of you.  
There won't be any marriage,  
If you can't afford a carriage.  
'Cause I'll be switched,  
If I get hitched,  
On a bicycle built for two!"





**GENERAL INFO**

Due to licensing requirements for the events, please be advised there have been no special provisions for children under the age of 19.

**MEET & GREET:** \$10:00 per Person

**TRANSPORTATION**

Please indicate if you might avail yourself of transportation, if available, to and from downtown hotels to 12 Wing Shearwater on Wednesday, 31 July 2013.

**GALA DINNER:** \$75.00 per Person

**MENU:**

- Spinach Salad
- Grilled Beef Tenderloin & Roasted Chicken Breast
- Dark Chocolate & Chai Bavarois with Caramel Panache Surprise & Creme Anglaise

If you have Food Allergies/Restrictions, please indicate on your registration Form.

**GOLF TOURNAMENT:** \$75.00

**Do you require Rental Clubs? If so, please circle your swing:**

**You:** LH / RH      **Guest:** LH / RH

**Are you in a Foursome? Please list other players:**

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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2013

**REGISTRATION OPENS:** 1:00 pm

Sea King Club, 12 Wing Shearwater

**Bus Tours Commence:** 1:30 pm

**MEET & GREET:** 4:00 pm

Officers Mess, 12 Wing Shearwater

Registration continues

(at Officers Mess) 4:00 pm

Entertainment -- Cash Bar -- Light Food.

**Last Bus for Hotels:** 9:30 pm

**Bar Closes:** 10:00 pm

THURSDAY, AUGUST 01, 2013

**PARADE:** 12:00 pm

Grand Parade, Halifax. (Seating will be available for those with mobility issues. See info sheet for details)

**EVENING COLOURS:** 5:30 pm

Grand Parade, Halifax

**RECEPTIONS (cash bar):** 6:00 pm

World Trade & Convention Centre

**DINNER:** 7:00 pm

Dress: Jacket & Tie / Uniform /Mess Kit

FRIDAY, AUGUST 02, 2013

**GOLF TOURNAMENT &**

**PARTICIPANT DINNER:** 1:00 pm

Hartlen Point-Forces Golf Club

# SEA KING

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY



**WHERE & WHEN**

12 WING, SHEARWATER

WORLD TRADE & CONVENTION CENTRE, HALIFAX, NS

JULY 31 to AUGUST 02, 2013

## ACCOMMODATIONS:

The following hotels have indicated Special Rates for the Sea King 50th Anniversary:

Atlantica Hotel Halifax (\$139.00/night)

1980 Robie Street (at Quinpool Rd.), Halifax NS B3H 3G5  
1-888-810-7288

<http://www.atlanticahotelhalifax.com/>

Atlantica Hotel & Marina Oak Island (\$110.00-\$120.00/night)

36 Treasure Drive, Western Shore NS B0J 3M0  
1-800-565-5075

<http://www.atlanticaoakisland.com/en/home/default.aspx>

Delta Barrington (\$145.00/night)

1875 Barrington Street, Halifax NS B3J 3L6

1-888-423-3582

<http://www.deltahotels.com/en/hotels/nova-scotia/delta-halifax/>

Prince George Hotel (\$175.00/night)

1725 Market Street, Halifax NS B3J 3N9

1-800-565-1567

<http://www.princegeorgehotel.com/>

Delta Halifax (\$145.00/night)

1990 Barrington Street (across the street from Delta Barrington, in Scotia Square), Halifax NS B3J 1P2

1-888-423-3582

<http://www.deltahotels.com/en/hotels/nova-scotia/delta-halifax/>

Please indicate that you are with the Sea King 50th when booking. Rates are subject to availability.

For RV'ers, there are various camp sites in the area. Book early.

TAXIS: Bob's Taxi: 463-2222; Blue Bell: 465-5555, Casino: 429-6666; Eastern Passage Cabs: 465-4754

## PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

**If not registering online, please make cheques or money orders, payable to Sea King 50th & mail registration form to:**

Sea King 50th Anniversary Association  
C/O Shearwater Aviation Museum  
34 Bonaventure Street  
PO Box 5000 Station Main  
Shearwater, NS, B0J 3A0  
[signalcharlie@seaking50.ca](mailto:signalcharlie@seaking50.ca)

Credit Card Info (check):

Visa \_\_\_\_\_ M/C \_\_\_\_\_ Amex \_\_\_\_\_

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Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code (last 3 digits on back of card): \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Please check) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel./Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # Persons: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your choice(s):

Wednesday Only: \$10.00 per person

Thursday Only: \$75.00 per person

Friday Only: \$75.00 per person

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require bus transport to 12 Wing and return to your downtown hotel(31 July only, if available)?

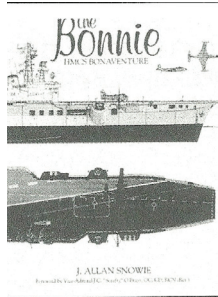
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate any special dietary requirements.*

**NOTE:** Dinner Tables hold up to 10 people.

If you have seating preferences, please contact [signalcharlie@seaking50.ca](mailto:signalcharlie@seaking50.ca) to indicate who you wish to sit with. (max 10)





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Codicil to the Last Will and Testament of \_\_\_\_\_

which Last Will and Testament is dated this \_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_.

I hereby add to that said Will as follows:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation,

the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid out of my general estate.

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

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

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## Shearwater Hockey snippets

from Vernon Conrad

### Shearwater Flyers Win Senior Championship

By Vernon Conrad

Dartmouth-- Shearwater Flyers captured the Halifax - Dartmouth Senior Hockey League championship at the Memorial Rink, Saturday night by completely out-playing the Stadacona Blue Tides 4-1 in the third and final Playoff game. Each team had won a game prior to the finale.

Shearwater showed power in every department to notch its important win. They dominated play from the opening whistle and never gave the Blue Tides a chance to organize their short passing plays. Flyers played a semi-defensive style of hockey that kept the opposing team off balance throughout the three frames. Stad on the other hand didn't seem to have the steam in its drives that they had in the previous game they won. The forwards were slow in checking their men, and as a result of the defence corps, had to work overtime to hold the fast skating Flyers at bay.

The first period was score-less one with neither team having too many chances to score. Shearwater carried the play to the Stad defence, but was stopped there every time they got in a position to form an attack on Newman in the Stad net.

Blue Tides got the first break of the game when **Miljus** was charged for interference. Flyers defence held the on-rushing Stad team at bay. Just after Miljus returned to the ice, **Johnson** of Stad was caught elbowing **Saleski** along the boards and was waved to the cooler. Flyers put on a drive that carried them to the goal-mouth of the losers, but they couldn't beat Newman in the Stadacona net.

Both teams put on the pressure in the second frame that kept the rival net minders busy for short spells, **Lajoie** netted the first Shearwater tally at the 4:54 mark on a play set up by **Darky Lowe**. Flyers kept the puck inside the

Stad blue line for a full three minutes before they scored. Lowe trapped an intended Stad pass at the line and rifled a low-shot in the general direction of the Blue Tides net. Lajoie, who was standing a few feet away from the crease, stuck his stick in front of the puck and deflected it into the net past a startled **Newman**.

Play see-sawed back and forth for most of the period with the Flyers having the better of the play. Shearwater registered its final goal of the session at the 11:01 mark on a three-way passing play inside the Stad blue-line.

Saleski started the play when he retrieved the puck along the side-boards, flipped it to **Cribb**, who shot for the right hand corner, but was fooled by Newman who made the stop. **Roberts** was Johnny-on-the-spot as the rebound landed on his stick, and he made no mistaken putting the Flyers into a 2-0 lead at the end of the second frame.

Trying to protect its two goal lead, Shearwater took to the defensive as the final period got under way, and as a result, play became ragged and disorganized. Ray **Shedlowski**, who was the outstanding manor the Sad team, both on the defensive and offensive side, staged a one-man invasion on Shearwater territory with his brilliant rushes from his own blue-line. He sent his forwards in all alone on **Briard** in the Shearwater net, only to be stopped cold by the fine playing of the Flyers net-minder.

Jack Cribb sent the winners into a 3-0 lead at the 8:21 mark on a scramble in front of the loser's net.

Defenceman Lowe was again the man who engineered the play. He fired a shot from the Stad line, which Newman partly stopped, and then let the puck by his feet, and Cribb poked it home for the third tally. A minute and thirty seconds later Shearwater came back with its final marker of the game. **Johnny Betchold** was the marksman with an assist going to goaltender Newman in the Stad net. Betchold got hold of a loose puck along side the Blue Tides net and let go a shot in the direction of Newman. The puck hit Newman's pads and dropped into the net before he could get hold of the disc. Stad showed signs of coming to life just past the half-way mark of this period when they tallied its only marker of the three frames. It was the best goal of the night.

Shedlowski carried the puck from his own blue-line, fed a perfect pass to **Wannamaker** who was going at top speed over the Shearwater blue line, and he rifled a low wing shot past Briard, who had no chance on the play.

From then until the final buzzer play was on the ragged side. Shearwater was trying to protect its three goal margin, and kept four men inside its blue-line clearing the puck to centre ice when it was flipped inside by the Stad aggression, who were trying desperately to get back in the game. They put up a good fight on the last four minutes,

but couldn't get past the steady playing of the Shearwater defence.

