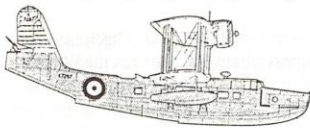


# SAM FOUNDATION NEWS



VOL. 1, NO. 1

SPRING 1991

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is my privilege to welcome the launching of the SAM FOUNDATION NEWS, and I do so with much pleasure. Keeping members of the Foundation informed is a major responsibility of your elected officials. I am confident that this publication will serve this special need.

Our fund-raising activities are gradually gaining momentum. Response to our current membership drive is most gratifying, and especially the surprising number of applications for Sustaining and Life memberships. On the other hand, negotiations with the Federal and Provincial Governments are proceeding somewhat more slowly than expected. Preparation of a "Business Plan", a necessary tool in the process of successful solicitation of support from industry, is nearing completion.

Studies to find more working and display space for the museum and to improve public accessibility to it, are continuing even to the extent of considering provision of temporary quarters; e.g. using the old CANEX building when CANEX moves to the Hampton Gray School. A recent review of the cost of the planned new building showed little change from the \$2.3m figure first projected.

The Foundation compliments Col. Sandy Kerr, Base Commander, and his personnel for their support. We also thank LCol. Mark Aruja, Museum Director, and Gordon McLauchlan, Museum Curator, for their help and cooperation. I am particularly pleased that BGen. Bowen has appointed a representative to the SAMF Communications Board in the person of LCol. Don McLeod, Staff Officer Air Reserves. This line of contact will be invaluable to us. A special thanks to the increasing number of volunteers who are making this project fly.

Doug Peacocke,  
Acting President.

## BIRDS ON THE VICTUALLING LIST

From: THE NAVALAIRE  
Vol. VIII, No. 21, 12 November, 1964

The recent introduction to Shearwater of Mr. Galicz' seagull-chasing falcons excites the imagination, but it's not the first time we've had birds on permanent ration strength here. Up until about

1942, before aircraft speeds made it impractical to use them, pigeons were a fairly important means of communication between A/S patrol aircraft and the Base.

Corporal Fred Threlfall was the "Pigeon Master" here from about 1938 to 1942, when the pigeon loft was down by the shore just below married quarters. "Freddie" was one of those quiet, calm chaps who knew every one of his pigeons by name. He fussed over the broods, hovered over the hatch and took care of a sick pigeon as tenderly as a nurse. He always had about 150 pigeons in the loft; mostly "homers", but "rollers", "fantails", and "crosses" as well. Nearly every one of his birds would come at his call and it was a sight to remember when, while chatting with Fred, we would see him look up, search the sky and, with a paternal look in his eye say: "There's Beanie now! She's tired, but watch her come!" Fred would purse his lips, make a raspy sort of whistle and a lovely brick-red bird would drop in straight to his hand. He'd look her over carefully, checking whether "those guys loosed her properly" and, satisfied that her plumage had not been damaged as she was launched from a Stranraer (boat seaplane) on patrol, he would take the capsule from her leg, take out the onionskin "Pigeon Service Message Form" and read from it where "Beanie" was launched. Then he'd figure her speed.

Those were the days when the word "radar" was on the secret list and the first "ASV" (Anti-Submarine Vector) hadn't yet been seen here. The DF (Direction Finding) Loop, too, was quite primitive; we had to turn it by hand and read off the bearing for the Navigator.

The armament was rather skimpy, by today's standards. With a crew of 7, the Stranraer carried 2-250 lb and 2-100 lb A/S bombs and 3-.303" Cal. "Free-mounted" Lewis guns besides pyrotechnics. But we also had a primus cookstove, a galley, and lots of rations. (Did you ever smell a steak cooking at 1,200 ft.? mmmMMM!)

We carried 4 to 6 pigeons in a wicker basket on every flight. I don't remember all of the reasons for it, but one of the main ones was that if we went down at sea - not an unusual thing even now - the last pigeon would tell our approximate position.

