

# WARRIOR

WINTER 2024







This window is located in The Shearwater Aviation Museum. It commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canadian naval Aviation and is in memory of those still in "The Delta", Contributed by The Canadian Naval Air Group (C.N.A.G.) Window Designed and executed by Philip Doucette

# WARRIOR

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Delta photo Bruce Allan Mackintosh (Stellarton Photographer)

Front Cover HMCS Sackville Photographer Rick Boutilier (Halifax)





## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT SAMF

Thank you for entrusting me with the yoke and allowing me to steer the “craft” in an uncharted direction.

Despite the SAM being closed due to the repairs and refurbishments, this has been a very busy year with the RCAF 100<sup>th</sup> festivities, Airshow Atlantic, Bridge Walk, Hobby show, and many others – I hope you all had an opportunity to attend some of them, they were a great homage to our proud past.

This past year we also have been productive and I think we have charted a new path forward for the foundation. The groundwork of rebranding, document updating/ revising, studying the ways that the organization functions well, and what needs to be addressed has been enthusiastic and reinvigorating.

The working groups, or as I call them brainstorming sessions, have been a source of gathering many ideas and gaining insights into what we can accomplish as an organization. It also was a forum that allowed us to explore new ideas and different methods for looking at some of the issues that the foundation faces. I hope to keep this going, as a way to bring in experts to examine the future issues that we will face.

Additionally, I started a volunteer help program for the SAM – tidy up Tuesdays – it was a great start but there will be more work in the coming weeks, as the SAM gets nearer to being opened again. I think that as a board, this group has addressed many shortcomings and we are continuing the great work.

Looking forward to this next year, my goal will be to have a clearer path towards sustainability and expansion. This should be done by identifying/ clarifying the roles of the BOD, a concentrated

decision on how we fundraise, engage with the stakeholders and expand our reach as an entity.

We will achieve this by adopting a solid communications plan, a well-developed strategic guide - for the next decade and beyond - and a concentrated and focused goal.

I foresee a decision on an expansion of the SAM. With either a land lease option or a partnership with the community - This will drive our organization for a few years and allow us to develop a solid business plan, and ensure that future generations have a robust museum.

This capital project will be a great avenue for us to reach out to the military community, the corporate community and the general public. We need to show the value added to society, as a source of pride in our contributions to Canada and the world, but also as a valuable learning establishment. The wealth of knowledge and experience – even just held by the members of the foundation – could be leveraged to inspire a new generation of Aviation enthusiasts to take up the legacy of the SAM.

They could then be a part of the story, that is being so very well told by the exhibits and aircraft at the SAM. Membership, fundraising and community involvement will be the key to our survival and future expansion.

It is my sincere hope that we continue the enthusiasm and mindset to ensure that the foundation is set up for success in the future. I was taught that you should always leave something better than you found it, so my personal goal will be to do so.

Jason Miller SAMF President







From the desk of Karen Collacutt-McHarg

It's hard to believe another year has gone by, and as I walk around the museum looking at all the artifacts, photos and aircraft I can't help but feel totally grateful to be working here on your behalf.

When you come here to the Shearwater Aviation Museum, you can't help feel the pride for our military passed and present. Working here or just visiting you get to see and speak to the volunteers that keep our displays in great shape and you see and feel the pride they put into every single project they are working on. This year one of the projects is a mule that allegedly came off HMCS Magnificent 1944 Majestic-class aircraft carrier.



The mule has been stripped down to the bones and in the process of being restored. Some of the money raised through our 50/50 draws has done to help restore the Radiator. Pictured here are only a few of our hard-working volunteers. Their expertise is invaluable.



Newly presented 'King Charles III Coronation' medals presented by the Army Cadet League for service to the League, etc. at RA Park on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 2024.

One of our Board members Bob Stewart (second from the left), marks 50+ years of volunteering with various organizations, mostly with the Cdn Cadet Leagues (Navy and Army), but recently with HMCS Sackville, Dartmouth Yacht Club, SAME, Order of St George, etc.

Other recipients are LCol Ian MacVicar, Maj Russ Maine & Capt Bill Graham (all Ret'd and active with the Army Cdt Lg NS Branch).

My one Christmas wish this year is that each and everyone of you, remember and or thank a veteran for their service. My second wish is that you come visit us here at the museum one day and see where your donations and memberships are going. Be part of the story, remember you can send us you family's military stories and photos to be part of the story.

From my family to yours

*Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year*

*Karen*

## FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

By Christine Hines



It is great to be writing to you again from my own desk, as we've just moved back into the museum from our temporary office at the Shearwater Fitness and Sports Centre. During the renovations at SAM this past year, the amazing team at the Fitness and Sports Centre welcomed us to our remote office in their conference room, our home away from home, and we couldn't be more grateful and appreciative to Jason Price at PSP and his entire team for making us feel welcome and supported.

The legacy construction materials were successfully removed from the main display hangar, and the hangar has been repainted and new LED high bay, dimmable light fixtures have been installed in the ceiling. While a lengthy project, we couldn't be happier with the result, and working now to freshen the paint on the floor before the aircraft go back in, and making plans for a refreshed installation of aircraft and exhibits. Our stalwart restoration volunteers have been working to plan the logistics of the move of the aircraft, as well as working on the restoration of a Clarke tow tug from the early 1950's, reportedly used on board HMCS MAGNIFICENT. Our weekend engineers have been working on finessing the HO4S-3 "HORSE" and have been quietly making progress.

Despite being away from the museum these past months, we worked on many projects, including publishing the new book by the Canadian Naval Air Remembers Committee, "Signal Delta: Remembering Those Who Died, 1914-2024." It was fitting to launch the book on November 11<sup>th</sup>, with the help of the good folks at HMCS SACKVILLE, as the museum isn't yet ready to host visitors. The proceeds of the sale of the book will go towards a companion exhibit.

Our annual merchandising fundraiser at Air Show Atlantic in Greenwood this past August was a huge

success, and the largest volunteer team we've ever had attend. We had record sales, and also staffed an information booth to spread the word of the museum despite our current closure. The museum staff also participated on the RCAF 100 Committee at 12 Wing, and various celebratory events helped us raise awareness and allowed us to sell RCAF 100 merchandise to help us keep the restoration supplies going and to clean and make repairs to help us reopen as soon as possible. Once we get the aircraft reinstalled and able to entertain visitors once again, we'll plan a grand reopening, likely in the early spring, but we'll keep you posted on the details as they develop. We all eagerly look forward to meeting you at SAM once again!

Thank you for your support and helping us keep going! It has meant a great deal to all of us at SAM these last months.



A few more coats of paint, almost there





## Into the Delta

CAMPEAU Robert  
BEAKLEY Stu NOV 2023  
FINDLEY Robert (BOB) NOV 2024  
FOURNIER Joel Walter SEP 2024  
HOLLYWOOD Harry AUG 2024  
KENT Robert William JUN 2024

MCNISH Robert W. (BOB) AUG 2024  
MINGO STU JUL 2024  
NICHOLAS Gordon Arthur SEP 2024  
PICKFORD John SEP 2024  
STERLING Findlay Paul AUG 2024  
VERONNEAU Jean Joseph MAY 2024

### In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place, and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To take you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

Major John McCrae

Canadian doctor and WWI artillery commander

### Lest We Forget



Bruce Allan Photographer

## **McDonnell F2H-3 Banshee in the RCN**

Col. (Retired) Ernest Cable  
SAM Historian

### **Banshees for the U.S. Navy**

A total of 895 Banshees was built by McDonnell Aircraft Corporation in St. Louis, Missouri. The Banshee takes its name from Celtic mythology meaning “Spirit who warns of death”. The XF2H-1 prototype Banshee made its maiden flight on 11 January 1947 and incorporated the most recent jet fighter innovations such as an ejection seat and a fully pressurized, air-conditioned cockpit. Other improvements included a change from pneumatically to electrically operated flaps, landing gear, wing-fold, canopy and air brakes. Also, the front of the canopy was made of bulletproof glass that was electrically heated to prevent frost forming.

The U.S. Navy placed its first order for the twin-jet Banshee in May 1947 to replace its reciprocating-engine Grumman Bearcat as its primary fleet air-defense interceptor. The U.S. Navy decided to move away from the Second World War era .50 caliber (12.7 mm) machine guns to the heavier hitting 20 mm (0.79 inches) canons. Following delivery of the earlier F2H-1 and F2H-2 models of the Banshee, the U.S. Navy ordered 250 improved F2H-3s, the last significant version of the Banshee. The F2H-3 made its maiden flight on 29 March 1952; it is 2.4 meters (8 feet) longer than the previous models to increase the internal fuel load to 4,172 liters (1,102 gal) and its basic weight is 1,800 kg (2 tons) heavier than the original F2H-1. Other changes to the F2H-3 Banshee included mounting the four canons lower and farther aft in the nose than earlier versions to make room for the Westinghouse AN/APQ-41 radar; this gave the F2H-3 an all-weather, day-night intercept capability. The positioning of the canons in the lower fuselage also had the advantage of shielding the pilot from the blinding muzzle flash at night.