First Period: No scoring; penalties-- **Miljus,Johnson, Emmons, Betchold (misconduct).**

Second Period: 1,Shearwater,Lajoie (Lowe) 4:54; 2. Shearwater, Roberts **(Cribb, Saleski) 11:01; Penalties--Wannamaker, Emmons, Mingo, Johnson.**

Third Period: 3. Shearwater, **Cribb, (Lowe) 8:21; 4. Shearwater, Betchold 9:51; 5. Stadacona,Wannamaker, (Shedlowski) 13:25:**

Penalties - **Guertin, Roberts, Thompson, (misconduct) Cribb.**

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### **Flyers Drop Shipyards In Final League Game** By Vernon Conrad

Dartmouth- Shearwater Flyers eliminated the Halifax Shipyards from gaining a berth in the semi-finals of the Halifax - Dartmouth Senior Hockey League, Saturday night at the Memorial Rink, by turning back a determined Shipyards entry 9-7 in the final league game of the year.

Playoffs will get underway sometime this week with St. Mary's University,Stadacona Sailors, Shearwater Flyers, and the Dartmouth Royals the contending teams.

Neither squad was at full strength for this contest. Shipyards played with only eight men and couldn't keep pace with the hard-driving Flyers, who had two complete lines and three defencemen. The majority of the Shipyards players were playing with the Lunenburg Falcons against the Windsor Maple Leafs in a M.A.H.A. playoff game. Shearwater was without the services of **Stu Mingo, Les Shatford, Cecil Zimmer, Currie, Jack Cribb, Jim Veysey, and it's regular goaltender. Kerry Briard** donned the pads and played in goals for Flyers and turned in a fine performance. He had never played goals before.

The opening period produced the best hockey of the night as both teams raced up and down the ice in big league fashion. Shearwater netted two tallies in this session by **Betchold and Gommer.** Shipyards only tally came from the stick of **Billy Carter.**

Each team scored four goals in the wide-open second frame which was action-packed all the way. Briard, in the winners nets and **Slaunwhite** were busy men in this stanza. **Gil Banifield and Billy Carter** each tallied two markers for the losers while Flyers goals went to **Roberts, Lajoie and Perron** with two.

Shipyards crew. Lajoie sent Flyers into a two-goal lead early in the third session, only to have Shipyards come back with two tallies, one by Carter and the other by **Banifield** to notch the score at 7-7. Lajoie scored what proved to be the winning tally at the 16:01 mark on a pass from **George Saleski. Doug Scotland** put the game on ice with the final goal of the game at the 17:33 mark for Shearwater.

Shipyards fought right down to the final buzzer but couldn't cope with the winners driving force. They played an outstanding game with only eight men.Luigi **Centa** and **Bernie Horne** were outstanding on the defense corps,with Centa playing the entire 60 minutes. Up front it was Billy Carter with four goals and **Gil Banifield** that sparked the attack. They were a thorn in the winners side throughout the three frames. **Lajoie** was the big gun for Shearwater. He tallied three goals and assisted on two others to lead his team to victory. His line-mates, **Perron and Roberts** also turned out first-rate performances. Shearwater took a one goal lead in the final period and had to fight all the way to hold back the on rushing. Perron scored twice and assisted on one other goal. Roberts netted one marker and assisted on another. Johnny Betchold was also going strong for Shearwater, he scored once and set up two other goals. George Saleski and Mike Miljus played a strong game on defense.

The game was cleanly played with only four penalties being handed out by the referees.

First Period \_\_ **1.Shearwater,Betchold ( Sakeski) 7:21; 2. Shipyards, Carter (Walsh) 13:35 3.Shearwater,Gommer (Scotland,Miljus) 15:12.**

Second Period \_\_ **4 Shipyards, Banifield 3:20 ; 5. Shearwater, Perron (Lajoie) 3:53: 6. Shipyards, Carter 7:56 ; 7.Shipyards, Carter (Banifield, Centa) 10:43; 8. Shearwater, Perron ( Betchold) 15:28 ;9 Shearwater, Lajoie 17:01 ; 10. Shipyards, Banifield (Centa) 17:37; 11 Shearwater, Roberts (Lajoie) 18:09. Penalties- Saleski, Centa , Betchold.**

Third Period\_\_**12, Lajoie (Roberts, Perron) 8:10; 13. Shipyards, Carter (Purcell, Banifield) 11:22: 14. Shipyards, Banifield (Centa) 15:42; 15. Shearwater, Lajoie (Saleski) 16:01; 16. Shearwater, Scotland (Betchold) 17:33. Penalty- Betchold.**

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## Lt. Governor's visit to SAM

Brigadier-General the Honourable J.J. Grant, CMM, ONS, CD, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia paid an informal visit to SAM on 12 February 2013. He was welcomed to 12 Wing by the Wing Cmdr, Col. Lightbody and WCWO, CWO Staples.

Earlier this year, His Honour became Honourary Patron of The Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation and shortly after that his office advised that he would like a tour of our facility. We have not had many visits from our Honourary Patrons in the past and we are delighted that His Honour took the time from his busy schedule to visit us.

The tour was conducted by our Curator, Christine Hines accompanied by Lt. Col. Don Waldock, SAM Director; Owen Walton, Chairman of the Board of Directors of SAMF; John Knudsen, President of SAMF and Aide-de-Camp, Capt. Mark Wojtasiak.



His Honour viewing artifacts



Lt. Col. Don Waldock, Christine Hines, Brigadier-General the Honourable J.J. Grant, CMM, ONS, CD, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Owen Walton, John Knudsen, Capt. Mark Wojtasiak.

Christine Hines, SAM Curator, Brigadier-General the Honourable J.J. Grant, CMM, ONS, CD, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia and Owen Walton, Chairman, Board of Directors, SAMF

Photos provided by Wing Imaging.

## THE LAST PUNCH

### F2H3 126334

## THE TEST FLIGHT

A tribute to Banshee maintainers.

“The adventure started sometime in early 1962. A couple of Banshee pilots were conversing with Dave Bennett, the VF 870 Squadron Air Engineering Officer. We were wondering what a lightly loaded, cleaned up Banshee would be like to fly. Dave took the thought away and discussed it with his senior maintenance personnel. Shortly thereafter, he returned with a proposal which quickly met with the approval of the squadron CO.

The project was divided into four phases: planning, technical work, cosmetic work, then a test flight. The planning, including what could be removed, weight and balance considerations and how the cosmetic activity would be conducted, went ahead and, after careful consideration of the condition of these venerable machines, aircraft no. 334 was selected. The project, named “The Last Punch” was launched.

The technical phase involved the removal of everything possible including radar, guns, bomb/rocket racks, tip tanks, and everything else that was not required for safety of flight reasons. The list was extensive. The resulting weight and balance calculations showed that so much had been removed that a few pieces of railroad track had to be welded into the nose compartment to get things right.

Then the cosmetic phase got under way with a complete cleaning, dent and scratch filling, and finding and fixing any and all protrubances which could slow the airplane down. Finally, several coats of wax were generously applied and the entire airframe polished to ensure that the surface was as smooth as silk. All hands, including several pilots, were included in this phase.

Finally, the last step, the test flight, was scheduled. For reasons that have completely escaped my memory in the mist of time, I was detailed off to do the test flight. The airplane was fueled to about half its internal capacity – about one hour of flight time, the paperwork was sorted out, and off we went to proverbially kick the tires, light the fires and launch.

The plan was to do a fairly normal take-off, conduct a proper test flight, then leave a bit of time to see just what the “streamlined” Banshee would do. Start-up, the usual

checks and taxi were normal. Everything seemed fine.

Then the fun began! Full power, check the brakes, and away we went. The plane literally leaped down the runway like a startled beast of the jungle. What a difference compared to the normal heavily loaded, fully equipped Banshee. We were airborne in about half the normal distance and gaining speed fast. After pulling up the wheels and flaps, the acceleration was terrific. Departing from the normal test flight procedure just a bit, the nose was raised into a vertical climb just past the end of the runway and 10,000 feet was passed in no time at all.

Then common sense prevailed. I levelled off and did the usual test flight stuff which took about 20 minutes – faster than normal, but everything was working absolutely perfectly. I then decided to put the nimble machine through its paces.

We went into a climb which was nearly out of this world. The plane cruised upwards to over 50,000 feet in record time (usually, it was tough to get much over 40,000). Now was the opportunity to check out terminal velocity and handling at that speed. I rolled over, put the nose straight down, and firewalled the throttles. The Banshee rapidly accelerated to Mach .96 (the design terminal velocity – the best one can get out of a straight wing aircraft). It flew straight down to about 20,000 feet with nary a shudder and the controls were as smooth as could be.

Then it was time to check out maximum manoeuvring capabilities. A number of high speed and high G rolls and various other “dog fighting” manoeuvres were executed. Handling was perfect. The thought crossed my mind that it would be great to find a Saber wandering by so as to see how a real dogfight would work out – I sure was confident of this Banshee’s abilities. Next a series of loops, rolls and other manoeuvres were conducted to complete the spectrum of flight capabilities. All was marvellous.

