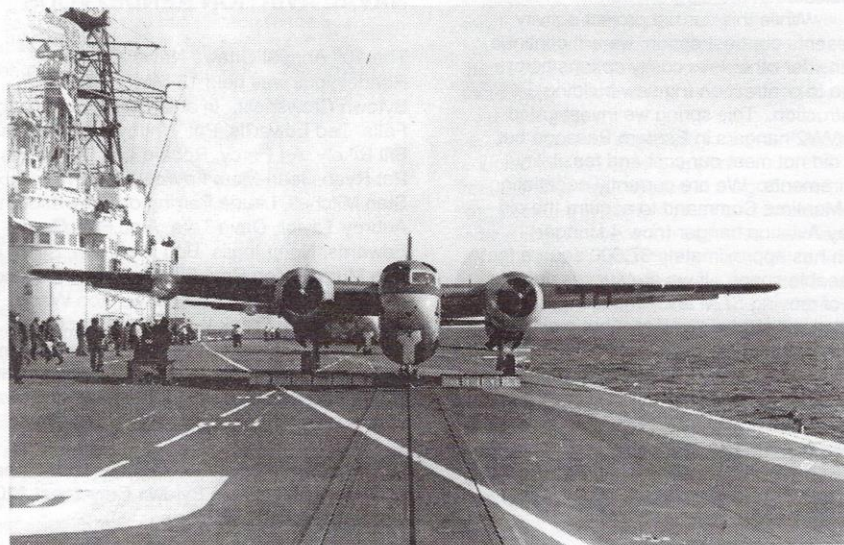


# SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM

FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1998 ISSUE



## Tracker – Cold Warrior

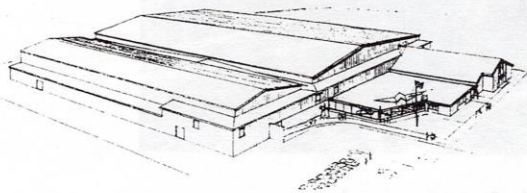


### "SAVE OUR HERITAGE AIRCRAFT"

Please note the change in titles from "SAVE THE GUARDIANS" as used in the Spring 98 Newsletter. The project still addresses the need to provide cover for the **Banshee, T33, Horse, Avenger and Tracker**, and now also includes the **Firefly** and a second **Horse**, which are both undergoing restoration.

To date we have raised about \$125,000 towards this goal – many thanks for your generous contributions. Our minimum requirement is still for an additional 18,000 square feet of building space. This will give SAM a total of about 33,000 square feet for display and management. Since our last newsletter we have made good progress initiating a professional fundraising effort geared towards business and government support. We have also initiated the site preparation and the geo-technical/environmental surveys for the land as indicated in the diagram below.

While this current project activity represents our best option, we will continue to consider other less costly options before we go to contract on the new building construction. This spring we investigated two WW2 hangars in Eastern Passage but they did not meet our cost and feasibility requirements. We are currently negotiating with Maritime Command to acquire the old Fairey Aviation hangar (now 4 Hangar) which has approximately 37,000 square feet of useable space. If we are successful, the cost of moving SAM and renovating this building will still be significant but most likely less than a new building.



We still have a long way to go, so **please consider helping to preserve your aviation heritage.** Cheques should be made to 'SAMF Heritage Aircraft Fund'; (post dated or spread out payments are acceptable). Note that cheques made out to the previous 'SAMF Save the Guardians Fund' will still be applied to this project. **Tax receipts will be provided by SAMF**, and our new Donor Recognition boards and books, which will present the names of supporters, are on display at the museum's entrance. Thanks for your consideration.

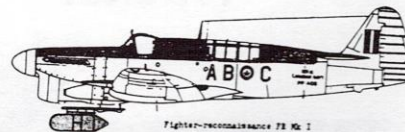
Jav Stevenson, Fundraising Co-ordinator,  
for SAMF Directors & The Board of Trustees



### NAVAL AVIATION RENDEZVOUS

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ottawa Naval Aviation Rendezvous was held 13 May 1998 in the Bytown Crowsnest. In attendance were: Bob Falls, Ted Edwards, Pat Whitby, Vic Wilgress, Bill Rikely, Art Percy, Robbie and Di Hughes, Pat Ryan, Jean-Marc Favreau, Ed L'Heureux, Stan Mitchell, Laurie Farrington, Roy Kilburn, Aubrey Taylor, Dave Tate, Alec Fox, Gord Edwards, Norm Inglis, Bud MacLean, Bill Munro, Bob Murray, Ken Roy, Bill Cody (Sr), Bill Cody (Jr), Gene Weber, Ernie Baker, Ron Wade, Bruce Wilson, Frank Willis, Rod Hutcheson, Larry Ashley, Glenn Cook, Cal Smith, Dudley Allan, Doug Maginley, Raymond Phillips, Harold Wirth, Ken McCrea, Don Jones, Sandy Dewar, and Gordon Armstrong.