#### **Banshee F2H-3 Statistics**

Crew	1 Pilot
Wingspan	12.7 m (41 ft. 9 in)
Length:	14.7 m (48 ft. 2 in)
Height:	4.4 m (14 ft. 6 in)
Weight, Empty:	5,980 kg (13,183 lb.)
Weight, Gross:	9,531 kg (21,013 lb.)
Cruising Speed:	742 km/h (461 mph)
Max Speed:	933 km/h (580 mph)
Rate of Climb:	1,829 m (6,000 ft.) /min
Service Ceiling:	14,200 m (46,600 ft.)
Range:	1,883 km (1,170 mi)
Power Plant:	Two Westinghouse J34-WE-34 axial flow engines, 1,450 kg (3,200 lb.) static thrust
Armament:	Guns: 4 × 20 mm (0.79 in) Colt Mk 16 cannon, 220 rounds/gun (upper pair), 250 rounds/gun (lower pair) Rockets: 8 × 60 lb. High Explosive rockets or 6 × 500 lb. bombs and 2 × 60 lb. H.E. rockets Missiles: 2 × AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles



## Banshees In the RCN



**F2H-3 Banshee on Deck of HMCS Bonaventure**

In 1951, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) began to search for a replacement for its Centaurus 18-cylinder piston engine Hawker Sea Furies. The Navy was looking for a jet fighter for its new angled-deck aircraft carrier, *HMCS Bonaventure*, for the 1954-to-1959-time frame. The RCN stated a requirement for 60 aircraft, 16 each for VF 870 and VF 871 fighter squadrons plus 16 in reserve (a 100 % reserve) and an alarming number of 28 aircraft for attrition over the six-year period. After a thorough survey the McDonnell F2H-3 Banshee flown by the U.S. Navy was the only carrier-borne aircraft that met the RCN's fleet air-defense requirements.

In 1952, the Chief of the Naval Staff approved a plan to acquire 60 Banshees at a cost of \$500,000 each and \$9 million for spares including Sidewinder air-to-air missiles. McDonnell agreed to keep the Banshee production line open beyond its scheduled September 1953 shut down to add the RCN order to the end of the U.S. Navy production run. However, after making the initial payment, the Canadian Cabinet reneged on the agreement for fiscal reasons and the RCN's only alternative was to buy used Banshees from the U.S. Navy.

The U.S. Navy advised that surplus used Banshees would not be available until mid-1955 because their Banshee replacement aircraft, the F3H Demon, was delayed due to development problems. Since the RCN still intended to retire the Banshee in 1959, the number of attrition aircraft could be reduced by six making the total number now required 54. In an attempt to start jet pilot training sooner the RCN proposed to borrow 15 T-33 dual-seat jet training aircraft from the RCAF, to be assigned to one of the proposed Banshee squadrons. It was intended that the 15 T-33's would further reduce the planned strength of 54 Banshees by an equal number so that only 39 Banshees would be required.



### **Problems with USN's F3H Demon Delayed Banshee Delivery To RCN**

Thus, an order was placed with the U.S. Navy for 39 used Banshees with a price tag of \$25 million which included several million dollars of spare parts. However, because of the RCAF's expanded commitment to train NATO pilots, only four T-33's would be available to loan to the RCN. As the order for the Banshees was already placed, the difference in the number of aircraft was never made up. The delivery of the first used and tired Banshees commenced in November 1955 and was completed in June 1958.

On 1 November 1955, Lieutenant Commander Robert Falls, VF 870 Commanding Officer, and Lieutenant Walter Sloan ferried the first of ten well-used U.S. Navy Banshees from U.S. Naval Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island to *HMCS Shearwater*. In February 1956, VX 10 experimental squadron assumed responsibility for ferrying the remaining 29 Banshees to *Shearwater* and performing the RCN acceptance trials. In April 1957, two VX 10 Banshees flew to the UK to conduct flight trials on the RCN's newly acquired aircraft carrier, *HMCS Bonaventure*, for the British-built carrier's sea trials in the English Channel. The last Banshee was delivered to VF 871 in June 1958, 31 months after the RCN's initial delivery.

After arrival, the Canadian Banshees were stripped of their U.S. Navy livery and re-painted in the standard RCN dark grey-light grey colour scheme. Fortunately, there was an abundance of spares as the U.S. Navy retired their Banshees. It was only through exceptional diligence and hard work, often performing factory level repairs on the hanger floor, that the RCN maintainers were able to get their Banshees into excellent operational condition.

The RCN followed the Royal Navy numbering system where single-seat aircraft were assigned fuselage numbers in the 100-block (100 – 199). Similarly, experimental squadrons were assigned 700-block numbers with VX 10 rotating fuselage numbers, 700, 701 and 703 among their aircraft. The fuselage numbering was later changed to the RCAF system where last three digits of the serial number became the fuselage number (Banshee serial number 126402 was assigned fuselage number 402). VF 870 Banshees were identified by a blue and white saw tooth pattern on their rudders, while VF 871 aircraft were distinguished by alternating red and white horizontal bars on their rudders.





**Formation of VF 870 Banshees**

In November 1959, while VF-870 Banshees were deployed to the Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton England, the Royal Navy requested the squadron to demonstrate the effectiveness of its new Sidewinder 1A missile to gain intelligence for the refinement of their own infrared (heat-seeking), air-to-air Firestreak missile. As an inducement the Royal Navy offered 10 Firefly drone aircraft as targets. When five of the first six targets were destroyed by the Sidewinders the Royal Navy concluded the demonstration to save their remaining drones.

The Banshees' primary role was to provide air defence for the fleet when embarked in the aircraft carrier *HMCS Bonaventure*. While based ashore at *Shearwater* the Banshees were the prime interceptors in the 22<sup>nd</sup> North American Air Defence (NORAD) Region, working closely with ground intercept controllers at RCAF Station Beaverbank, a Pinetree radar site located approximately 30 kilometers north of *Shearwater*. The RCN Banshee was the first Canadian aircraft to employ the Sidewinder AIM-9A heat-seeking missile as its primary weapon. Although, the Sidewinder was developed by the U.S. Navy it was not used operationally on their Banshees. Therefore, VX 10 had to conduct the first trials to adapt the Sidewinder to the RCN Banshees. Despite the superior performance of the RCAF's contemporary CF-100 interceptors the Sidewinder gave the Banshee an equivalent or better probability of destroying its target. The Banshee also had an air-to-ground role; pilots honed bombing, strafing and rocket firing proficiency on the air weapons range at Chezzetcook, N.S about 20 km east of *Shearwater* and participated in ground support exercises with army units in Rivers, Manitoba and Gagetown, New Brunswick.

In early 1956, VF 870 formed a squadron aerobatic team which performed at Maritime airshows plus an appearance at the Canadian International Air Show (CIAS) in Toronto. In late 1957, the VF 870 aerobatic team was officially established as the "Grey Ghosts". The name was based on the two-tone grey of the aircraft and the fact that a Banshee was a ghost-like spirit. The Banshee fleet was too small to have aircraft dedicated to the team, so pilots flew squadron aircraft that were available. The Grey Ghosts were very active during 1958 and 1959 airshow

seasons, including performances at the CIAS. Because of personnel changes the Grey Ghosts flew for the last time in February 1960.

VF 870 and VF 871 flew F2H-3 Banshees from *HMCS Shearwater* and *HMCS Bonaventure* from November 1955 to July 1959 when VF 870 absorbed VF 871. VF 870 continued to fly the Banshee until 12 September 1962 when the RCN's first and only jet fighter was retired without replacement.

Of the 39 Banshees purchased for the RCN, 12 were destroyed or lost at sea, 15 were cut up for scrap and nine were used for training fire fighters. Three are preserved in museums: Banshee 126334 at the Naval Museum of Alberta in Calgary, 126464 at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa and 126402 at the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

### **Shearwater Banshee 126402**

Banshee 126402 in the museum's aircraft collection served with U.S. Navy fighter squadrons VF 23 and VF 194 before VX 10 delivered it to *HMCS Shearwater* naval air station. The RCN took the aircraft on strength on 13 March 1957, making it the 17<sup>th</sup> Banshee to be acquired. It was turned over to Fairey Aviation of Canada Ltd that same month for inspection, overhaul and repainting in the RCN dark-grey, light grey colour scheme before being allocated to VF 870 in June 1958 for squadron service. As part of the program to arm all RCN Banshees with the Sidewinder heat-seeking missile, 402 was returned to the Fairey plant in July 1958 where launch rails were mounted on the outboard pylons under each wing to accommodate the Sidewinder missile and its firing circuits.

Other Canadian modifications to Banshee 402 included a Safety of Flight Indicator (SFI) to give the pilot a quick reference to safe approach speed during the critical phase of landing on a carrier. The instrument was mounted above the instrument panel to allow the pilot to monitor the carrier-landing mirror and not having to look down into the cockpit to ensure the aircraft was above the stall speed. Also, installation of the Tactical Air Navigation (TACAN) system provided the pilot with range and bearing to the carrier or any other facility with a TACAN transmitter. Banshee 402 was also the trials aircraft for testing the smoke generators planned for the Grey Ghosts aerobatic team.

On 3 August 1962, Banshee 402 joined other squadron aircraft to fly its last operational sortie, a farewell fly-past over Halifax and Dartmouth in conjunction with ceremonial divisions at *Shearwater*. On 12 September 1962, Banshee 402 was among the 11 remaining Banshees to be struck off strength from RCN inventory. The aircraft was subsequently displayed outdoors at the entrance to the *Shearwater* air station until year 2000 when it was refurbished and moved indoor for display in the Shearwater Aviation Museum.