Time (and fuel) was running out. It was time to return to Shearwater and report on how the test flight went. A couple of obligatory high speed/low altitude passes revealed that the entire squadron had turned out to watch their “baby” return – in one piece. It was a proud moment, for me and for them, when we taxied in and shut down. And there was not a single discrepancy to report on 334’s performance.

The squadron technicians had indeed outdone themselves. Their work was flawless, and their enthusiasm was heart rendering. Their dedication and the superb result were considered a fitting tribute for the end of the Banshee era, and for the end of fighters in the RCN.



A number of other pilots went on to fly "The Last Punch" and all were amazed. Sadly, the Banshee was being retired, but 334 found a wonderful home when Bob (Fergie) Ferguson, the last person to fly it, delivered it to Calgary in January 1963."

Frank Willis, November 25, 2012



Lt (P) Frank Willis RCN prior to a flight at Key West FL in 1958

## THE LAST FLIGHT

### *Pre-Flight Preparations*

"When Lt. Ferguson was assigned the ferry flight of Banshee 126334, "The Last Punch" to Calgary, he asked that the aircraft be prepared for a test flight first. I told him that the stick grip had been stolen and that we would have to find another. After some searching, I found three Banshees in storage behind the NAMS building. Two grips were gone but the one remaining was good. I removed it quickly and got it plugged in and tested it on 334." -

Lee Trick, Banshees in the Royal Canadian Navy, by Carl Mills, p. 271

### *Check and Ferry Flight*

"On the January 8, 1963 I took 334 up for a check/familiarization flight and found all satisfactory. I departed for Calgary on January 10 for the one day trip via North Bay and Winnipeg for fuel stops.

The flight planned altitude on the HMCS Shearwater NS to North Bay ON was flight level (FL) 310 (31,000 feet) for a time of 2.6 hours at mach 0.8, which was the cruising speed for all legs of the transit. North Bay ON to Winnipeg MB the initial flight planned altitude was FL350 for a time of 2.6 hours. Approaching Thunder Bay ON I asked for FL430. The Air Traffic Controller queried the request and when I confirmed FL430, clearance was given "Climb to and maintain FL430". I was pleased with the time taken to climb to FL430—in the standard version F2H3 it had become somewhat of an effort to climb that high. While cruising at FL430, a fine oily mist formed on the inside forward section of the canopy. This was a known problem caused by a leaky seal in one of the engines starter motor. The Winnipeg MB to Calgary AB leg was flown at FL350 for an elapsed time of 2.0 hours and a total flight time of 7.2 hours.

I parked the machine in front of a civilian hangar where it was to be stored until the disabling crew arrived by a CS2F Tracker aircraft. The welcoming committee from The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, the new custodians of Banshee 126334, met me and we talked about the flight. The bitter cold kept the discussion short because we were outside looking at the Banshee.

Transportation was kindly provided to the CP Palliser Hotel where I checked in, showered, changed into civilian dress and had something to eat. A look around the city centre and fresh air was the next order of the day - that was until I ventured out into the cold, windy street. About 20 minutes was long enough, so back to the hotel bar for a scotch or two.

The disabling crew arrived in Calgary the next day, January 11, and proceeded to remove various components to ensure the Banshee remained on the ground. We all



departed in the Tracker to Winnipeg that evening and on to HMCS Shearwater the next day, January 12, 1963.”

Bob Ferguson, December 2012



DND Photo.

**S/Lt (P) Bob Ferguson RCN, CJATC Rivers, MB, hands out of cockpit during arming of weapons, October 1958, VF871 Squadron.**

#### *Disabling of the Banshee 126334*

“When Lt. Bob Ferguson flew the last Banshee to Calgary for use at the technical school, George Dobson and I were sent out to remove any explosive charges and to remove a couple of key parts so that no one could fly the aircraft later on.

When George and I arrived to do our work, it was 33 below and there was no tow bar. The civilian crew at the airport suggested that I taxi the aircraft and I jumped at that opportunity. After nearly hitting the Tracker aircraft we had flown out in, I got used to steering by light port or starboard braking and managed to taxi the aircraft up to the hangar. The tail of the aircraft was about 20 feet from the hangar doors so that taking the engines to 80 per cent to avoid a fire on shut-down was out of the question. Fortunately, there was no fire at 50 per cent. The aircraft arrived in Calgary with one snag, smoke in the cockpit, not uncommon in a Banshee.” - Marvin May, [Banshees in the Royal Canadian Navy](#), by Carl Mills, p. 271

That was the last movement of an F2H3 Banshee under its own power.

#### **US Navy and US Marine Corps BuNos Third Series (126257 to 130264)**

McDonnell F2H3 Banshees

126334 (c/n44) Royal Canadian Navy Jul 4, 1956. Made last flight by a Canadian Navy Banshee (and perhaps the last by any Banshee) Jan 10, 1963 when it was flown to Southern Alberta (Calgary) Institute of Technology for use as a ground instructional airframe. Later displayed on lawn of Naval Reserve Division in Calgary, HMCS Tecumseh. In 2007 was at the Naval Museum of Alberta, Calgary, Canada.

Last revised September 26, 2012

[http://www.joebaugher.com/navy\\_serials/thirdseries14.html](http://www.joebaugher.com/navy_serials/thirdseries14.html)

Bob Ferguson



**CJATC Rivers Manitoba, summer 1962, 5” rockets, six with explosive war heads. Note powder residue from 20mm cannons, total of four. Outer pylons were for Sidewinder air to air missiles.**



## Memories of a Back Seat Naval Aviator

Part Eleven

*By Peter Bruner*

I received a note from Kay Collacutt last month requesting information on the newest acquisition of the museum. The Avenger, side number 53610. Having spent over

the better part of the last 1.5 hrs inspecting my flying log books, I noticed I first flew in an Avenger on October 10, 1953 with Lt. Terry - Royal Navy exchange pilot. For a total of 1.00 hr on "Observer's Mate" Course #6. My total time flying in Avengers was culminated on Feb 25, 1959 with a total time of 1048.1 hrs in "TBM Avengers". Not once in these hrs flown was I a crew member in Avenger # 53610. Sorry Kay!

May 27, 1968 - Back at Shearwater after completing the Round Robin Trans Atlantic Flight from Shearwater to Ballykelly Ireland and return.

June 1968 - Back to St Huberts testing the Sea King helicopters at United Aircraft. July was of the same nature and task.

In August 1968 a call from dockyard Halifax. They were requesting a "Ship's Diver", one of my Sub specialties, to come to their D.D.H. (Destroyer) to clean out the boiler water intake located on the hull of the ship. There was no other except myself available. I picked up my diver's gear and proceeded to the dockyard to clean out the intake. After dressing in my gear and putting on twin bottle diving tanks, I went over the side to the bottom of the hull. I had a safety rope around my body but no other person with me. Reaching the intake, just off the center line of the ship I quickly found the inlet tube of the ship. Positioning myself facing up on the hull I was able to reach into the pipe and pull out the seaweed and other flotsam to clear the intake. It was a tedious chore and I had been there 1/2 hr or so when I discovered I was unable to move my body from the area where I was working. There was a large rock on the bottom of the harbour. The tide was going out and the ship was descending with the tide and had forced my body and tanks on my back against the rock and my chest against the hull. I was unable to free myself from the position and slowly I was being crushed. I rapped on the hull with my knife which was tied to my thigh and could move but I could not reach it. I kept on banging out S.O.S. in morse code. About 5 minutes later a free diver in swim suit appeared from above checked me out and indicated he would go for

help. I had been down for about 60 minutes and my air supply was of concern plus the ship was starting to squeeze so there was nothing I could do. From the noises coming from the ship, I could hear engines and pumps starting up and knew they were doing their best to shift the weight of the ship. Suddenly two divers appeared and indicated they would cut my tanks free and hopefully get me out of my predicament. With tank straps cut both divers pulled me clear of the ship and up to the surface. I bought the drinks for the evening and everyone went home happy. All's well that ends well.

In December, out to sea to test Minican Sonar aboard "Bonaventure". Completed 6 deck landings and on the fourth flight in Sea King 4016, number 1 engine failed. We landed on the ship and the next day were airborne in the same aircraft with a new number 1 engine. We completed all our tests and returned to Shearwater on Dec 13 for the Christmas season.

January 1969 - Testing Sea Kings and a new type of Miniscan Sonar. February, back to Montreal and acceptance of Number 4036, 4037, 4041 as new aircraft and 4021, 4023, 4020, 4024 as rebuilt Sea Kings.

In June 1969 I was accepted for a commissioned rank and proceeded to Victoria for Officer Training. In August I was promoted from Chief Petty Officer to Lieutenant and posted to CFB Greenwood as Air Ops. I remained in my residence in Waverley and drove 85 miles daily to Greenwood and 85 miles back home to Waverley. Total miles driven daily was 170 miles. My family was pleased that they could remain in our home and my son (Peter Eric) could continue his education at "Dartmouth Academy" and Gwynn, my wife, could stay on as the Secretary to the Chief of Police in Dartmouth NS.