Flying at 85 knots, one launched the pigeon downward at arm's length out of a hatch. It would drop like a stone for many seconds, circle around a bit, then head for home and "good ol' Freddie" with its message which really meant "All's well! (up to now)!"

Lt. P.J. Brunelle.

## SAMF LAUNCHES 'FOUNDATION NEWS'

The SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION (SAMF) is pleased to introduce this first issue of FOUNDATION NEWS, dedicated to propagation of information about the museum, the foundation and their activities. As well, FOUNDATION NEWS, which will appear two or three times a year, will be a forum for members and others to help to preserve Canada's Maritime Military Aviation heritage, with their letters, anecdotes and recollections of past personnel, exploits, methods and equipment. Appropriate news, articles, cartoons, sketches, etc., are welcome from anyone. They need only be relevant and preferably short - about 100 to 200 words if possible. But send longer ones too; they are needed as Feature Articles. We'll edit or serialize them as needed.

Address correspondence to:  
The Editor, Foundation News,  
Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation,  
PO Box 577, Dartmouth, N.S., B2Y 3Y9.

## THE EDITOR'S CORNER

Societies, in their early years, often need to reorganize, and SAMF is doing that now. This first issue of the SAM FOUNDATION NEWS is one of the results, and we present it with much satisfaction. If this first issue is not perfect yet, please note that it has been put together somewhat hastily to meet a deadline, and to let you know that we're ready to accept YOUR input.

Recently, someone commenting on falconry at Shearwater said, in my hearing, that "Never before have we had working birds at Shearwater." I first heard that tune in 1964, when falcons were used experimentally here. That time, I wrote "Birds on the Victualling List" for (then editor) Jan Salter's NAVALAIRE, and I repeat it now for FOUNDATION NEWS.

SAM Curator Gordon McLauchlan just recently acquired a pigeon transport basket, one which I may even have handled myself, 52 years ago. See Gordon's article below. Sadly, I also note Pigeon Master Fred Threlfall's name on the RCAF Pre-war Club's "Roll of Honour."

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN ADMIRAL R.H.FALLS, (RET'D)

Your directors have long realized the need to keep the membership of the Foundation aware of the progress (and the setbacks) of their efforts in support of the Museum, but the realities of survival kept getting in the way. At long last, here it is: The first of what we hope will be an ongoing series of "Howgozit" reports. Informed members are more likely to be supportive members.

The Foundation needs your moral, financial and vocal support as well as the intellectual support of your ideas. We feel sure that if you know what is going on, you will help in whatever way you can to achieve our ultimate goal of "A New Home". We're well on our way!

Robert H Falls,  
Admiral, (Ret'd)

## SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM A BASKET CASE

Parallel technologies seldom go hand in hand. This is no more apparent than in the aviation business where, for example, the Wrights, although bicycle merchants, had no landing gear at Kittyhawk. Another example closer to home for most of us was the Supermarine Stranraer which, as late as 1943, was without reliable radio contact with the ground. (Strict radio silence rules were a more valid reason. Ed.) Of far greater reliability was the centuries-old practice of sending messages across vast distances via pigeon. No one really understands that kind of technology, not even the pigeon! In any event, members of 5BR squadron, RCAF made full use of the technology on the Lower Base at Shearwater when they built a pigeon loft and raised pigeons to replace or at least augment the unreliable radios carried in the aircraft during the early years of WWII.

In February of this year, the Museum acquired a basket used to carry the pigeons in the aircraft. It's about 4' X 2' X 1' and made of wicker. When it arrived, it had a number of characteristics that served to authenticate it; one was an aluminum plate mounted on top which said, "RCAF LOFT, DARTMOUTH"; another was a scrap of very old newsprint wedged in the bottom with a date on it, "1944"; and, littering the bottom, were small dessicated tell-tale lumps of, shall we say, flying guano? Of such is the life of a curator!

Gordon McLauchlan  
Curator, SAM.