## A swamp, a downed plane, and an unexpected funeral guest



Darron Kloster

<https://www.timescolonist.com/>

Two Islanders honoured at a ceremony at 443 Squadron's base at Victoria International Airport have an amazing story to tell. Eighty years ago, a Halifax bomber piloted by B.C.-born Wilbur "Wib" Bentz smashed into a swamp in Belgium, its engine torn off by a German fighter pilot.

All seven Royal Canadian Air Force crewmen and another from the Royal Air Force who were aboard died in the exploding impact that night in May 1944.

The bodies of five of the crew aboard LW682 were recovered, but the others, including 23-year-old Wib Bentz, who grew up in the Fraser Canyon, sank quickly with the wreckage into the deep bog.

Fifty-three years later, Bentz's nephew and niece, Jay Hammond and Maureen Thom, went looking for the uncle they knew only from his letters home. They visited the site of the crash near Geraardsbergen, Belgium, and convinced Belgian and Canadian authorities to exhume the wreckage. They found the remains of Bentz and the other missing airmen seven metres below the surface.

They gathered some personal items — watches, gloves and a perfectly preserved wallet with a ticket stub from one of the airmen's last trips home. The plane was pulled to the surface, and the twisted aluminum was repurposed into ingots.

Every RCAF pilot earning their wings now wears a little of that historic plane where eight men lost their lives.

In a ceremony Friday at 443 Squadron at Victoria International Airport to honour the family's efforts, the air force presented Hammond, a Sooke resident, and Thom, who lives in Ladysmith, with a special set of their own wings.

"To look at this and to realize these wings are made from my uncle's bomber means that every member of the Royal Canadian Air Force that is awarded these wings remembers my uncle," said an emotional Hammond.

Thom, who went on to become a pilot herself, called it "a very proud moment for our family."

Lt.-Col. Matt Dukowski, commander at 443 Squadron, said pilot's wings have been using the aluminum of the downed Halifax bomber since 2021, and today's pilots are wearing a "true piece of history."

"Our modern leadership of the air force is hearkening back to the air force family and saying not only do we wear a uniform, but we're going to make part of that uniform historic and to remember those before us."



When the shattered bomber was recovered, the remains of the three-remaining aircrew — Bentz, upper gunner John Wilson Summerhayes and tail gunner Fred Roach — were still at their stations. Still-packed parachutes were in the plane, and there were leather items, a silver

cigarette case belonging to the tail gunner, a cross in a boot and flight suits. A piece of hardened chewing gum was still attached to a jaw bone, said Thom.

Hammond said a signet ring worn by one of the crew had been ripped off his finger by the impact, “showing us just how devastating the impact was.”

The men were buried with full military honours in Belgium in November 1997, alongside their five comrades — navigator Thomas Wessel Taylor, bomber aimer Clifford Stanley Phillips, air gunner Jack Edwin McIntyre, flight engineer Roy Ellerslie and mid-gunner Joseph Arbour. Surviving family members and government officials attended the funeral.

And there was also an unexpected guest.

The German fighter pilot who shot down the Halifax bomber in 1944 stood at the back of the crowd in a long coat.

Martin Drewes, a Luftwaffe ace with more than 50 confirmed “victories” during the Second World War, was piloting the Messerschmidt Bf-110 that hammered rounds into one of the bomber’s engines.

Hammond had been in touch with Drewes prior to exhuming the bomber and later on the two shared each other’s stories for several years. Hammond even visited Drewes’ home in southern Brazil in 2008.

Drewes, who died in 2013, is well known in aviation circles for his night-fighting abilities, with 43 kills in the dark.

Thom remembers Drewes at the funeral as the crowd watched a Belgian flypast. “He was a very small-stature man ... I remember thinking it was surreal because I should have been filled with anger at this man for killing my uncle and for the destruction that that man caused in the family ... all the families,” she said.

“But I couldn’t find that anger because I realized he was doing his job and it could have just as easily been [my uncle] that shot his plane. You had to look at him through a lens of this is war.”

Hammond said all the family members who were at the funeral that day “were friendly and introduced themselves. There was no anger, angst, nothing. Everyone behaved really well, except for one guy who at the dinner afterward did not want to meet him.”

Hammond said Drewes told him he could not remember shooting down that particular bomber. The German fighter pilot, however, told Hammond and Thom that he would fire into

the wings of bombers “in the hope that the boys could get out before the plane went down. He knew there were young men in bombers, just like him.”

Hammond said Bentz’s mother never got over the loss of her only son. She died in 1981. “At 88 she still talked often about losing her son,” said Thom.

It isn’t the first time aluminum from LW682 has been put to good use, according to the Department of National Defence. The roof of the Bomber Command Memorial in London, England, unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II in 2012, is constructed from LW682 aluminum.

The same year, a memorial to the crew of LW682 was unveiled at 8 Wing Trenton, Ont. Polished ingots, each engraved with the name of a crew member, are embedded in a memorial wall at the Air Mobility Training Centre.

Canadian aviation archaeologist Karl Kjarsgaard, with assistance from the Belgian Aviation History Association, managed to salvage a lot of the downed and buried bomber. Some of the recovered parts were used in the restoration of Halifax NA337 on display at Trenton.

In 2013, a memorial commemorating 16 Americans who served in the RCAF during the Second World War was unveiled in Richmond, Virginia. The war-era RCAF badge and the Virginia state insignia, incorporated into the memorial, are cast from LW682 aluminum. The remaining aluminum ingots, about 700 pounds worth, are stored at Bomber Command Museum of Canada in Nanton, Alta., according to DND.

The successes of the Bomber Command force came at a terrible cost, the museum says. Of every 100 airmen who joined Bomber Command, 45 were killed, six were seriously wounded, eight became prisoners of war, leaving only 41 unscathed, at least physically. Of the 125,000 who served in bombers, 58,000 were killed, including more than 10,400 Canadians.

The Bomber Command Museum said of those who were flying at the beginning of the Second World War, only 10% survived. Only the Nazi U-Boat force suffered a higher casualty rate.





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### **SAMF MEMBERSHIP DONATION FORM**

**Note: MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS**

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Everyone is welcome to join our  
membership and be part of the story.

## PLANNED GIVING

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

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

**Income Tax Benefits:** A bequest made by your Will confers an important advantage to your estate when the bequest is made to a Charitable organization such as the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation. Your lawyer or financial advisor can advise you on such advantages and the implications or limitations of such bequests.

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of the Testator

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank you for supporting  
the  
Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation**



## WALL OF HONOUR

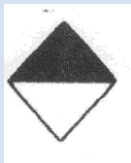
### Guidelines for designing your “Wall of Honour” Tile.

The tile used is made from high quality marble which is 12 inches square. The tile can be sand blasted in various ways to suit your wishes. All lettering will be in upper case and the tile will be mounted in the diamond orientation as opposed to a square orientation. All Text will run horizontally across the tile.

The options are:

- Option A:** One half tile 12" X 12" x 17" and triangular in shape with up to 5 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 60 letters and spaces. The longest row can accommodate up to 20 letters and spaces. The remaining 4 rows will decrease in length as the border/edge of the tile dictates. It should be noted that the upper half of the tile will start with a short row and the bottom half will start with a long row.
- Option B:** The full tile with up to 6 rows of 1" letters for a maximum of 55 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 16 letters and spaces. The remaining rows will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.
- Option C:** The full tile with up to 10 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 120 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate 20 letters and spaces. The remaining rows will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.
- Option D:** The “Buddy” Tile - sold only as a full tile. This tile is divided into 4 quarters - each 6" X 6". Each quarter can accommodate up to 6 rows of 1/2" letters for a maximum of 48 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 12 letters and spaces with the remaining rows decreasing as the tile edge dictates.

Option A



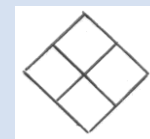
**\$300**

Option B & C



**\$600**

Option D

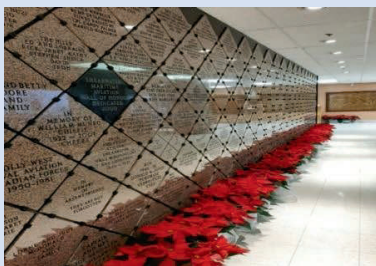


**\$600**

**Wall Tiles may be purchased through monthly installments.**

Half Tiles - \$100 day of purchase - \$100 per month for the following two months.

Full Tiles - \$200 day of purchase - \$ 100 per month for the following four months.



## (Wall Tiles (continued))

### ENGRAVING REQUEST

The colour of the tile will be 'Belmont Rose'. If the submission requires any alteration, the subscriber will be contacted by phone or email by the coordinator for further discussion. REMEMBER TO COUNT THE SPACES!

From:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

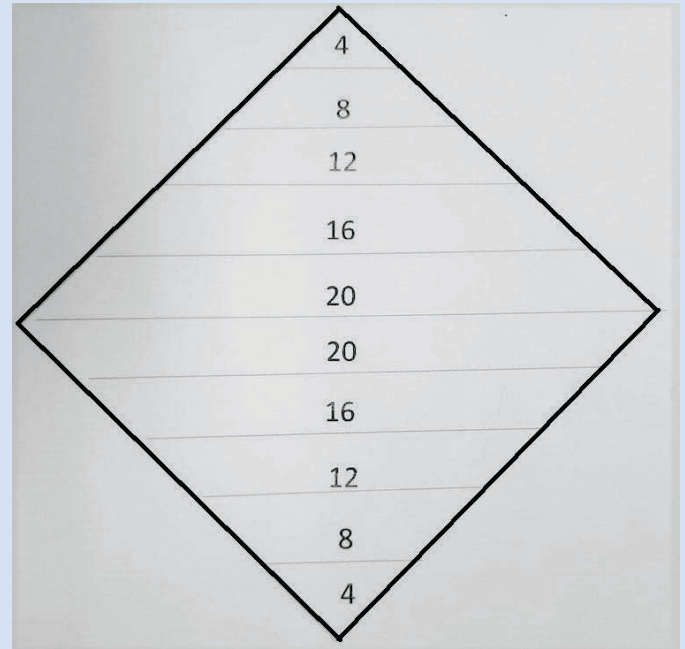
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PROV: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



Number of spaces per line

TYPICAL OPTION 'C' above

CIRCLE CHOICE: OPTION 'A'      OPTION 'B'      OPTION 'C'      OPTION 'D'

Method of Payment: Cheque (made payable to SAMF or SAM Foundation) Money Order      Cash

VISA/MASTERCARD Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3# security code on the back of card \_\_\_\_\_

For further information, please call the SAMF Secretary: Toll Free: 1-888-497-7779 of (902) 461-0062

Email: [samf@samfoundation.ca](mailto:samf@samfoundation.ca)

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



## Recognizing, Supporting The Last Corvette

The iconic HMCS *Sackville*, built in Saint John, NB and named after the Town of Sackville, NB, has had a storied career following the corvette's commissioning in December 1941.

*Sackville* is the second-last of 269 Allied Flower Class corvettes that were built and served during the Second World War, including the 123 corvettes that served in the Royal Canadian Navy.

The 205-foot ship had an active combat record while providing critical convoy escort duties from Halifax to Londonderry (Derry), Northern Ireland to keep the vital lifeline to Great Britain open.

In early August 1942, while escorting west bound convoy ON 115, *Sackville* engaged three German U-boats in a 24-hour period and put two out of action. This was followed with another U-boat action in September 1943 while escorting ONS18/ON 202 that resulted in the loss of several of *Sackville's* sister escorts with heavy loss of life.

Naval historian Marc Milner noted in *HMCS SACKVILLE 1941-1965* that *Sackville*, following an extensive refit in Galveston, Texas, and workups in Bermuda "began her third campaign in the North Atlantic on 29 June 1944 when she sailed with C 2 to escort HX 297." The convoy arrived safely in Liverpool July 11.

While alongside in Londonderry just prior to joining a west bound convoy, a defect was detected in *Sackville's* No 1 boiler and a further examination was ordered on the ship's return to Halifax. Following arrival in Halifax and another examination of the defective boiler, the

ship was removed from escort duty and assigned as a training ship for HMCS *Kings* and later converted as a harbour loop-layer. She remained on one boiler until her transfer to the Trust in 1982.

During the 1950s *Sackville* was converted to Canadian Naval Auxiliary Vessel (CNAV) and continued to serve as a naval and oceanographic research vessel until paid off in 1982.

Following *Sackville* being paid off the Naval Officers Association of Canada (now the Naval Association of Canada) and other groups took the lead in acquiring the corvette. The volunteer Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT) was formed to restore the ship to the vessel's wartime configuration and to maintain and operate *Sackville* for the benefit of all Canadians. In 1985 the Government of Canada designated HMCS *Sackville* Canada's Naval Memorial.

The younger generation may not be aware the Second World War touched our shores. During the hostilities, some 3,500 merchant ships were sunk in the Atlantic including 59 Canadian registered ships; 1,500 Canadian Merchant Navy members lost their lives. The rapidly expanded RCN lost twenty-four ships and 2,000 members.

A milestone in the history of HMCS *Sackville* occurred in June 2010 during the Centennial of the RCN and the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip to the ship.

In his welcoming remarks, then CNMT Chair John Jay noted: "Your Majesty, there have been many memorable days in the life of this small ship, including August 3, 1942, when she engaged three enemy U-Boats in a 24-hour period, allowing her convoy to proceed. However, June 29, 2010, and your visit will always be remembered by the Trustees as a most significant event in our history because



your presence here today recognizes the role of *Sackville* as the memorial to the 100,000 young men and women of this country who joined the RCN during WW II. This ship particularly honours the two thousand that were lost at sea during the war, but it also recognizes the contributions made by your Canadian Navy during the Korean War, and indeed the contributions which your sailors continue to make today and every day at home and around the world.”

Each year *Sackville* welcomes thousands of visitors at the ship’s summer-fall berth at Sackville Landing next to the Maritime Museum of Atlantic on the historic Halifax waterfront. Through guided tours, displays and audio-visual aids visitors learn of the daily routine of the young sailors from across the country who braved the unforgiving North Atlantic in defence of freedom.

In 2023, the Board of Directors of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT), embarked on the development of a strategic plan. While the Trust has been a diligent steward of HMCS Sackville, the last corvette, for the last forty years, there were future challenges looming, including the eventual replacement of the hull. The year-long effort to establish strategic priorities culminated in a renewed mission to preserve HMCS Sackville and to share the stories. These stories are to inspire generations of Canadians to appreciate the accomplishments and sacrifices of the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War that helped change the world.

The requirement for a clear brand that would articulate the goals of the Trust was evident. With this in mind, a Branding Committee was formed that hired an experienced marketing contractor to articulate the Trust’s requirements, including specifications of key target audiences. These clarifications lead to the hiring of an advertising agency that created a brand

campaign. Their output was completely on target, winning both international and local awards. The print and audio-visual ads function as a storyteller; highlighting the moments that might seem small but collectively changed the course of history and thus end with the tagline: “And that changed everything.” The work and purpose of CNMT is summed up by another tagline: “History preserved is history remembered.” The Trust’s logo, along with its specific colours, were modernized with reference to dazzle paint and fonts reminiscent of the 1940’s. An advertising campaign was introduced on television as well as Amazon Prime, podcasts, on-line digital ads, and social media. The branding campaign continues to roll out with a renewed website, signage, print ads, and even stationery.

The rebranding of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust lays the foundation to attract new Trustees and promote fundraising to help preserve the ship and to share the stories for years to come.

Story credit  
Ann Mech



Photo By Rick Boutilier (Halifax)

## **HMS Seaborn / RNAS Dartmouth**

### **A Convoluted Lineage of Names**

Colonel (Retired) Ernest Cable

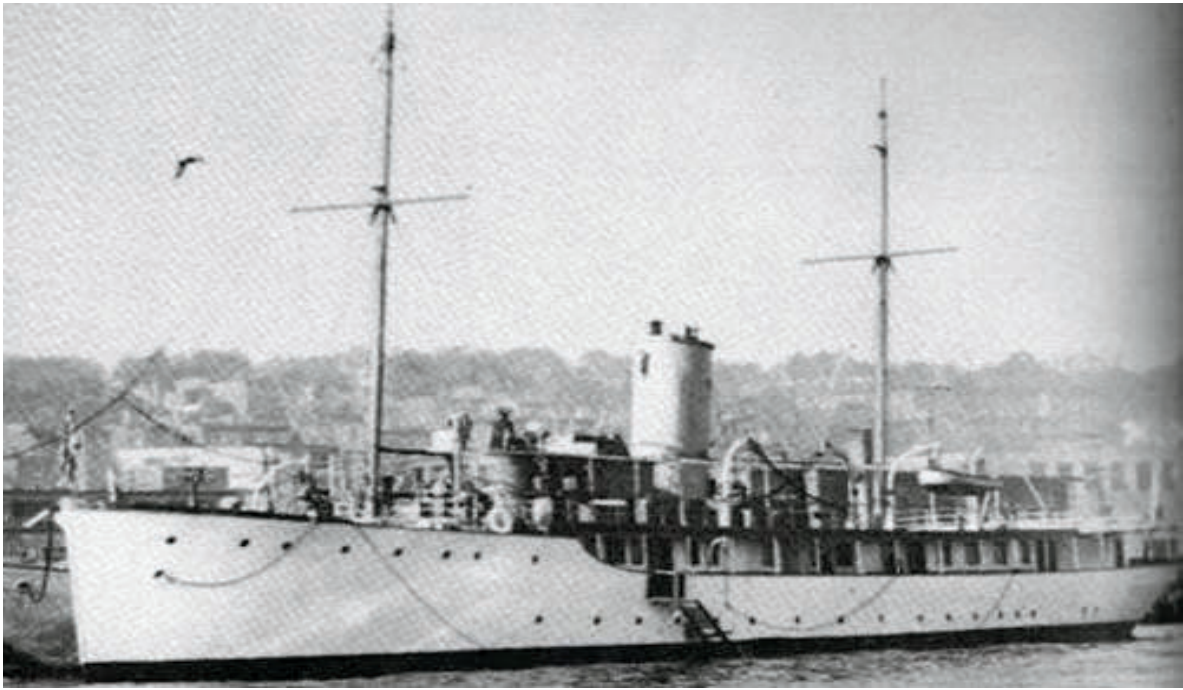
SAM Historian

With war clouds on the horizon in 1939, the British Admiralty realized that the industrial capacity in the United Kingdom would be hard pressed to meet the wartime expansion needs of the Royal Navy (RN). If the RN was to continue to “Rule the Waves”, additional ships, aircraft and personnel would be required from North America. Additional aircrew destined for the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) would have to be trained by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) in Canada and by the United States Navy. Consequently, the Admiralty planned to establish several Strategic Reserve Pools in Canada and the United States to administer the acquisition of warships and aircraft as provided by the American Lend-Lease policy and the Canadian Mutual Aid agreement. Additionally, the Reserve Pools would coordinate the flow of Royal Navy personnel to and from training establishments in North America. In Canada a shore-based Strategic Reserve Pool was established at Halifax, which was initially commissioned as *HMS Seaborn*. As the Battle of the Atlantic progressed, Halifax became a major western terminus for trans-Atlantic convoys carrying war materials to the UK; requiring the RN to establish an air facility ashore to service FAA aircraft embarked in RN ships during port visits to Halifax.