In Greenwood, I was employed as an air traffic controller until April 1973. Then posted to CFB Gagetown as controller at the Army Heliport. My family could not move so I only saw them on Weekends. In the meantime, I learned all about being a "Pongo" (Army) after two years as a "Crabfat" (Air force). I guess I was becoming truly integrated to the new Armed Forces.

In August 1974 I was posted to CFB Calgary, Currie Barracks, as Senior Air Traffic Controller on "One Tactical Air Control Unit" and Deputy Commanding Officer of the unit. This unit, 1TACU, controlled all air support to the land forces West of Ontario. Thus I became a Navy man who did an Air force job for the Army. Truly integrated as sub specialty I also became Liaison Officer to the Air force Association Calgary and also Liaison Officer to all the Air Cadet Squadrons in Southern Alberta.

My family could not move to Calgary as I was on a restricted posting with 12 hrs notice to move to the Middle East. As a true Calgarian born and raised here and had joined the Navy here, it was a bit frustrating but I always said "I joined the Armed Forces, so be it".

In October I flew to Churchill Manitoba to inspect the airport for an upcoming exercise. In January 1975 on the flight with "Transair" North from Winnipeg to Churchill, the aircraft encountered severe turbulence. Being an NAMC YS-11 twin engine aircraft with all seats occupied, approximately 45 passengers plus cargo, I occupied the seat next to the main door of the aircraft as it was the only one available. About 200 miles South of Churchill the main door blew off with a BANG! We descended to a lower altitude and then proceeded to our destination and landed. As I was leaving the aircraft I discovered my seat was NOT fastened to the floor and there was a possibility I could have exited the aircraft along with the door. The next day I toured the airport inspecting the facility in regards to the military running the airfield as a controlled airport which it was not. Expecting CH-135 Twin Huey and Bell OH-58 Kiowa helicopters, Canadair CF-5 fighters and Lockheed CC-130E Hercules transports to operate from the airport, it was important to ensure it could be safe for everyone. The Airport Supervisor drove me up to a radio beacon North of the facility located on a point of land on Hudson's Bay about 5 miles North of the town. We stopped in his half ton truck at the base of the radio tower and the two of us proceeded into the small building which was about 10 ft by 10 ft. It has a 3 by 6 door on it with a 2 by 2 ft window in it. On the inside was the radio equipment etc... We entered the shack closing the door behind us and were looking over the room. At this point there was a crash of the glass in the door being broken and a Polar Bear in the window of the door with one foreleg and his head sticking through the opening as it attempted to gain access to the inside where the two of us were located. The bear was too large to get inside and the building and door were metal. Our truck was about 10 feet from the door and we were not about to try to get to it with this animal attempting to reach us. After about ½ hr and there was no noise or activity from the outside. I took a chance and peeked out of the broken window. I could not see the bear so we made a dash to the truck and managed to safely get in and close the doors. Never saw the bear in the vicinity as we drove back to town and the airport. The next day I boarded the same "Transair" NAMC YS-11 that I had flown North in as it had sat on the ground until a new door replaced the one lost in flight. The seat I had occupied previously had been securely bolted down, however I chose a location well away from the door and personally checked the seat was properly secured!

Once back in Calgary, I prepared for Christmas and left for Nova Scotia to be home, with my family in Waverley....

But that's another tale...to be continued.

Yours Aye, Peaches



### **"QEII Diamond Jubilee Medal"**

#### **Recognition of a Special Lady**

I'm certain I speak on behalf of all CNAGers when I say that it makes us extremely proud to see Kay Collacutt awarded the "QEII Diamond Jubilee Medal", in recognition of her over 50 years of dedicated volunteer work. Many of you are probably unaware that for over 20 years, she organized and oversaw many of the "Shearwater Dependants Social Programs" and Base charities in the Halifax/Dartmouth area. (This was long before the current Military Support Centres came into being.)

An avid sports enthusiast, Kay was a member of the "Shearwater Figure Skating Club" since near its inception, and served terms as its President and in addition was the Secretary of "Skate Nova Scotia".

As we are all aware, for numerous years Kay has served as the Secretary of the "Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation" and as the volunteer secretary of the Foundation Board of Directors. She is also the volunteer Editor of the "Warrior Magazine", a daunting task, that through her constant diligence and dedication to the preservation of our proud Canadian Naval/RCAF Aviation Heritage was named the top museum magazine in the "2010 Naval Centennial Year".

This accomplished Lady is a prime example of a "silent" yet highly talented volunteer who has dedicated her life to the betterment of her community and all Canadians. Kay Collacutt richly deserves her award of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and as CNAGers we are proud to extend our congratulations on this long overdue recognition. BZ Kay!

Paul Baiden

#### **Congratulations from LGen Ashley**

Dear Kay: Please accept my heartfelt congratulations for this recognition. Many thousands of these Medals were passed out to Canadians but none was more deserved. You are a great lady. You still instil the same fear of God in me as you did many years ago when you were running 3 hangar with its cast of characters. You surely knew how the system worked back then and how to get things done - and if anything - like a good wine- your skills have improved over the years!

Thank you for all you have done to preserve the spirit of Naval Aviation.

*Larry Ashley*





**Canadian Naval Air Group**

**Queen Elizabeth the II Diamond Jubilee Recipients**

It gives us great pleasure to inform you that the following CNAGers are known to have been awarded the “Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal”:

Larry Ashley; Paul Baiden; John Cody; Kay Collacutt; John Eden; Robert Findlay (via his local MP); Don Knight (via his local MP); Ron MacKinnon; Bud MacLean; Peter Milsom; Robert Mofford; Paul Peacey; Chuck Rolfe (via the Divers Association); and Dave Tate.

We also wish to thank the *National Council of Veterans Association in Canada*, the *Aboriginal Veterans Association*, the *Hong Kong Veterans Association*, the *Canadian Divers Association* and the aforementioned MP's, for their efforts and support, in bringing this quest for recognition of our members to fruition.

The adjacent pictures depict some of these individuals receiving their medals. Unfortunately, we are still awaiting the official presentation for Dave's, coming via “SNOW SHOE”, from Yellowknife, and for Bob, and Ron to return from the sunny south.

Again, on behalf of CNAG, congratulations to you all for having made a significant contribution to your community and Canada. “BZ” Mates! *Paul*



*John Cody and Mrs Cody with CO 12 Wing and CWO 12 Wing*



*Peter Milsom and Paul Baiden present Bud MacLean with his Medal and Certificate*



*Mug Shots!*

Continued



*LGen Larry Ashley and wife Gail*



*Peter Milsom and Paul Baiden presenting Gen Ashley with his medal and certificate*



*Paul Peacey and LCol Maud*

*Celebration Luncheon*





## Bearcat and Rooster

by *Dave Tate*

During the two years, Aug 69-Aug 71, when Colin Curleigh and I were COs of HS 50 and VS 880 respectively there is little doubt that a fair amount of friendly rivalry existed between our two squadrons. This in turn precipitated a number of "hi-jinks", attempts at "one-upmanship"(by both units) and "try and top this" escapades.

One of the more memorable incidents that comes to mind was the time HS 50 won the Cock- O - the Walk. The very fact that they beat us for this very prestigious trophy was humiliating enough but to rub it in the way they did was the last straw. This is what transpired: On the morning following HS50s winning of the Cock-O- the-Walk I received a telephone call from Colin suggesting I take a look at their hangar. There in all its glory was a very large red rooster, painted on the side of their hangar facing ours. Enough is enough I thought and with that I got hold of our Chief OM, Joe Saunders, and mentioned that we couldn't let this display of bragging go unchallenged. He agreed wholeheartedly and with a parting "leave it with me Boss I'll take care of it" he left my office.

The following morning Joe came to my office and told me to have a look at HS 50s hangar. This I did and there ,in all its glory, was 880s mascot, THE BEARCAT, mounted atop THE ROOSTER. I couldn't resist calling Colin and suggesting that he have a gander at the side of his hangar. I won't repeat the telephone call and he suggested we call a truce and quit wasting paint, to which I agreed. I then called Joe and advised him of the agreement I had made with HS50 to which he responded that if the agreement pertained to only the hangar wall then the hangar roof should be "fair game". I had no argument with that assumption.

The following day Joe asked if we could take a Tracker and do a short recce of HS 50s hangar from the air. We did just that and there on the roof of their hangar was a white Bearcat stretching from one side of it to the other, painted by none other than Joe and his boys using a number of gallons of pussers white paint. Needless to say I called Colin and told him that the next time he got airborne he may wish to look at his hangar roof. I don't recall his comments after viewing 880s handiwork but can only assume they were not complimentary. It took awhile but 880 finally got revenge and more importantly, the last word (for then).

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## KNOWING WHEN TO LET GO

by *Jake McLaughlin*

In the summer of 1954 the Support Air Group VF 771 Fury fighters and VS 881 Avenger Anti-Submarine aircraft was moved temporarily away from HMCS Shearwater. The circuit, shared by Naval aircraft ranging from helicopters, C-45s, Harvards, Furies and Avengers, plus the then Air Canada and Maritime Airways DC3s and occasional USN aircraft of several types had become too limited, too crowded.

We moved first to Scoduc, an abandoned wartime RCAF airfield close to Moncton and just outside the coastal town of Shediac in New Brunswick.