NOTAM: The next annual Ottawa get together in on Wed 12 May 99 in Bytown Crowsnest 1200-1400. Everybody welcome.



Read me first!

We cock an editorial snook at the Zoilean few who carp about the recognition this newsletter gives to the Air Force presence here during and preceding the second world war; and we thank those readers who offered appreciation for our past efforts and encouragement to continue; also those who contributed material for this issue (some contributions will have to await space in future printings). Your newsletter will evolve to reflect those inputs; and will continue to respect our mandate - Maritime Military Aviation, both light and dark blue.

That having been said, we take note that our dues-paying membership is almost wholly of the naval persuasion and we will be guided by the adage "he who pays the piper calls the tune": accordingly, much of the content will be naval nostalgia. The message to Air Force readers is "Go out and recruit your buddies into SAMF - it's your heritage and your nostalgia too." We note in passing that one of our most valued contributors and supporters of SAM is Colonel Ernie Cable (RCAF) who covers the waterfront in an ecumenical way - writing on both carriers and Cansos.

And farewell and thanks to our out-going President, Frank Willis, who burned much midnight oil in his years of service to SAMF's membership. Thanks Frank and sorry we couldn't name this magazine after you but the title is already taken.

Editor

P.S. This septuagenarian scribe expects, one day, to "slip the surly bonds of earth": his calendar displays proof that his days are numbered ("thirty days hath September etcetera") and knows it is time to pass the plume to a younger person. Volunteers? (It's a great job - flexible hours and no taxable remuneration!)

**From the Editor**

*Special thanks to John Benson Jr for his work on our cover pages and his continual support with the Newsletter.*

President's Message

Our fine editor and his super team have done a first class job producing this Summer edition of your Newsletter. A few more are also working very hard on your behalf: Tom, Jav, Denny, Ted, Ernie, Bill, Eric, Kay and a few others are laboring furiously on fund raising related projects; and John Cody, Bill Ropp, Ted Kieser, Kay Collacutt, Peter Staley, Andre Martel and Jim Adam are busy with preparations for the annual Golf Tournament on 10 September. Chuck Coffen, Barb Hicks and their great SAM team including many volunteers are overseeing another excellent year at our increasingly attractive museum.

This edition features an aircraft well known to many maritime Canadians. The Tracker was a superb component of naval air for many years, and in its later life it visibly inspired confidence in our nation's ability to expand control over key offshore areas. Its story truly deserves to be told.

Coordination activity with SAM and 12 Wing to attend to the many complexities involved in acquiring, outfitting and operating the new addition is steadily progressing. Due to well known fund raising difficulties, progress is slower than desired but we are confident we will get there - with your financial assistance and volunteer support.

The new approach to Donor Recognition, coupled with the special appeal to our membership, has resulted in a significant improvement in our Building Fund balance which now stands at over \$100,000. We now have over 50 contributors of \$1,000 or more, with a few in the over \$10,000 category. A richly deserved BZ to these major supporters! This is heartening, but if a lot more of our members would similarly respond we could move ahead even more quickly. Remember, it is your heritage, and your contribution is tax deductible.

Some of us have been enjoying leisure pursuits in cottage country and other venues. Trust your summer activities are satisfying also, but please Save some resources for SAM!

Frank Willis  
President



## THE CS2F TRACKER

By James W. Stegen

The "Stoof", to call the Tracker by its nickname, was the best carrier-borne Anti-Submarine Warfare (AW) aircraft the RCN ever had. Operationally, its "hunting ground" was that area from the edge of the helicopter/surface ship screen out to about 200 miles from the force being protected. Because of its manoeuvrability, the Tracker performed well in the prosecution of submarine contacts. A Tracker/helicopter team working together on VECTACS and MADVECS was virtually unbeatable. This article will give the reader a brief history of "Stoof" operations with the RCN.

The Tracker was an ugly-looking a/c, but aircrew had the same kind of affection for it as car drivers had for the Volkswagen "Bug". The "Stoof's" two engines had enough power (1525 HP each) to give it a max. Speed of 280 Kts, though the normal cruising speed was 120 Kts.