*HMS Seaborn* had a convoluted lineage of names because the Royal Navy followed a tradition of double-naming shore establishments and air stations by commissioning them as ships with the commissioned names not bearing any relation to their geographic names. The identity of *HMS Seaborn* was further confused by the fact that it was commissioned under four different names during its five-year existence.

### **The First HMS Seaborn**

In 1939, Northumberland Ferries Ltd of Charlottetown, PEI acquired an American yacht, which was immediately drafted into wartime naval service and berthed in Halifax harbour. On 7 December 1939, the converted yacht was commissioned *HMS Seaborn* and served as the flagship for the Rear Admiral commanding the Royal Navy’s Third Battle Squadron based in Halifax. In addition to his Third Battle Squadron duties, the Rear Admiral administered the Strategic Reserve Pool in Halifax. The Third Battle Squadron urgently required an airfield ashore to service Swordfish and Walrus aircraft embarked in its ships as well as for aircraft disembarked from other British warships during port visits to Halifax. However, it wasn’t until 14 September 1940 that the British Admiralty, with the consent of the Canadian government, established Royal Naval Air Section (RNAS) Dartmouth, as a lodger unit at RCAF Station Dartmouth. Organizationally, RNAS Dartmouth was a tender (sub-unit) to its parent ship, *HMS Seaborn*, but was frequently misrepresented by being referred to by the name of its parent ship, *HMS Seaborn*. Understandably, two separate units seemingly named *HMS Seaborn* created confusion both in Canada and abroad.



**Converted Yacht HMS Seaborn**

Although RNAS Dartmouth was a tender to *HMS Seaborn*, it was responsible to the Admiralty as far as aircraft facilities were concerned. By arrangement between the Admiralty and the Canadian government, contracts were let for construction of the required buildings at RCAF Station Dartmouth with the RCAF supervising the contracts on behalf of the Admiralty. The main RNAS buildings consisted of three hangars, a workshop building, an engine test bed, barracks and messes for the men, Chiefs, and Petty Officers, and a wardroom for the officers. The RCAF supplied the furniture and mess equipment, and the Admiralty provided all aircraft support and technical equipment. The RCAF controlled all flying from the station control tower and shared other smaller sections common to their needs such as safety equipment.

The RNAS personnel referred to their hangars as Nos. 1, 2 and 3, but on the RCAF site plan they are identified as 108, 109 and 110 hangars. No. 108 hangar was located on the site of the former "D" hangar; and now the site of the 423 Squadron hangar. No. 110 hangar was situated south of 108, while 109 hangar was located east of 108 hangar centrally situated at the north end of the inner ramp. The 12 AMS hangar is built on the site of the former 109 hangar.





**RNAS Dartmouth Hangers 108 and 109 in Background  
Foreground - RCN 803 and 883 Squadron Sea Furies**

The RNAS Officers' mess and quarters were located on the site of the former Warrior Block; the NCOs' quarters were located on the east side of Puncher Ave. at the corner of Boundary Road, while the NCOs' mess was across the street on the west side of Puncher Ave. The Victualing Stores building was adjacent to the mess. The RNAS Administration Building was located on the south side of Boundary Road between Puncher and Warrior Avenues.

In August 1940, LCdr. Dennis Foley, a Canadian engineer/pilot serving in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm was appointed to the staff of Rear Admiral Third Battle Squadron but upon arrival was immediately assigned to be the first Officer-in-Charge of RNAS Dartmouth. LCdr. Foley arrived at the Naval Air Section site with a staff of three: a Royal Air Force (RAF) Sergeant fitter (aero-engine mechanic), a RAF Leading Aircraftman rigger (airframe mechanic) and a naval stores man. They found that most of the buildings had been started but none was near completion. The area where the buildings were being built was remote from the other RCAF buildings with no roads into the new construction area. With the exception of the taxiways, which had been gravelled, the site was a quagmire. For the first few months the RCAF station provided temporary quarters and office space at the marine site (lower base on the shore of Eastern Passage) and eventually Foley's small staff moved into their workshop, the first building to be completed.



### **LCdr. Foley and Swordfish at RNAS Dartmouth**

In May 1941, the number of personnel started to increase and built up to a basic complement of approximately 50 personnel; about half were RAF aircraft trades (the RN was still short of Fleet Air Arm personnel) with the other half naval trades: regulators, writers and stores men. Eventually, as many as 200 to 300 people were stationed at RNAS Dartmouth. These additional personnel were transients awaiting rail transportation inland for training or awaiting sea transportation back to England following training. These transients were billeted in a long two-story building at the foot of Morris Street in Halifax and ferried back and forth across the harbour to RNAS Dartmouth. The transients were kept busy by building roads around the RNAS site and landscaping areas around their buildings; they won many awards for their gardens (mostly gladiolas) which attracted many admirers.

The transient ratings wore the traditional British naval uniform with bell-bottom trousers and the regulation sailors' black cap. Fleet Air Arm trainees could be identified by the white band on their caps in place of the usual cap tally, and the letters "FAA" were worn on the left sleeve just above the cuff. Following successful training their wings were worn just above the "FAA" badge. The officers wore the letter "A" (for Air Branch) in the executive curl of their gold rank braid both on their sleeves and shoulder epaulets. The officers after graduation wore their wings on their left sleeve just above the rank braid.

The first crates of disassembled Swordfish aircraft arrived by sea in June 1941; not all of the shipment arrived, as some of the convoy ships had been sunk by U-boats enroute from England. Since much of the aircraft maintenance equipment had not yet arrived there were problems handling the oversized heavy crates and assembling the aircraft. However, with much improvising the first Swordfish, V4312, was test flown on 4 August 1941. Eventually, a Swordfish could be uncreated and assembled in half a day; however, rigging the controls took considerably longer because of the wing-fold and spreading mechanisms. By early 1942, operations were in full swing, and 25 Swordfish could be assembled in 30 days. By the end of the war over 200 Swordfish were shipped in crates from England, assembled and test-flown at RNAS Dartmouth.

## **HMS Saker II**

On 1 October 1941, the Rear Admiral hauled down his Flag and the Third Battle Squadron departed for the UK. The Admiral's former flagship, the yacht *HMS Seaborn*, was decommissioned, renamed *HMCS Sambro* and assigned the role of depot ship for Royal Canadian Navy destroyers and auxiliaries.

With the departure of the Third Battle Squadron for the UK the Admiralty reorganized its North American facilities. On 1 October 1941, the Admiralty commissioned the Strategic Reserve Pool in Washington D.C., as *HMS Saker*, to administer the Royal Navy activities in the United States. The Admiralty followed the practice of naming tenders after their parent units by adding a Roman numeral to the parent unit's name. Therefore, the Strategic Reserve Pool in New York was commissioned as *HMS Saker I*. With the decommissioning of *HMS Seaborn* RNAS Dartmouth was left without a parent unit. In keeping with the North American reorganization, the Admiralty, on 1 October 1941, commissioned RNAS Dartmouth as *Saker II*, a tender to *HMS Saker* but an independent air facility for FAA aircraft embarked in RN ships visiting Halifax.

## **HMS Canada**

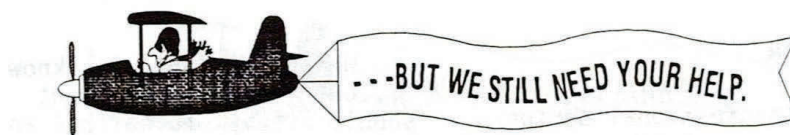
The tenuous command relationship of having Royal Navy activities in Canada administered from *HMS Saker* in Washington D.C. was remedied on 1 August 1942 when *HMS Saker II* was decommissioned and *HMS Canada* was established in Halifax to administer the Canadian Strategic Reserve Pool. RNAS Dartmouth was made a tender to *HMS Canada*. On 1 March 1943, the Admiralty established No.1 Naval Air Gunner School (NAGS) as a lodger unit at RCAF Station Yarmouth to train FAA Air Telegraphists and Air Gunners. Although, No. 1 NAGS and FAA squadrons that supported the school were tenders to *HMS Canada*, No. 1 NAGS was part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which was administered by the RCAF. (The Royal Navy had commissioned several warships *HMS Canada* dating as far back as 1765; the most recent *HMS Canada* was a battleship that fought in the First World War).



## HMS Seaborn Reincarnated

On 7 December 1943, RNAS Dartmouth was commissioned *HMS Seaborn* as an independent command, but *HMS Canada* retained accounting responsibilities for the new *HMS Seaborn*. On 1 July 1944, the Admiralty issued an order amalgamating *HMS Canada* and *HMS Seaborn* (RNAS Dartmouth) under the single name of *HMS Seaborn*, thus streamlining the responsibilities of the two Royal Navy facilities in the Halifax area. The accounting responsibilities (pay and personnel) for the Royal Navy in Canada were assumed by *HMS Seaborn* and the name *HMS Canada* ceased to exist. The newly amalgamated *HMS Seaborn* was under the direct administrative control of the Commander-in-Chief, Canadian Northwest Atlantic, Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, RCN, who was the only Canadian to command an Allied theatre of war during the Second World War.