We were warmly welcomed, made honorary members of the Moncton Golf Club and the social Club Bois Hebert in Shediac itself. We flew regular training missions over the Atlantic always making sure that our return path to base took us over the beautiful coastal beaches close to the town of Shediac. Life was good.

One day, a pair of Avengers were returning from an A/S exercise at about 2000 feet closing the beaches, the crews admiring the assemble pulchritude on the sand. Suddenly I noticed a Sea Fury diving on us from about 10,000 feet seemingly intent on jumping our two helpless Turkeys. But that's not what the pilot had in mind, he hurtled past, continuing his trajectory toward the beach where at a few hundred feet he pulled up and began a beautiful "upward twizzle". The aircraft rose, the sun glinting off it's wings when at about 5000 feet it abruptly stalled and began to fall, inverted, toward the water below. We watched, absolutely certain that we were about to witness the Fury, flown by a friend (by this time we'd figured out who was flying the aircraft), crash into the sea.

No more than one hundred feet above the waves, the aircraft, still inverted, appeared to regain control. It climbed and as sedately as a Fury could do it, headed inland to the airfield.

Later, at the Wardroom bar, I joined my friend Jake Birks acknowledged by all as a superb pilot who was still obviously shaken and "wan with care". He explained that the aircraft had gone into a "flick spin" as he twizzled away from the beach (it was a notorious Sea Fury characteristic from which few pilots survived). He tried every thing he knew to regain control as he hurtled down. Finally and in resignation, he decided to take his hands and feet off the controls and await the inevitable. By Jake's reckoning the plane recovered itself, still inverted, at less than 100 feet.

He flew home, landed and adjourned to the bar a wiser and very much surprised to be an alive, Naval Aviator.



*Continued from page 15*

### **No 10 Alien Landing at Lumber Camp.**

February 17, 1960, Lcdr `Duke` Muncaster invited me along as crew on the HO4S helicopter that he was flying as shepherd for a Bell that was being delivered to Longville for overhaul. In the vicinity of Millinocket, Maine, the Bell reported a problem and asked that the mechanic aboard our HO4S check it out. Duke instructed the Bell pilot to put down on a frozen lake and we join him.

When the mechanic reported that he would need at least half an hour or so to check the Bell out, I asked Duke if he would mind if I explored the path I had noticed leading from the forest down to the lakeshore obviously to a water hole in the ice. Duke gave the OK, and off I went, blithely not conscious of the appearance I presented ( gold coloured helmet with goggles stowed over the helmet, a baggy blue-grey flight suit, an orange Mae West and flying boots).

Wending my way up the path, I noticed a Nissen Hut ahead with smoke rising from the chimney and an open screen door. As I got closer I noticed a man inside busily stirring a large pot. I knocked on the doorframe with no response. Assuming he couldn't hear me due to a radio blaring nearby, I walked in. As I approached, I spoke out in a soft voice hoping not to startle him. Needless to say, my hope was in vain because he swung around and turned ashen before my eyes and dropped the ladle in his hand. To allay his obvious fear, I backed away and in as quiet a voice as I could muster, asked if I could have a coffee. It was only then that I realized what an apparition I must have presented to this poor man and I removed my helmet so that he could get a better look at me. This seemed to work and he sat down trying to smile. After a few minutes he regained his composure and said I had scared the hell out of him particularly as he was not expecting the logging crews back for lunch for another hour. We shared a coffee and a chuckle over his close encounter with an alien, and I was on my way back to the chopper.

### **No 1 HMS Macaw - A step back in history.**

'Macaw' was an RN shore base, located in the wilds of Cambria near a village named Bootle in Cumberland on the west coast of England. It was a holding base for RN aircrew awaiting or between appointments. It was a god forsaken uninteresting and boring place to put in time. I was cycled through there some 3 times during my 6 months as an RNVR pilot for on average stay of two weeks.

The most exciting moment was one Sunday when the Loud Speaker blared 'Wakey Wakey' at six in the morning and a fellow Canadian shot and silenced it. While we all welcomed the week that it was out of commission, the

trigger happiness of some of our cohorts made one exit his cabin cautiously as one could never be sure when a shooter might choose to take aim again.

Frequent visits to the only Pub in Bootle named 'The Ring Of Bells' was the only activity we had to look forward to during these lay-overs. It was an ancient Post House built in the 15th century to accommodate travellers on the Post Road and looked not unlike a rough grey stone building out of a Chaucer or Dickens novel. The entrance way was slightly over 6 feet high and the threshold step of quarried hard marble was worn down about 6 inches in the middle. As we were to learn later from the 'Publican' or owner, the step was original and was worn down through the ages by a variety of footwear ranging from metal boots worn by knights, through wooden clogs and leather shoes and hobnail boots worn up to modern times. The doorway being just over 6 ft reflected the fact that people were quite short back then, I guess due to the less nutritious foods.

I recall visiting Museums, Cathedrals and other places like Madam Tousseau's Wax Museum in London that displayed armour worn by knights of the realm and was amazed at how short they had been in those days.

Back to the Pub. The interior was rather broken up with many small rooms each of which could accommodate maybe ten or so patrons. Each room was equipped with a pull lanyard that led to the bar where the bell for that room rang. Thus the name 'Ring Of Bells'. The Publican would respond, take the orders and deliver the quaffs. I should mention that the Publican in typical Chaucer/Dickens style had lost an arm and sported a hook ( for effect we suspected) and wore an apron tied at the waist. The only things missing were a Parrot on his shoulder and a growling ARRRRRRR m'lads.

### **No 2 BLOODY COLONIALS**

At the end of our first stint at Macaw, we were appointed to the Royal Naval College at Greenwich to undertake a course in Officer-like qualities and behaviour that we immediately dubbed a Knife & Fork course.

Immediately thereafter we were appointed to RAF Station Ternhill

In Shropshire which I believe is in the Midlands. Until early '45 it had been an active fighter base but was now the home of Advanced Flying Training and Single-engine Conversion to and on Harvards. It was there that we got our first exposure to the English wartime and rationing Bill of Fare. It was bloody awful.

The only food we Canadians could handle was Fish and Chips, usually wrapped in the News Of The World newspaper, breakfast of toast and marmalade and Teatime when delightful but small sandwiches were

served in the Officers Mess . Supper/Dinner was a complete and utter washout. It wasn't too long before we Canadians became alert each day to the approach of the tea wagon being pushed down the hall by a comely WAAF girl, and began intercepting her before she entered the Lounge. Needless to say there were few if any sandwiches left on the trays by the time she reached the sitting room.

This became a daily routine and the RAF officers soon became understandably pissed off with our antics. It wasn't too long before their frustrations spilled over into entries in the Mess Suggestion Book. They ranged anywhere from suggesting the galley staff prepare more sandwiches, to earmarking certain platters for Base Staff Officers only, and finally barring the 'Bloody Colonials' all together from the Mess at Teatime. As the Suggestion Book was located in the Mess, we were able to monitor it fairly regularly and could sense the rising resentment. It was when the reference to Bloody Colonials appeared, that one of our group entered a counter suggestion that "Air Force Officers be issued with running shoes so that they may better compete in the race for Teatime Goodies".

The president of the Officers Mess Committee, probably feeling that things had gotten too far out of hand and recognizing that there was no obvious solution, removed the Suggestion Book permanently from the Mess. In keeping with a desire to cool things down, we Canadians agreed amongst ourselves to thereafter walk, not run, to intercept the Tea Wagon.

Fortunately for inter-service and international peace we were only there for a month.

### **No 11 Flying Accident Free Career**

I was set to claim an accident free career in the RCAF, RN, and RCN, but in retrospect have to qualify the statement somewhat. I was at the controls when two aircraft were bent although neither incident precipitated the rendering of an A25 Accident Report.

To explain, the first one involved a Seafire III and happened at Nutts Corners Northern Ireland whilst serving in 883 Seafire Squadron. Aircraft were always parked on the turf just off the paved portion of the circular parking area at the Squadron Dispersal sight. The result was that one had to apply a significant amount of power to get the aircraft rolling to climb from the turf up to and over the lip of the pavement. This was particularly so when the turf was soggy as it was most often in Northern Ireland.

One fine day I throttled up as usual to get up onto the paved area when it became immediately apparent from the reluctantly slow forward movement of the aircraft that more than the usual amount of throttle would be required. It worked and the aircraft mounted the lip to the pavement and immediately throttled back and applied brake to preclude dashing across the dispersal towards the aircraft

parked opposite. Well it was with shock and surprise that I found that the brakes were not responding as expected and despite my best efforts I was unable to get the aircraft stopped before my right wing tip struck a blade on the prop of one of the aircraft facing me.

There is nothing that brings on greater disgrace than being involved in a taxiing accident. I reported it to the Senior Pilot who decided that we go right in and see the CO, LCDR King Joyce RN. After hearing my description of events, he came from around his desk and asked us to join him while he gave the aircraft a taxi test. He certainly put it through its paces and I awaited his decision with trepidation. When he returned to the group of us watching and speaking to the AEO said "Better adjust those brakes, they're too spongy.", and returned to his office. I heard nothing further.