The normal endurance was 6 hrs., but it could stay aloft for 10 hrs. With the engines leaned right back and at 1500 rpm single-engine performance was good, but required a fair amount of pressure on the rudder pedal even with rudder-assist turned on.

The CS2F-1 was the Canadian version of the American S2F. The main difference between the two was in the electronics "suit". The crew of a Tracker consisted of two Pilots and two Naval Aircrewmembers to operate the electronics. Trackers in Canada were flown by VS880 (later MR880), VS881, VU32, VX10, 406 and 420 (Reserve) Squadrons.

The first group of Canadian student pilots to receive flying training in the S2F was #6 Junior Air Officers Basic Training Course (6JAOBTC). This course commenced flying training with the USN in late 1954 and graduated in the spring of 1956. The Tracker training was conducted in the Advanced Flying Phase at Kingsville, Texas. Pilots received 80 hrs of S2F training out of a total of the 325 hrs required for wings standard. Tracker training consisted of basic and emergency procedures, over-water navigation, instrument flying, and simulated ASW tactics.

The first of 100 CS2F a/c built by

DeHavilland Aircraft Company of Canada under license from Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corp. Was completed on 12 Oct 56. The initial 48 a/c were CS2F-1 models. Fifteen of these total were eventually sold to the royal Dutch Navy. The remaining 52 were CS2F-2s.

The advent of the Tracker in the RCN required a rethinking of the manning of the Pilot's cockpit. The options were either a Pilot and an Observer, or two Pilots. The final decision was to use two Pilots. It was considered more practical to enhance a Pilot's navigation and tactical training than to train Observers to fly under instrument conditions. The Observer's classification was abolished. However, those Observers who could meet Pilot entry standards and wished to do so were subsequently given Pilot training.

Trackers began arriving in the VS Squadrons in 1957. In July, VS881 Trackers were embarked in USS WASP to carry out initial carrier qualifications on an angled deck using the mirror system. They completed their carrier qualifications in BONAVENTURE by mid-October. Tracker Operational flying commenced from BONAVENTURE in January 1958.

The CS2F-1 was much the same as the USN S2F. The major modifications found in the CS2F-2 model included improved flight and navigation instrumentation, replacement of the AN/APS-358 radar with AN/APS-501 (including the removal of the radar repeater scope in the pilot's compartment), new communications equipment, the provision of a release system for the explosive charges used in the Julie echo ranging system, an automatic MAD compensation system, and most importantly from the flying point of view, the PB 20 autopilot.

The autopilot system included an automatic catapult launch mode which was capable of flying the aircraft safely on one engine should an engine fail during a catapult launch. I recall Lt. Dave Tate of VX10 conducting single-engine catapult launch trials circa 1960 in BONAVENTURE. After Dave was satisfied that this mode worked well, squadron pilots embarked at that time also "had a go" with this feature, but with two engines operating. This gave us such

(Continued)

#### The CS2F Tracker (continued)

tremendous confidence in the PB 20 that pilots had no compunction in engaging it during low-level MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection) Trapping manoeuvres at night and in poor visibility.

The CS2F-3 modifications include the full installation of the Julie system, the ASN-501 ASW Tactical Navigation System, and a Data Link system for Jezebel. With the demise of carrier aviation and the change of role from ASW to sovereignty patrols in the North and over the fishing areas, all ASW equipment was removed along with the tailhook. A photo-pod was later added to the starboard wing which included a flash for night photography. The composition of the crew was changed to include only one NA.

After years of service in the RCN/CAF, the last Tracker was flown to Mountainview for disposal on 4 Apr 90. It is fitting that the last military Tracker landing was made by LCdr W.R. Davidson. Bill has more than 6000 hrs flying time in Trackers, the most of any Canadian pilot, and possibly a world record. His career spanned the

lifetime of the Tracker. A Venture Cadet in 1954, Bill commenced pilot training with the USN in 1956. He served aboard BONAVENTURE in VS880 and was in MR880 when it was "zero manned" in 1990. I spoke with him recently and he told me how he had to use a bit of a skylark to obtain the honour. The final group of Trackers was flying to Mountainview and Bill positioned himself to be the last Tracker on the ground. The Tracker in front of him (flown by another ex-Navy pilot, incidentally) had to go around and would have been the last. Bill waited until that Tracker had touched-down, then took-off again, went around the pattern and landed.