After the end of the war *HMS Seaborn* was paid off on 29 January 1946. The Admiralty donated the 22 Swordfish and three Walrus aircraft still on strength at *HMS Seaborn* to the Royal Canadian Navy. These aircraft helped to form the nucleus of the embryonic Royal Canadian Naval Air Arm, which had just been approved by the Canadian Cabinet on 19 December 1945 and became part of the next chapter in Shearwater's colourful history.



Memberships / Donations

Cheques are payable to

Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation or SAMF

12 Wing PO Box 99000/ Stn Forces, Halifax, NS B3K 5X5

Online: [samfoundation.ca](http://samfoundation.ca) (our website)

E tranfer: [samf@samfoundation.ca](mailto:samf@samfoundation.ca)

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR



## **DEDICATION OF THE HMCS VENTURE (1954-1968) LEGACY CAIRN**

**Article submitted by Matt Durnford, Chairman,  
VENTURE (1954-1968) Legacy Committee**

**Article written by Dick Duffield(62)**



On Saturday, 14 September, a bright, sunny Halifax day, the HMCS Venture (1954-1968) Legacy Cairn was unveiled in the presence of a large gathering of Ventures, their families and special guests and with music provided by the Stadacona Band Quintet. The cairn has been installed on the grounds of the Naval Museum of Halifax at Admiralty House, CFB Halifax and will be available for viewing by visitors as a permanent reminder of the impact the graduates of HMCS Venture had on the Navy in particular, and society at large. But first, some background information.

The executive of the Venture Association, a body whose membership is made up of

attendees who joined HMCS Venture during the period 1954-1968, recognizing the increasing ages of our members and the ever-decreasing number of our members, commenced discussions last year to consider the dissolution of our Association. As part of this discussion process Matt Durnford, Class of 65, our Vice President, Venture East proposed the establishment of a Legacy monument as a memorial to all officers who trained at HMCS Venture during the period 1954 to 1968. This proposal was accepted by the executive on condition that no Association funds were to be used to pay for the project. Accordingly, Matt formed a committee with the main purpose of raising funds from our Association members to make the project happen. The response was overwhelming and the committee received sufficient funds to cover the cost of the monument and its installation plus a considerable excess. I'll talk about that latter point in a minute.

The impressive granite cairn was successfully installed and was the center piece of our dedication ceremony on the 14 September. Matt commenced with opening remarks outlining the origin of HMCS Venture and its training plan and the details surrounding the planning and successful completion of the project. He was followed with a most inspirational address by Rear Admiral J. Kurtz, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic who emphasized the important role played in the past by Venture trained officers and mentioning specifically the personal benefit she had received from Venture officers with whom she served.

She closed her remarks outlining how the current and future navy will benefit from the knowledge that has been passed on by Venture graduates to serving personnel of all ranks. The Admiral was followed by John Cody, Class of 64, who gave a stirring account of his career as a naval aviator. After the unveiling of the cairn by the Legacy Committee as seen in the accompanying photograph the assembled gathering sang O Canada led by Angus Duncan, Class of 66 and the Stadacona Band quintet. We then moved to the Stadacona Wardroom ballroom for the opportunity to socialize, chat and recall memories of our time at HMCS Venture. The ceremony finished with a review of the Naval Toasts of the Day by Matt and Roger Chiasson, Class of 62 following which all assembled Ventures, with a glass of port in hand gathered in front of the ballroom fireplace and proposed a toast to HMCS Venture and ourselves.

I mentioned earlier that the project fundraising was so successful that the Legacy Committee ended up with a considerable excess. What to do with these left-over funds? The final decision was to donate the funds to the Sea Cadet organization. After discussion with the Navy League of Canada, it was decided that the funds would be donated to the Royal Canada Sea Cadet Education Foundation (RCSCEF). It is significant to note that the RCSCEF was founded by Rear Admiral Henry Timothy Porter, Class of 58 when he was Past President of the Navy League of Canada. Thus, on 16 October in front of the

assembled cadets of RCSCC Falkland at HMCS Carleton in Ottawa, Matt on behalf of all Ventures will be presenting a cheque for \$7,500 to Capt (Ret'd) Harry Harsch, RCN, Chair of the RCSCEF. A very fitting tribute and outstanding conclusion to the dedicated, hard work of the HMCS Venture Legacy Committee.



Matt Durnford, VENTURE Legacy Committee Chairman, opening remarks.





John Cody, Committee member, former Base Commander CFB Shearwater, reflections of a Naval Aviator



Admiral Kurtz, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic, address to Ventures and families

## **TOAST OF THE DAY—VENTURE CAIRN DEDICATION**

### **MONDAY--OUR SHIPS**

FROM CRUISERS TO DDES TO DDH 280 AND ALL IN BETWEEN—WE HAVE SAILED THEM ALL

NAVAL AIRCRAFT FROM BANSHEES TO TRACKERS TO HO4S TO SEA KINGS, WE HAVE FLOWN THEM ALL

SHIPS ARE NOT JUST PIECES OF METAL, WE FONDLY REFER TO THEM, THEY HAVE A SOUL

THERE WERE TYPES AND TAIL NUMBERS OF AIR CRAFT THAT WERE FAVOURITES

### **TUESDAY--OUR SAILORS**

NAVAL OFFICERS ARE LEADERS. WE HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO LEAD SOME OF THE FINEST MEN AND WOMEN. THEY MADE US GOOD LEADERS.

WE WERE TRAINED BY SOME GREAT SAILORS WHICH WE ALL REMEMBER. CLASS OF 65, ONE OF OUR INSTRUCTORS, PO SAILOR, CAN IT BE MORE NAVY THAN THAT

### **WEDNESDAY—OURSELVES**

WE ARE UNIQUE. AS A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER AMONG AN OFFICER CORPS OF COMMISSIONED-FROM-THE RANKS, ROTP, DIRECT ENTRY, ETC, WE PUNCHED ABOVE OUR WEIGHT AND HAD A SOLID IMPACT ON THE NAVY WE LOVED

### **THURSDAY—OUR NAVY**

WHICH WE SERVED SO WELL; WE STOOD ON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT IN WWII AND KOREA; WE LEFT OUR LEGACY; AND TODAY'S NAVY, REPRESENTED BY OUR HONOURED GUESTS HERE TODAY, CONTINUE THE PROUD TRADITION OF LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

### **FRIDAY- OUR NATION**

OUR COUNTRY IS THE ENVY OF MANY AROUND THE WORLD WHO COME TO OUR SHORES SEEKING A BETTER LIFE; AS A RESULT, OUR COUNTRY HAS EVOLVED OVER THE DECADES – FOR THE BETTER; OUR NAVY REFLECTS THE VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS THAT BUILT, AND CONTINUE TO BUILD, THIS PROUD AND DIVERSE NATION

### **SATURDAY- OUR FAMILIES**

TO THE YOUNG GIRLS WHO WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO MARRY US, WHOSE SUPPORT MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE

### **SUNDAY-ABSENT FRIENDS**

THOSE WHO HAVE CROSSED THE BAR, THOSE WHO GONE TO THE DELTA AND THOSE WHO ARE FAR AWAY

LET US CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF HMCS VENTURE (1954--1968) AND RECOGNIZE OURSELVES, THE OFFICERS WHO TRAINED TO SERVE THE NAVY AND CANADA.

GENTLEMEN--- TO OURSELVES AND HMCS VENTURE



VENTURE Legacy Committee and Guests

L-R Dick Duffield, Roger Chiasson, Lt (N) Campbell, Commanding Officer, Stadacona Band, Matt Durnford, CAPT (N), Vallis, MARLANT Chief of Staff, Admiral Kurtz, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic, Colonel Holmes Wing Commander, Shearwater, CWO Wezenbeek, Wing Chief Warrant Officer, CAPT (N) Fortin, Base Commander, Halifax, Don Uhrich, John Cody.



VENTURE Legacy Committee

L-R Dick Duffield, Roger Chiasson, Matt Durnford, Don Uhrich, John Cody, Don Uhrich is holding a picture of Bob Lancashire, committee member, who passed away 4 Aug. 24)





#### Ventures in attendance

L-R Pierre Allard, Don Uhrich, Matt Durnford,  
 Angus Duncan, Brian MacLean, Len Tedds, Gord Davis,  
 Dick Duffield, Bob Stewart, (in front) Jim Barlow, Lee Myrhaugen, Allan Snowie  
 George Braithwaite, Bruce MacKay, John Cody,  
 Doug Thomas, Bill Davidson, Jim Green, Al Moore, Stew Russell, John McDermott, Roger Chaisson, Wayne  
 Shellnutt, Frank Dennis.