Strike one 'pilot at fault accident'.

The next time an aircraft came in contact with something it shouldn't have, and I was in control, was during a flight from Ottawa to Shearwater in an Anson MK V carrying the Chief Of Naval Staffs golf clubs; even in those days rank had its privileges. East of Montreal and short of Megantic, on the Quebec/Maine border, I entered cloud at 10,000 ft and shortly thereafter lost my radio. Unable to get a clearance to proceed IFR, I turned North off the airway and started a descent to gain VFR conditions. We broke out at about 2000 ft in steady rain but with enough visibility to reach Megantic. A Civilian grass field, it was built on the side of a shallow hill that descends from North to South with the main landing area East/West.

Approaching from West to East, I noted the wind to be moderate from ENE. As I rounded out, I noticed and corrected for a slight drift from left to right. What I wasn't expecting and what became apparent as I was rolling out was the slipperiness of the wet grass and the compounding effect of the right downhill slope of the entire airfield. The result was that applying left brake was virtually useless as the wheel locked and slid on the wet grass.

Sliding uncontrollably and gradually to starboard, we neared the right edge of the landing area and the underside of our right wing tip contacted a Barto Light breaking the lens and causing a 3" long split in the plywood .

At Megantic the Barto Lights were mounted about 4 ft above the ground to cater for snow accumulation during winter months and are therefore designed to snap at a weak link in the event of contact by an aircraft. Well this one didn't because, as I suspect, the force and direction of the Anson wing was probably more downward than of a shearing nature. On inspection of the tear which was minor, I was quite prepared to fly it onward to Shearwater. However, I had aboard a very talented Air Technician in

the person of the Petty Officer Hart and he volunteered that he could fix the tear if he could obtain some copper wire and quality glue in town.

He was subsequently successful and immediately set about sewing the split shut with the copper wire. When finished he asked me for my handkerchief which he promptly tore to size and glued as a patch over the repaired area. There is no question that he did an excellent and professional job when it is realized that his repair and my hanky painted over in yellow, were still in place when the aircraft was struck off strength years later. Upon return to Shearwater, it was officially deemed, by the powers that be, that failure of the Barto Light to shear, as designed, was the root cause and an A 25 was not required.



Sea Fury

## No 12 SEAFURY FORCED LANDINGS

During my tour in 19th Carrier Air Group, specifically in Jan/Feb 1949, I encountered engine problems on two occasions.

(A) The first was while flying at 100' in the low flying area South of Shearwater with Abbie Byrnes on my starboard wing. We were blithely skimming along when Abbie shattered my enjoyment with the announcement "Eddy your on fire". I immediately put Abbie in 'free cruise' (a relaxed formation) and poured on the coal. Climbing for altitude and turning towards Shearwater, I transmitted Mayday to the tower that responded immediately clearing me for a straight-in approach to the North and longest runway.

Meanwhile Abbie informed me that black smoke was continuing to pour out of the lower part of the engine nacelle which I could not see. When I had the end of the runway in sight and was within gliding distance, I throttled

back and began letting down. It was then that I carried out my pre-landing check, lowered the undercarriage and lowered flap.

The landing and roll out were uneventful except that I cut switches and turned off the gas. I had been accompanied during roll out by the crash truck and ambulance. I stopped on the runway and hastily exited the cockpit and got clear of the aircraft. As I looked back I noticed a small pool of oil had collected on the runway under the engine with only a small drip adding to it. A check of the engine later uncovered several factors, 1) there had been no fire, 2) there was a break in an oil line that had sprayed oil on the cylinders causing the smoke, and 3) there was no oil left in the entire lubricating system. The Centaurus engine, designed with a sleeve-valve configuration, is highly vulnerable to engine failure in no time if oil to the engine is cut off. Apparently the last drop fell as I exited the aircraft.

Without Abbie close at hand I probably would not have been aware of my predicament until the engine ground to a halt. Our close proximity to Shearwater was also a big bonus.

B) In the second case the engine did stop. I couldn't have been in a more perfect position to suffer an engine failure. Returning from a practice flight, I had joined the downwind leg of the landing pattern and was performing the landing check by cutting power, reducing airspeed, lowering the undercarriage and opening the throttle to maintain altitude and airspeed. Except that as I opened the throttle, nothing happened. When a second try failed to get a response, I gave a Mayday to the tower and immediately cut short the downwind leg of the circuit in preparation for the shorter and steeper approach to landing I was going to have to execute.

All went according to practice and plan. As I said earlier I couldn't have been in a more ideal position for an engine failure. I rounded out a few Knots faster than I would have with power, touched down and ran down the runway without further adieu.

I cannot recall the final cause of the engine failure but suffice it to say we were suffering a number of engine malfunction, some fatal, that did not cease until all CAG Seafuries were grounded and subjected to a major modification program at CJATC Rivers Manitoba in the summer of 1947.

In each of the foregoing incidents I received a Canadian Naval Headquarters' commendation in my Flying Log Book.

(Here endeth the lesson) Cheers.....Eddy Myers

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## A WAR STORY

(Sent to us by John Snowden Jul 2012)



An Italian submarine was sold for a paltry \$100,000 as scrap. The submarine, given to the Italian Navy in 1953 . . . was originally the USS Barb . . . an incredible veteran of World War II service . . . with a heritage that should not have been melted away without any recognition.

The U.S.S. Barb was a pioneer, paving the way for the first submarine to launch missiles and it flew a battle flag unlike that of any other ship. In addition to the Medal of Honor ribbon at the top of the flag identifying the heroism of its Captain, Commander Eugene 'Lucky' Fluckey. And the bottom border of the flag bore the image of a Japanese train locomotive. The U.S.S. Barb was indeed, the submarine that SANK A TRAIN !

### **July 18, 1945 In Patience Bay, off the coast of Karafuto, Japan.**

It was after 4 A.M. and Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned the submarine's command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make a fifth trip with the men he cared for like a father. Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and should have been his final war patrol, that Commander Flunkeys success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. Lucky Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour night battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the mother-lode... more than 30 enemy ships. In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the subs forward torpedoes, then turned and fired four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed through the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships.

What could possibly be left for the Commander to

accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington, DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coastline.

Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train! The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives... one of the sub's 55-pound scuttling charges. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but also one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men.

Thus the problem... how to detonate the explosives at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party.

### PROBLEM ?

If you don't search your brain looking for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony was broken with an exciting new idea : Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up ?

Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. "Just like cracking walnuts,"he explained. To complete the circuit [ detonating the 55-pound charge ] we hook in a micro switch... and mounted it between two ties, directly under the steel rail. " We don't set it off . . . the TRAIN will." Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to go along with the volunteer shore party.

After the solution was found, there was no shortage of volunteers; all that was needed was the proper weather... a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the sabotage mission ashore.

Lucky Fluckey established his criteria for the volunteer party :

[ 1 ] No married men would be included, except for Hatfield,

[ 2 ] The party would include members from each department,

[ 3 ] The opportunity would be split evenly between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors,

[ 4 ] At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts,

experienced in handling medical emergencies and tuned into woods lore.

FINALLY, Lucky Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

When the names of the 8 selected sailors was announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment. Members of the submarine's demolition squad were:

Chief Gunners Mate Paul G. Saunders, USN; Electricians Mate 3rd Class Billy R. Hatfield, USNR; Signalman 2nd Class Francis N. Sevei, USNR; Ships Cook 1st Class Lawrence W. Newland, USN; Torpedomans Mate 3rd Class Edward W. Klingsmith, USNR;

Motor Machinists Mate 2nd Class James E. Richard, USN; Motor Machinists Mate 1st Class John Markuson, USN; and

Lieutenant William M. Walker, USNR.

Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that as commander he belonged with the Barb, coupled with the threat from one that "I swear I'll send a message to ComSubPac if the Commander attempted to join the demolition shore party." In the meantime, there would be no harassing of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission had been accomplished. The crew would 'lay low' to prepare their equipment, practice and plan and wait for the weather.

### **July 22, 1945 Patience Bay [ Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan ]**

Waiting in 30 feet of water in Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had crafted and tested their micro switch.

When the need was proposed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed digging tools. The only things beyond their control were the weather.... and the limited time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. So, this would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945

The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it

was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American submarine so close to shore or in such shallow water.

Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the tower's ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower . . . an OCCUPIED enemy lookout tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping. And Markuson was able to quietly withdraw to warn his raiding party.

The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement for the explosive charge to continue their work more quietly and slower. Twenty minutes later, the demolition holes had been carved by their crude tools and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath fresh soil.

During planning for the mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. BUT IF the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped or messed up during this final, dangerous procedure . . . his would be the only life lost.

On this night it was the only order the sub's saboteurs refused to obey, and all of them peered anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to be sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a bungled switch installation.

1:32 A.M.

Watching from the deck of the submarine, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. Fluckey had daringly, but skillfully guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach sand. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his bridge saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 A.M.

The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, 'CAPTAIN ! There's another train coming up the tracks! The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, "Paddle like the devil !", knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

1:47 A.M.

The darkness was shattered by brilliant light . . and the roar of the explosion ! The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it the railroad freight cars accordioned into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs were lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb eased away . . slipping back to the safety of the deep.

Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. Lucky Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. "All hands below deck not absolutely needed to manoeuver the ship have permission to come topside." He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. (The train mission is noted at



the center bottom of the flag)

The Barb had sunk a Japanese TRAIN !

On August 2, 1945 the Barb arrived at Midway, her twelfth war patrol concluded. Meanwhile United States military commanders had pondered the prospect of an armed assault on the Japanese homeland. Military tacticians estimated such an invasion would cost more than a million American casualties.

Instead of such a costly armed offensive to end the war, on August 6th the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. A second such bomb, unleashed 4 days later on Nagasaki, Japan, caused Japan to agree to surrender terms on August 15th.

On September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Harbor the documents ending the war in the Pacific were signed.

The story of the saboteurs of the U.S.S. Barb is one of those unique, little known stories of World War II. It becomes increasingly important when one realizes that the

[ 8 ] eight sailors who blew up the train near Kashiho, Japan conducted the ONLY GROUND COMBAT OPERATION on the Japanese homeland during World War II.

[ Footnote : Eugene Bennett Fluckey retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, and wore in addition to his Medal of Honor . . [ 4 ]FOUR Navy Crosses . . a record of heroic awards unmatched by any American in military history.]

In 1992, his own history of the U.S.S. Barb was published in the award winning book, THUNDER BELOW. Over the past several years proceeds from the sale of this exciting book have been used by Admiral Fluckey to provide free reunions for the men who served him aboard the Barb, and their wives.



P.S. : He graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1935 . . lived to age 93 . .

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From the Secretary Where is Spring?

Hello everyone. Hope your holidays were the best for you.Thanks for sending in your membership - if it wasn't for you....

Our Fall/Winter edition of WARRIOR will read mostly about the Sea King. They are still going strong - thank you to our maintainers.

If you have any stories, send them along.

Keep well and keep in touch with each other. You're thought of often.

Kay



## LIFE IN THE PMQs

Joe & Joan Paquette



It doesn't look like much but our life in the PMQs at Shearwater in 1965 and beyond added a lot of memories to our Navy life as a family.

There wasn't a lot of money for a very young married Navy pilot and his wife and family. In addition, under 23 years of

age you weren't entitled to "marriage allowance" as you weren't entitled to get married. As a result, while you did get the same \$125.00 to move out of the Wardroom you lost this when you were posted to sea as you were now living on the ship with your room and board provided. "Legally" married officers got a "separated family allowance" to compensate for this loss of pay. All of this to say that it was really critical that Joan and I get a PMQ as soon as possible and # 4 Albacore was the answer.

PMQs were not only close to the base, fairly large and single or "side by side" homes but they were also moderately priced. The down side was that Base Engineering was your landlord. Our basement flooded so often that we placed everything in the basement on pallets. When they finally insulated the basements they insulated OVER the pipes and we had a rash of frozen pipes until the insulation was installed properly. The roof over the outside porch on our Firefly PMQ was so rotten that I feared for the kids' safety. When nothing was being done to correct it, I called Engineering and asked for information on who to sue if it collapsed and hurt someone. I mentioned that I was going to sea for a few months and wanted to leave that information with my wife. The next day the porch roof was torn down ... and never replaced.

Living close to the base and Wardroom often meant hosting unscheduled parties on Friday nights but at least was a short drive home. Why did we risk driving on Friday night you might say? Young Navy pilots can be stupid sometimes. Wes Postma and I decided that using his bicycle with me on the handlebars would be a great way to avoid the gate check on said Friday nights. One out-of-control trip down the hill to the gate by the gym was enough to convince us that walking, while slower, was the way to go.

You were also living with the same people you worked with (and bunked with on board ship) and you existed in the same rank structure the Navy had. Officers' families lived on different streets from the enlisted's families and senior

officers normally lived in a separate area than the Sub-Lt/Lt crowd. The truth of the matter was that while the ranks were separate as to streets, baby sitting requirements, kids social relationships and church involvement transcended this separation and many of those who lived on the "other" streets became life long friends. The closeness at work, at play and at home never became an issue and the relationships which grew out of this arrangement were often closer than family ones.



Wayne and Roberta Halladay (the pumpkin twins) and Jim and Mae Robinson (Snoopy and the drag queen) (Wardroom Halloween Party) and many others remain close friends some 50 years after the PMQ experience.

Not only did the Wardroom provide entertainment to us as Naval Officers and wives (often more formal than this) but on Sunday mornings after church it became a family affair. We have fond memories of relaxing in the Foxtrot Hotel bar while the kids tried to destroy the pool table with impromptu games.

That is not to say that living in PMQs wasn't "close". Ed Vishek, our next door neighbor, had "stumbled" upon a bottle of Pusser Rum but, being a white rum drinker, was willing to trade for a bottle of the same with some money added. Given the serious financial commitment, we decided that a "tasting" on my front step was in order. We had just poured our tots when Clem Gumbrill came out on his step across the street, took a sniff of the air and went back inside to get a glass shouting, "Save a tot for me!".



The biggest joy, strongest memories and most pictures came from the family interactions. You would think Venture course mates / squadron mates / shipmates would have had enough of each other at work but here Ed Vishek and Kenita Brunlees monitor the brood in our back yard that includes Donna and Debbie Halladay, possibly Leanne Postma, Shannon Vishek and two others that Joan and I can't recognize (might even include one of ours).



The kids played together endlessly and with the exception of being terminally embarrassed when some of their fathers dressed as clowns for a PMQ parade, there was never an issue. That of course is the view from the male side of the equation. There is probably a case of beer somewhere in

this picture and the day probably ended with the Bar-B-Q being lit and enough hot dogs and hamburgers being found to feed the multitude.

You only have to look at this group (Paul and Shannon Vishek, Chris Ashley, Kelli, Kym and Karen Paquette, Debbie Halladay and one unidentified girl) to see how close the bonds were.

Living in PMQs not all roses either and in the picture you can just see the Vishek's back yard. Well because we lived on the edge of the harbour some pretty substantial rats had taken up residence under his garbage hutch and Ed called on me to assist in the extermination effort which involved, water hoses, shovels and my air pistol. The idea was to flood the rats nest with water and dispatch them as they deserted the flooded nest with the shovel and my pellets. The flooding worked as planned but the large number of rats running to and fro overwhelmed us and then in our scramble we darn near killed each other. Picture Ed swinging a shovel as the rats darted about while the gun slinger ran after the same rats with my head down firing pellets into the spot where they had been. In the end we called it even, neither the rats nor the rat catchers were injured and the rats never came back.



While we were financially strapped we did live the good life, either formally dressed as "Officers and Ladies" or drinking, dancing and story telling at the numerous BYOB house parties. Given neighbors like Charlie & Alma Coffin, Wayne & Bert Halladay, Lil and Clem Gumbrill, Larry and Linda Lott, Tom and Gail Byrne, Wes and Dorothy Postma, Larry and Merle O'Brien, Myrna and Glen Brown, Jack and Judy Ford and many others, it seemed that someone was always having a planned or impromptu party ... and they were the stuff of legend (again the male perspective). Here Roberta, Sally Rhode, Helen Green and George LeForme (talking to Joan) are obviously enjoying the female



perspective. Sometimes we even moved out of the kitchen as proved by Jim Robinson, Lynn Vishek, Joan, Mae, Shirley Rheaume and Terry Wolfe-Milner

One attempt to call people for a "come as you are" party resulted in getting a couple of otherwise wild people in a "going to bed early" mode so we delayed our calls until midnight and made it a pajama party. The numbers who complied with the directive speaks well of the high spirit we all enjoyed.



common area and was perfect for a block Bar-B-Q. George Davidson (padre), Liz and Peter Bay and the XO's wife are enjoying the benefits of a full table. When Ken Edmonds son-in-law ended up deployed over Christmas with the USN, George and his wife Donna decided to get the block together to celebrate Christmas when he got back and we found ourselves outside the house singing Christmas carols in red toques in May.

We all helped each other out but the worst situation was to be the only one left back when the ships sailed in the winter. Chivalry required that you offer to shovel as many driveways as you could ... unless Merle O'Brian was next door and finished her driveway first and offered to help me.

As the kids grew up they all attended the same school on the base (Hampton Gray) and participated in the same teen club with unwilling parents as chaperones. I found that lots of cotton in the ears greatly enhanced the experience for me but the presence of YOUR PARENTS there as chaperones was "death" for our three teenaged daughters (3). It always amazed me how the young ladies would dress to the "9s" for these events while the boys chose to dress down ... I guess that has not changed in fifty years.

Wally Buckowski became a lifelong family friend at this time when he volunteered to take on the role of hockey mentor for our son Steve. Ironic to see Steve out on the ice coaching his son's team.

This crowd just held a reunion in Shearwater for all the PMQ brat's of that era. Two of our daughters heard of it and one even traveled from Ottawa to meet up with the friends of their youth. It is hard to imagine that the boisterous kids in that teen club are middle-agers today in fact one of them, Shawn McClellan has a radio program here in Yarmouth.

The PMQ living was a mixed blessing as we lived it with no opportunity to add your personal touch to your home and suffering high heating bills in poorly insulated houses but when we look back it was the source of our best memories and our many Navy friends ... and as soon as I turned 23 we were really in the \$\$\$.