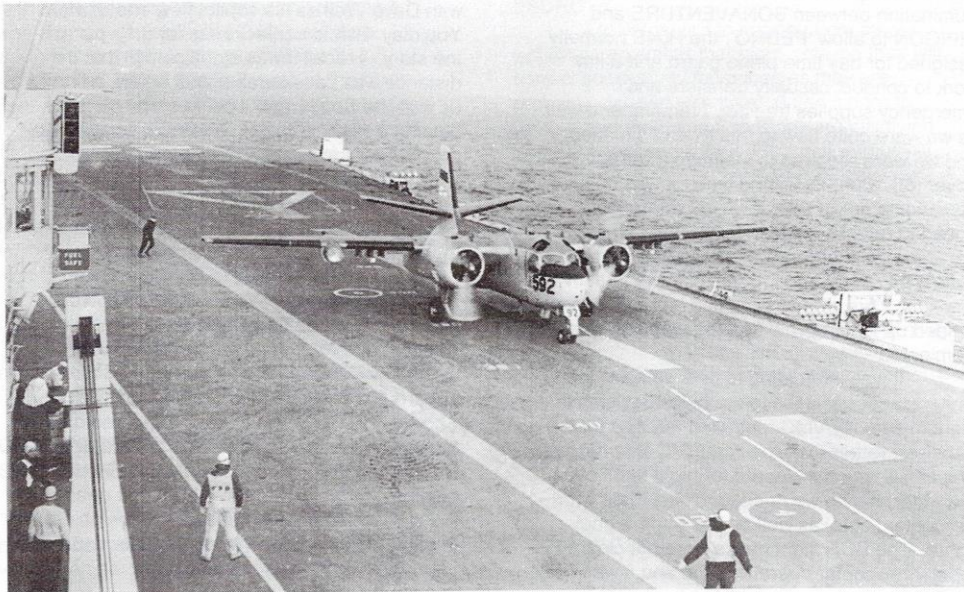
#### Bibliography:

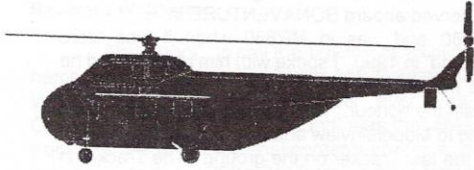
[A History of Canadian Naval Aviation](#),  
Kealy & Russell, Queen's Printer, 1965

[Hands to Flying Stations, Vols 1 & 11](#)  
Soward, Neptune Developments, 1993 & 1995

[Certified Serviceable](#)  
Charlton, Whitby et al, CNATH Book Project, 1995

[Canada's Naval Aviators](#)  
MacFarlane & Hughes, Shearwater Aviation  
Museum Foundation 1997





### NIPIGON EXPLOSION 1965

There was a flood of responses to our appeal for details of this tragic incident: space does not permit the publishing of all. Here are those that appear to best illuminate this remarkable operation, one that called for real courage and professionalism all around. An artist should be commissioned to capture this drama on canvas - to be hung in our museum. Ideas anyone?

**Herbert Harzan** writes: I happened to be flying that night in CHSS2 4914 with Al "Silky" Hawthorne as the Crew commander and myself as his co-pilot. The NATO Exercise was called TOTEM POLE and our mission that night was a "TOTEX 303". During the flight we were called off the ASW part and tasked to provide illumination between BONAVENTURE and NIPIGON to allow 'PEDRO', the H04S normally assigned for day time plane guard and utility work to conduct casualty transfers and emergency supplies transfer. I remember it well, as we were quite new to this type of situation and we were required to maintain a rather high hover (80-100ft) for a long time. It was quite demanding as we had no visual references ahead to refer to, yet had to maintain station on the ships on either side of us. Also, this used up quite a bit of fuel and I recall that with total flying time of 4.2 hrs, nearly all of it in high hover, we wound up landing with fuel low warning lights illuminated.

It was interesting to note some of the circumstances that led to the quick decision that night to use day/VMC restricted PEDRO for the transfers, rather than the night/IMC Sea Kings. The H04S was not cleared for night flight over the water, hence we needed to illuminate with helicopter lights, as well as the ships' signal lights. The DDH flight decks were not cleared for any helicopter operations yet and it was felt



that the smaller "Horse" with pilots used to doing transfers to DDEs and DDHs would be better suited to the task, as long as the space between BONNIE and NIPIGON was made sufficiently close to daylight VMC.

To the best of my recollection, PEDRO was piloted that night by John "Toad" McDermott, as I flew with him a few days later in PEDRO (H04S-3 875), doing supply transfers to NIPIGON, SAGUENAY & CAPE BRETON. I had just joined HS50 from HU21 before this deployment and was still current on the Horse, so I helped out. You may want to get in touch with McDermott for more details on the PEDRO part of the operation. Either late that night of the 18/19 Oct 65 or the next day, I believe two Sea Kings were tasked to fly the very critically injured casualties to Cornwall, England. I was not one of the pilots, but I believe Ken Sheedy with Dave Wall as his copilot flew one of them. You may wish to contact them for their part of the story. I recall it was significant in that the distance was considerable and, again, a first for us with the Sea Kings. I believe that certainly beyond a PNR. I do not remember whether we provided a Tracker escort for them.