## TOAST OF THE DAY—VENTURE CAIRN DEDICATION

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THE WORLD WHO COME TO OUR SHORES SEEKING  
A BETTER LIFE; AS A RESULT, OUR COUNTRY HAS

EVOLVED OVER THE DECADES – FOR THE BETTER;  
OUR NAVY REFLECTS THE VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS  
THAT BUILT, AND CONTINUE TO BUILD, THIS  
PROUD AND DIVERSE NATION

### **SATURDAY- OUR FAMILIES**

TO THE YOUNG GIRLS WHO WERE FOOLISH  
ENOUGH TO MARRY US, WHOSE SUPPORT MADE  
IT ALL POSSIBLE

### **SUNDAY-ABSENT FRIENDS**

THOSE WHO HAVE CROSSED THE BAR, THOSE WHO  
GONE TO THE DELTA AND THOSE WHO ARE FAR  
AWAY

LET US CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF HMCS  
VENTURE (1954--1968) AND RECOGNIZE  
OURSELVES, THE OFFICERS WHO TRAINED TO  
SERVE THE NAVY AND CANADA.

GENTLEMEN--- TO OURSELVES AND HMCS  
VENTURE

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Legacy Donation Photo.

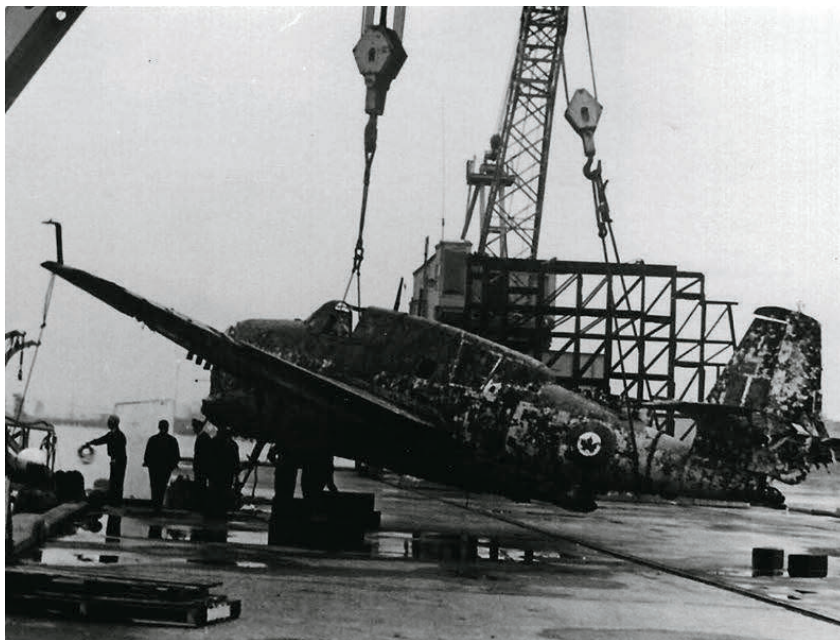
Matt Durnford, Class of 65, Vice President East  
presents the \$7,500 Venture Legacy Project  
donation and his Class of 65 \$650 donation to Capt  
(Ret'd) Harry Harsch, RCN, Chair of the Royal  
Canadian Sea Cadet Education Foundation. Photo  
Credit: Sea Cadet PO2 Marney Norcross, RCSCC  
Falkland

# Avenger



Avenger #85861 from HMCS Magnificent circa 1950-1952, flying as AB\*P, with a radar pod under the starboard wing. This Avenger crashed in Halifax Harbour in 1953, was recovered in 1972 and is now on display in the CFB Shearwater Museum. [Photo DND/RCN / Wikimedia Commons]

85861 TF-D recovery\_HalifaxNS\_Jun72\_BMacLeod



RCN 85861 is raised from the waters of Halifax Harbour, June 1972.

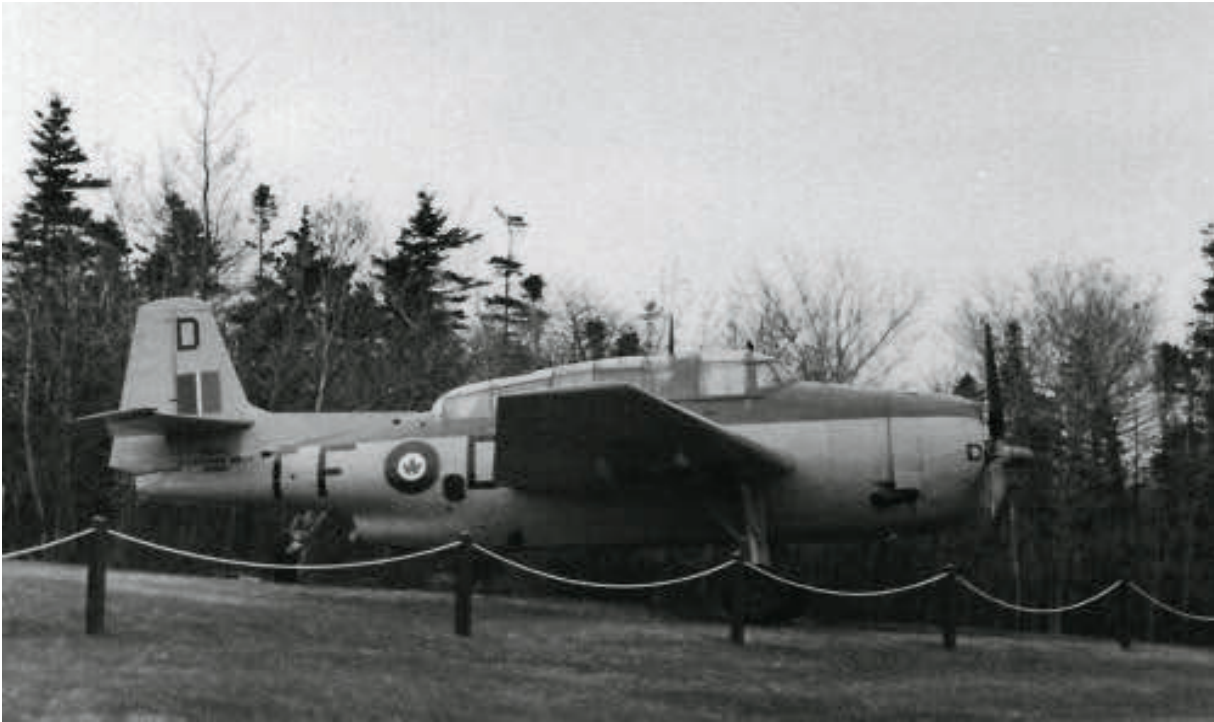
Royal Canadian Navy Avenger Bu. 85861 TF-D was flying over Halifax on 6 August 1953 as there was to be a flight of 24 Avengers over the city for Natal Day.

The aircraft experienced engine problems and ditched in Bedford Basin. The pilot went on to fly for Air Canada. 85861 remained submerged in the salt water until June 1972 when it was recovered by the Fleet Diving Unit Atlantic. It was taken back to Shearwater and cosmetically repaired. The biggest missing piece was the engine cowl and one from the wreck of A23 was obtained in New Brunswick. There is a snapshot of the nose but I cannot find my copy at the moment. 85861 was placed on display by the main gate on 9 October 1975 and remained there in the salt spray off the Atlantic for many years. By 2007 she was inside the museum building and had another overhaul.



Here she is being worked on, 21 September 1973. The metal rail is part of the turntable for the RCN crash boats in the 1940s & 1950s. Barrie MacLeod's post in TBM's - Mil & Civil, 20 Nov14.





85861 as a Gate Guard, 6 May 1977.



85861 TF-D as an inside display at Shearwater Aviation Museum.

## **The Grumman Avenger**

Colonel (Retired) Ernest Cable SAM Historian

Grumman Avenger 85861 at the Shearwater Aviation Museum's is one of 4,657 Avenger TBM-3's built for the U.S. Navy late in the Second World War. Avenger 85861 was manufactured at the Trenton, New Jersey Eastern Aircraft Division plant of General Motors Corporation. Built as a TBM-3E, Avenger 85861 could be distinguished from the basic TBM-3 by the AN/APS-4 radar pod fitted to the underside of the starboard wing. The "dash 3E" was the last Avenger model to be produced in quantity during the Second World War.

Avenger 85861 was among the initial batch of 74 Avengers purchased from the U.S. Navy and taken on strength by the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in July 1950. Nine months later it was turned over to the Fairey Aviation Company of Canada Ltd plant at Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia where it was converted to the AS 3 Mark 1 version for the RCN's anti-submarine role. The modification to the AS 3 included the installation of sonobuoy equipment and reconfiguring the centre cockpit and gunner's position to accommodate an Observer and an Observer's Mate. In early May 1952, 85861 was taken on strength by Fleet Requirements Unit 743 (FRU 743) of the No. 1 Training Air Group based at HMCS Shearwater. The aircraft was among the first Avengers to be allocated to the unit and was marked with the identification letters "TF-D"; the "TF" identifying the squadron and the "D", the individual aircraft within the squadron.

Six months after 85861 came on board, FRU 743 was elevated to squadron status and redesignated VU 32. One of the squadron's many tasks was training Observer's Mates (OMs), who were responsible for communications and some of the anti-submarine duties (dropping sonobuoys, smoke floats or marine markers as directed by the Observer, and operating the radar).

When targets of reconnaissance interest were encountered, the OM was responsible for aerial photography. The Avenger was ideal for training Observer's Mates, since the operational squadrons (VS 880 and VS 881) to which the OM's were assigned after graduation used the same type of aircraft.