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### **Canadian Forces National Sports**

**Congratulations 12 Wing Shearwater, the 2013**

**CF National Old Timers' Hockey Champions!**



In our later years, the social interactions included block parties. Our second PMQ up on Firefly Terrace had a large



## **SUERTE AT CHEZZETCOOK**

In January 1962 I was flying H04S-3, side number 885 out of HU-21 with my student, Herm Muenzer on a routine training flight to a piece of Crown land at Hartlen's point which had been used by Shearwater helo squadrons for years. About half an hour into the trip Shearwater tower notified us that a vessel was in distress at Chezzetcook and asked us to have a look.



**SUERTE**

On arrival at Chezzetcook inlet we quickly found the Greek ship "Suerte", registered in Piraeus, held fast by the rocks on the west side of the approach to Chezzetcook harbor, her port side very close to rocky cliffs, and with a fairly heavy sea running, it looked as if her fate was sealed. It later turned out that the radar picture of Chezzetcook Inlet was similar in shape to that of Halifax harbor and in rotten weather and poor visibility the captain had mistaken this much smaller harbour for his destination.

Happily, the morning's exercise was practice hoisting so we had a crewman in the person of L/S Oliffe aboard. As well there wasn't much movement to the ship and the winds didn't present a problem. A quick recce revealed that if the crew could knock down the flag staff at the rear of an open deck space, we could probably safely hoist the crew from there. Oliffe was able to use the hoist to lower a message asking the crew to remove or knock down the mast and while this was going on I notified the tower of our intentions and suggested that another Horse be sent out to pick up crew members that I was unable to pick up due to weight, space and power limitations.

The mast came down, we moved in, Oliffe lowered the hoist to the deck but to our surprise the captain ran aft and attached a note to the hoist hook. It read something

like this; If you pick up my crew I will give you a case of whiskey. I was dimly aware that haggling was a feature of commerce in the eastern Mediterranean but I didn't think this was the time and place for it. I told Oliffe to go ahead with the hoists so Oliffe gave a "thumbs up" sign.

The hoist was lowered to begin the rescue. But instead of putting a crew member in the sling, the captain used a length of rope to attach the proffered case to the hoist hook. What is a poor girl to do when ravishment seems inevitable?

"Alright" I told Oliffe, "Bring up the whiskey and we'll bring up as many crewmembers as power limitations would allow." First things first me old dad used to say.

So the whisky (Berry's Best as I recall) came aboard and three crew members including the ship's captain, with all their worldly possessions quickly followed. At which point, in spite of winter temperatures and heaps of lift in the air, I was not far from having to use full power just to maintain a hover. Oliffe told me the captain said he needed to get on the ground right away so he could contact his owners and obtain permission from the insurers to abandon ship. (Hey I thought. What if the owners say, "No, go back to the ship with your crew.") In which case I pictured the troops of HU-21 Shanghaiing the reluctant rescuees and marching them back to the helicopter for the return trip. But if we did that the result would be the revocation of the George Medals a grateful monarch would certainly bestow upon, the loss of our Boy Scout rescue badges and a very bad press for returning the saved souls to a watery grave. On the upside, had we done this we could always say "Paul Hellyer made us to do it" and with a single act we might have avoided the whole integration mess.

The trip back to Shearwater took about ten minutes and, of course photographers were waiting, so as soon as the sailors were out of the airplane we had 885 hauled into the hangar out of sight of prying eyes and whipped the whisky into the stores section for later distribution. I think Frank Delisle made perhaps two more trips to get the rest of the fairly small crew off – perhaps a total of 12 people.

In the following months, Suerte was beaten into a wreck, but in spite of the hazards to life and limb, scavenging parties in small boats, in the immemorial custom of the sea, were put aboard to remove anything that might be of value. The ship remained in place for several months but eventually a salvage contractor was hired to make the hull as leakproof as possible and the old girl was towed out to sea to be sunk in deep water. However, she had a contrary streak and broke the tow before deep water was reached, rolled over and sank to the bottom miles away from the intended resting place.

End of Suerte but not the end of the story.

One evening months after the event the doorbell on my Swordfish Drive PMQ rang and I opened it to find that my caller was a Mountie. A big one.

“Are you the pilot that took those men off the Suerte?” he asked.

Oh poop! I thought. Somebody blabbed about the whisky and I’m for the high jump.

What could I say but “Yes”? No other answer was possible since a picture of the Suerte’s captain shaking my hand in thanks for the rescue had appeared on the front page of the Chronicle Herald.

He asked: “Do you remember seeing a typewriter come off the ship at any time in the course of the rescue or later?” All of a sudden my future seemed a lot brighter.

“No officer – all we brought ashore were some sailors and their kit.”

With that he left and disappeared into the night and I heard no more.

I could only smile at the idea of an Eastern Shore fisherman, months later when the heat was off and the kids and the missus were in bed, bringing his filched treasure out of hiding and rolling a clean sheet of 8 x 11 bond into it. “Now” he almost shouts, “page one of the the play that will be my ticket out of the fishery and my first step on the road to fame and fortune!” Only to have his hopes dashed by a dumb foreign typewriter than wouldn’t write English. Probably a good thing. We were spared yet another Greek tragedy.

*Mike McCall*

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## **When the Green Empire Ruled**

For many years in aircraft maintenance squadrons the Squadron Chief and the watch supervisors were always from the Air Frame or Engine trades "the Greasys" while the other trades such as Armourers, Safety Systems, Radio and Electrical "the Green Empire" took a supporting role specialising in their particular trade but not involved in the maintenance management.

However in the early 70s when VS 881 ceased to exist and VS880 emerged with all the CS2F ( CP121) Tracker Operations at Shearwater with 24 Aircraft an anomaly occurred. The squadron CO was Cdr. Edward "Ted" Foreman a pilot but also an Electrical Engineer, the XO was LCdr. Albert "Whitey" Williamson a former Air Radio Technician, the Engineering Officers were LCdr. Frank Jobborn a former Air Radio Technician and Lt. Frank Dowdall, a former Electrical Air Technician, the Squadron

Chief was Dave Irving an Air Radio Technician and I a CPO 2 (MWO) Avionics Technician {former Electrical Air} was the Maintenance Manager thanks to the support of my good friend and mentor CPO2 {MWO} Al Moore my predecessor in the job.

I think in retrospect that many of our "greasy" friends did not approve of this and expected disaster to ensue but that was not the case and the Squadron survived!

As an aside one of my most fervent supporters was the late Tony Dungale a superb engine mechanic who was famous for an entry in the aircraft logbook where the pilot entered a snag as "engine missing" and Tony signed it off with the entry " engine found".

Memorable moments in Naval Aviation.

Eric Edgar, Capt. Ret'd



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## **Naval Aviator remembers his roots!**

*From John Knudsen*

Those with a keen eye for details will have noticed a new name has been added to the SAMF "Sponsor Board" specifically to "Major Sponsors", the donor is a 91 year old gentleman

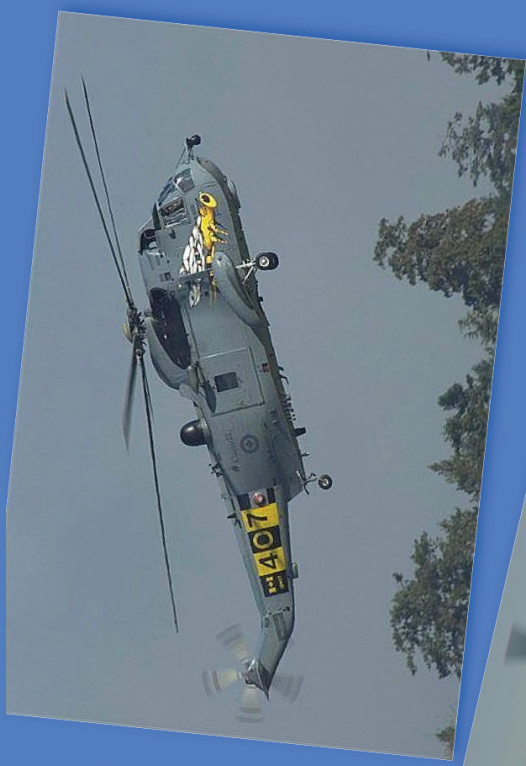
who is residing in Oakville Ontario.

This person has a long connection to maritime aviation, he first arrived at RNAS Dartmouth (now Shearwater) in 1942, Fleet Air Arm pilot in WWII, Served in Warrior as DLCO 1945-47, CO 880 Sqd 1951-1954. He also qualified for his Watchkeeping Certificate in 1946 and served as Executive Officer on HMCS Iroquois and HMCS Huron (DD216), he was Honourably released 11/11/60.

Although he went on to many other activities including teaching and photography after his release, he always remembered his roots and made a generous donation towards preservation of Maritime Aviation history, his name is: LCdr Edward (Ted) McKeown DAVIS, CD, RCN (Ret'd).

Do You remember your roots?





**STILL GOING STRONG!**



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# WINGS FOR THE FLEET



Celebrating the Sea King's Golden Jubilee