## FROM COMMANDER MARITIME AIR GROUP BRIGADIER-GENERAL B.D. BOWEN, CD

As Commander Maritime Air Group, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation (SAM) on its inaugural edition of the SAM FOUNDATION NEWS.

Shearwater has had a long and distinguished history of civil and military aviation, dating back to 1917/1918 and the uncertain early years of aviation in Canada. The initiatives being pursued by SAM will ensure preservation of this proud and distinguished heritage.

From spartan beginnings in Warrior Block in 1978 to the current plans for a new and modern facility at Shearwater, the Museum will continue to display the heritage of the aviation practitioners and pioneers who served Canada so well over the years. Fairchild's, Stranraers, Cansos, Avengers, Sea Furies, Banshees Trackers and Sea Kings - from the RCN Air Section to the RCAF the tradition is held in trust.

I am truly excited about the Museum's future. We are about to begin a new phase in the showcasing of an illustrious past. I encourage anyone with a taste for history and the perpetuation of maritime military aviation to become involved in this worthy endeavour.

B.D.Bowen,  
Brigadier-General



**SAMF PROFILE**  
**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Vice-Chairman**, Brig/Gen Larry A. Ashley,  
**President**, Wally J. Walton (on leave),  
**Acting President**, Doug D. Peacocke,  
(Acting Pres., during Wally's illness)  
**Secretary/Treasurer**, Paul J. Brunelle.

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Rod A. Lyons, E.B. (Spike) Morris,  
Harold Northrup, Ray S. Riddell,  
George Ruppert, Dennis B. Shaw,  
Alex Smith, L. Ross Wagener.

In addition, L/Col Mark Aruja represents the Board of Trustees of the Shearwater Aviation Museum at SAMF Board Meetings, and SAM Curator Gordon McLauchlan attends by virtue of his office.



**SAMF NEWSLETTER STAFF**

**Editor**, Paul J. Brunelle  
**Assistant Editor**, Peter H. Steffin

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial staff.

SAMF FOUNDATION NEWS will be published twice or three times yearly. Articles for the next issue are solicited from all interested persons and should be forwarded to the Editor, SAMF FOUNDATION NEWS, P.O. Box 577, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 3Y9.

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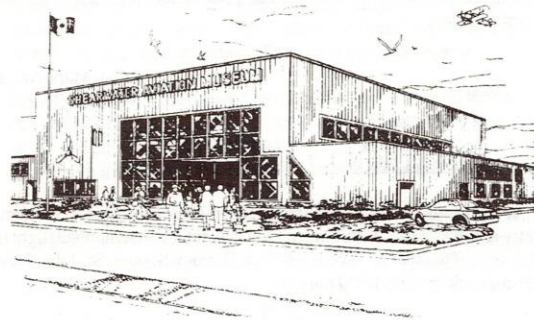
**WHAT IS SAMF?**

SAMF is the SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION, registered as a Charitable Organization (Public Foundation) under the Income Tax Act. Its only purpose is to provide support for the SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM (SAM) in the preservation of Canada's Maritime Military Aviation Heritage. Therefore, all of its member fees, and donations, are INCOME TAX DEDUCTIBLE under the provisions of the Income Tax Act.

At present, our major project is to accumulate funds to erect a building for SAM, outside the security area where it can be seen and reached by everyone, whether military or civilian.

All of the officers, directors and members of committees of SAMF are unpaid volunteers. There is no hired staff. Expenses are kept to a minimum compatible with the Charities Regulation of the Income Tax Act. The only sources of income are TAX DEDUCTIBLE membership fees, donations and bequests from anyone, gifts from associations, industry, governments, etc., and income from investments. By far the greater part of the income is invested to accumulate in the building fund at advantageous rates. However, there is provision for access to these funds for special assistance to SAM as determined by consultation with the SAM Board of Trustees.

**A NEW HOME FOR SAM!**



Shown is a sketch of the plan proposed by architect J. Philip Dumaresq, MRAIC, MEIC, of Halifax. Its 12,152 sq.m (40,500 sq.ft.) of display and working spaces will fit in nicely opposite the old Canex and the chapels on Bonaventure Street.

**LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!!**

**JOIN US! BE GENEROUS! IT'S YOUR HERITAGE!**

## FROM THE SAM DIRECTOR

Congratulations to the SAM Foundation on the appearance of this, its first Newsletter.

The arrival of the Swordfish in Shearwater again solicits our applause to the twelve stalwarts in Toronto who completed its restoration under the leadership of Brian Ashton and John Eden. Work is ongoing to get the stringbag to flying status once again. My predecessor, Maj. Charles Cormier had his tenure cut short by his Persian Excursion and I have been trying to fill his large shoes since.

Clearly, the new museum building is the focus of our efforts now, because we must continue to turn down artifacts, particularly aircraft, for lack of space. The resolve is quickly jelling to get our fundraising campaign under way, under the direction of SAMF, for this exciting and worthwhile cause. It will be a great day when we can put the Swordfish (and our other eight aircraft) on proper display as both they and the public deserve.

We are not idle in other areas, though: Capt. Butch Bouchard is spearheading the restoration of a Horse with the Aviation Trades School at St. Hubert, Quebec; the Banshee is to be overhauled starting in mid-May; and five Soviet museologists to Colonel rank will be visiting SAM at the end of May. It's too bad that they won't see a new building yet, but who said the Swordfish wouldn't put us on the map?

I wish everyone involved the best of success in this critical campaign to obtain funding for a new museum building as a home for the preservation of the history of Canadian Military Aviation. Through this newsletter we hope to keep you abreast of SAM activities, and we thank all of the supporters of the Foundation for their unselfish contributions.

LCol. Mark Aruja,  
Museum Director

## OUR HERITAGE

On August 10, 1840 Lois Anselm Louriot "Professor of Chemistry and Aerostatic Exhibitions", carried out the first manned flight in Canada. This was an ascension from Barrack Square, St. John, New Brunswick in a gas filled balloon.

In 1902 Wallace Turnbull developed a wind tunnel near St. John where his experiments with air foils and propellers led to the invention of the controllable pitch propeller.

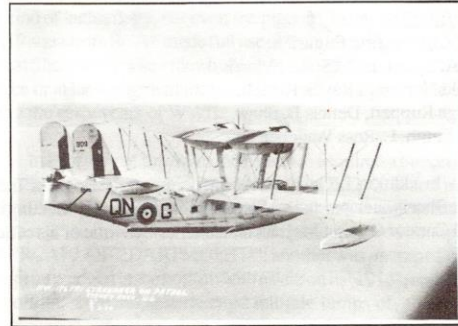
In 1908 the Silver Dart flew above the frozen Bras d'Or Lake at Baddeck to put Nova Scotia on the world aviation map.

In 1919 the USN flew Curtis HS-2L flying boats on ASW patrols from what is now known as Shearwater.

In 1929 Errol Boyd and his navigator H. P. Connor became the first Canadians to cross the Atlantic from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland to England. The aircraft was a Bellanca appropriately christened the "Maple Leaf".

These few historical facts are compiled here to reiterate, to the reader, the importance of the role played by the Maritimes and Maritimers in aviation. The punch line, is of course, that we must preserve and display the artifacts attesting to that role for the benefit of future generations. Please join the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation and help to preserve your heritage!

Eric Edgar  
SAMF Communications Board



## HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO KEN GIBBS

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP  
Victoria BC.



Ken, an ex LCDR pilot, almost single-handedly, and under tremendous difficulties, instigated an inquiry by DVA and DND into ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) which will be very greatly beneficial to hundreds of other ALS sufferers across Canada.

(From "CFAV Community Awards, 1991." Victoria BC)

## WITH DEEP REGRET

We note with deep sympathy that FRANK JOBBORN, of Economy, NS, passed away earlier this year. We extend sincere condolences to Frank's family.

Reported in "THE BOSUN'S CALL"  
Newsletter of the NS Naval Officers' Association.