Avenger 85861 was destined for a short career in the RCN. On 6 August 1953, it was scheduled to take part in a practice flypast for the upcoming Halifax naval day celebrations. While climbing to rendezvous with the other participating aircraft, it suffered a throttle linkage failure and was forced to ditch in Bedford Basin. It was officially struck off charge on 16 September 1953 and lay submerged on the Basin floor until June 1972, when it was raised by the Fleet Diving Unit Atlantic as a training exercise. It was subsequently restored by a team of

technicians from VT 406 Squadron at CFB Shearwater, and in October 1975 was presented to the base for display as a gate guardian along Bonaventure Boulevard.

As an outdoor gate guardian, Avenger 85861 unfortunately suffered severe deterioration from the corrosive maritime weather. To preserve the aircraft permission was granted in 1999 to move 85861 to unused space in one of the 12 Wing hangars where it could be protected from the elements. In March 2005, when hangar space was no longer available Avenger 85861 was moved into the museum where it is displayed as a work in progress while being restored.



**On Display at the Shearwater Air Park next to the Shearwater Museum**



Photos by Karen Collacutt-McHarg SAMF



## **ONE YOUNG MAN'S ADVENTURE IN HALIFAX HARBOUR DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF WWII**

This article is written by Geoffrey Payzant of Toronto who was born (1926) and grew up in Halifax. In 1944 he joined the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm at HMS Seaborn, the Royal Navy Air Section at RCAF Station Dartmouth. After leaving the FAA he returned to Halifax and subsequently moved to Toronto. The article was written for a newspaper telling of his boyhood experiences in Halifax sailing with his family around McNab's Island and watching the 5 Sqn. Stranraers taking off and landing.

### **STRANRAER**

On 3 September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany in response to the latter's invasion of Poland; most historians consider this declaration the beginning of the Second World War. In Halifax, preparations for the seaward defence of the harbour were speeded up, and it soon became obvious that pleasure boating in the harbour would have to be restricted, if not prohibited altogether, for the duration. Weather in that month was unseasonably good for sailing, so every yachtsman spent as much time as he could on the water. "One last sail." Hardly anyone in Halifax thought the war was going to be a brief one. A few days after the declaration of war my father, John W. Payzant, proposed an evening sail in Scout II, one of the Roué 20-foot class racing sloops based on the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron, just inside the breakwater of Halifax Harbour. My mother and my brother Pete and I, bearing provisions, met him at his office after work, and we all drove to the Yacht Squadron, where the co-owner of the Scout, Eric B. Hanright, and his fiancée, had the boat ready and were awaiting us. Readers nowadays might consider a 20-foot boat too small for a party of six people, but in those days, sailboats were designated by their waterline length. Overall, the Roué 20-footers measured 28 feet, lots of room for six people and more.

We had a brisk but not strenuous sail to Lighthouse Bank and back, then put into Iris Cove to anchor and eat. Iris Cove is on the northwest corner of McNab's Island, at the inner entrance to the Eastern Passage. Across the Passage from the cove was a seaplane base, Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Station Dartmouth, home of No. 5 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron.

When the anchor held and everything was squared away, drinks were poured with the usual chaffering about the sun being over the yardarm (it was already dusk). My mother looked astern and said "Oh-oh! Trouble!"

A motor launch with the RCAF roundel on its bows was heading at high speed straight for us, a boat of the type known as a seaplane tender, very official-looking. For all any of us knew, our presence in Iris Cove was in serious violation of some wartime regulation or other. It crossed my mind that we might be boarded and the boat inspected for weapons, cameras, explosives, and the like, as indeed

we should have been. While the launch circled us slowly to make a note of our name on the stern, my father said quietly: "Leave it all to me. Nobody say anything!"

The launch came to a stop abeam of us to starboard, a boat's length off. A Flight Sergeant emerged from the little wheelhouse and shouted through a megaphone over the burbling from the twin exhausts at the stern: "Ahoy Scout II!" My father cupped his hands at his mouth and shouted: "Ahoy there! Will you come aboard for a drink?" Stunningly impertinent, but a brilliant pre-emptive move. The Flight Sergeant and his two Page Spring 2001 Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation Newsletter deckhands, both Aircraftsmen, ignored the invitation.

The Flight Sergeant shouted: "Who is in command of Scout II?" My father replied that he was, and gave his name.

Flight Sergeant: "Commanding Officer's compliments, sir, and would you please clear the area immediately because we are setting up for night flying."

So, it was down spirits and up anchor and clamp the 3½ horsepower Johnson outboard motor to its bracket on the transom, and return to the RNSYS. There at our own mooring, half an hour later, we had a rather unfestive picnic in darkness and damp as we listened to the distinctive sound of the Stranraer flying boats, and watched their navigation lights, while the pilots did circuits and bumps on the other side of the harbour. "Circuits and bumps" are Air Force jargon for the exercise of taking off, flying in a wide circle to arrive downwind of the landing area, setting up an approach, landing, then, without stopping, taking off and doing it all over again.

Of course, different people will have different recollections of those first weeks of the Second World War in Halifax and Dartmouth. Militias from all over the country were called up, rushed to Halifax, and ordered to await transport overseas. There were no depots or camps for them, so for a few weeks they bivouacked in parks, playing grounds; anywhere they could find open spaces in which to put up their tents. Parents who had nubile daughters will remember this. Other people will remember that on any given day they could expect to see one or more of the most powerful naval vessels in the world at anchor in the harbour, for Halifax was de facto the home port of the Third Atlantic Battle Squadron of the Royal Navy for the first two years of the war. I remember all those things, but the thing I remember most clearly is the shriek of the Stranraers, day and night, clearly audible on the ground.

The Supermarine Stranraer was a biplane flying boat with two engines and twin vertical tails, a concept going back to the First World War. It was designed in the early 1930's by a man who was one of the handful of people without whose efforts the Allies might very well have lost the war: R. J. Mitchell. He designed the Spitfire.

Unlike the Spitfire, the Stranraer was aerodynamically very untidy. The archaic biplane and double rudder configuration with fixed wing floats entailed an extraordinary number of struts and wires holding the aircraft together and providing control; it was the wind stream over these that caused the unique sound of the Stranraer, which had, among other nicknames, "the Whistling Bird

Cage.” Jokes were made about its “built-in headwind,” but it was versatile and reliable and was held in high esteem by its crews.

No. 5 Squadron began to equip with Stranraers in 1938, built in Montreal by Canadian Vickers. In September 1939 the Squadron had seven. Altogether, Canadian Vickers built forty of them for the RCAF, some of which served on the west coast until 1946, but No. 5 Squadron at Eastern Passage converted to the Consolidated Canso, an amphibian version of the Catalina, in 1941. The Canso was a very clean design with retractable wing floats. Its Pratt & Whitney Wasps were about fifty percent more powerful than the Bristol Pegasus engines of the Stranraer, and were perhaps noisier, but the Canso made no aerodynamic noise audible from the ground like the Stranraer’s. No more shriek. I missed the noise.

It is of historical interest that the RCAF’s first mission in the Second World War was flown on 10 September 1939 in Stranraer #908 of No. 5 Squadron. No enemy vessels were sighted, just five friendly ones. Stranraer #908 took off on this mission from Eastern Passage.

Geoffrey Payzant 20 November 2000

(I gratefully acknowledge the assistance I have received from Col. Ernest Cable, CF, Ret Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian, in the preparation of this article.)





## Signal Delta by J. Allan Snowie

In 2021 a Canadian Naval Air Remembers (CANAR) memorial project was established to commemorate Canada's Naval Air personnel lost during war and peace. The memorial was the brainchild of former navy pilot Grant Smith who created an Ontario county War Memorial from his writing: "Norfolk Remembers the Great War."

The title 'Signal Delta' is a significant naval air adoption. Delta is the term for a holding pattern and the Signal an order to proceed. We list our dead as being 'In The Delta' and 'Signal Delta' is the synonym for such loss.

The book is divided into four chapters:

- **Chapter 1: The First World War 1914-1918** contains images and accounts of the 204 Canadian members of the Royal Naval Air Service who died during and shortly after the Great War of 1914 -1918.
- **Chapter 2: The Second World War 1939-1945** presents the Canadian Naval Air personnel who died during the Second World War, 1939 - 1945.
- **Chapter 3: RCN Air Branch 1945-1968** covers the years of the RCN Air Branch and provides photographs and narrative of 108 Canadians who perished in naval air service following the Second World War up until Unification in 1968.
- **Chapter 4: Canadian Armed Forces to Royal Canadian Air Force 1968-2024** is about the Canadian Armed Forces/Air Command period leading into 2011 and continuing with the sea-going squadrons of today's Royal Canadian Air Force.

The CANAR Memorial Project is a work in progress and as such seeks assistance from any family members or researchers in locating missing photos or new information on our 393 aviators who died in Canadian naval air service during the past 110 years. If you have any stories or photos of those who were lost during this period, we would greatly appreciate your assistance in sharing such memories. Please contact the CANAR Committee through the office of the Curator, Shearwater Aviation Museum.



Proceeds will be used towards a  
CANAR exhibit project.  
Book \$40 call 902-720-  
1083"Christine Hines"  
[curator@shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca](mailto:curator@shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca)

Bill Woodburn, Chair CNMT, Allan Snowie, author, & Lieutenant-General Larry Ashley (Ret'd) Former, Comd Air Com



# SIGNAL DELTA

CANADIAN  
NAVAL AIR



REMEMBERS

THOSE WHO DIED  
1914 TO 2024