I trust this provides some "illumination" on the events of that night. I enjoy your newsletter very much and always look forward to the next issue. BZ

**David Wall** writes: We did fly the survivors ashore in two Sea Kings and I was Ken Sheedy's Co-Pilot in 4011 for the trip. We carried five in total - I think that we had three aboard 4011, one of whom did not survive. Al Snowie, in *THE BONNIE* says that three died in the incident but I think one died aboard either BV or NN before the airevac flights. Snowie also has it that we went to a burn unit near Portsmouth but that is not correct - the ship was in the western approaches at the time and we  
(Continued)

### Nipigon explosion continued

ferried the victims to RAF St. Mawgan. Herb is correct that it was stretching the limits since I show the enroute time as 2.9 hours.

I cannot recall whether a Tracker escort was provided but I think not. In addition to the injured, we had at least two attendants. I think a physician went ashore with us but in the other Sea King - memory is a little fuzzy on this - the victims were badly burned. The trip to St. Mawgan was at night - I think that one died in the other Sea King enroute and ours died in hospital.

**John McDermott** writes: Phillippe Blanchard was indeed the PEDRO pilot on 18 Oct 65. I was his trusty co-pilot, and Leading Seaman Ken Bowen was our crewman. My log-book says we made three round trips between BONNIE and NIPIGON, evacuating eight casualties. We had to crab sideways between the two ships, thus Phil flew in one direction, and I in the other. He was much smoother than me, I should add.

**Don Bolan** writes: (his source is Ron Beard)

On the night of Oct 18, 1965, the ANGEL on board BONAVENTURE was called upon to assist in the evacuation and supply to NIPIGON following her explosion and fire. It was a dirty night and the H04S, not being designed for night flying, promised a hairy experience. With LS K.F. Bowen in the back seat, the helo made several trips back and forth to NIPIGON. Lt Blanchard was one of the Pilots.

On the trip to NIPIGON, there was fire fighting equipment to be transferred and on the return trip a total of nine casualties were transferred to BONAVENTURE. On these trips, visibility and the movement of the ship required Ken to be out on the step guiding the pilot with information on deck movement, height and positioning.

For their actions, the aircrew were awarded the Queen's Commendation and their names published in the Canada Gazette.

### QUEEN'S COMMENDATIONS FOR THREE SHEARWATER SAILORS

The Queen's Commendations for brave conduct have gone to the crew of a naval helicopter which transferred dead and injured sailors from

the helicopter-destroyer NIPIGON to the aircraft carrier BONAVENTURE after a flash fire at sea on the night of Oct. 18, 1965.

Commended are Lt Philippe A. Blanchard, 30, of Waterloo, Ont [should have read Waterloo, Que.] Pilot; Lt John W. McDermott, 31 of Fort Erie, Ont, Co-Pilot, and Leading Seaman K.F. Bowen, 38, of Toronto - aircrewman.

**Don Rubin** writes: LS Bowen stood on the outside step of the chopper and kept the Pilots informed of their heading, distance from the NIPIGON and BONAVENTURE, plus the height of the aircraft above the decks and the sea. It was all done in extremely adverse weather conditions and I must say that I was extremely pleased with the way the rescue operation was carried out by all concerned. It made me feel very proud to be a member of the RCN that night.

**Ian Powick** ( who ferried some of the injured ashore to RAF St. Mawgan) writes in part:

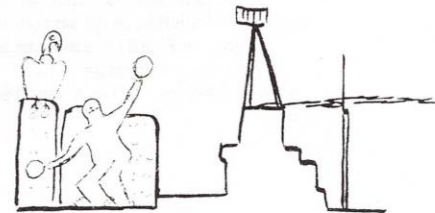
Mine was a small part in this "Disaster & Air Rescue at Sea" but I have the satisfaction and memory of contribution. The real heroes are the rest of the crews, on the flight deck, in the hangar, medical staff, and the flight crews who lit the way for the patients to be moved by PEDRO.

I look forward to hearing from others who may remember that night - maybe they will correct some of my memories as they are probably clouded with time. (I find it hard to believe that the same Sea Kings are still flying after 33 yrs of service - is 4013 still with us??)



### 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SAM FOUNDATION

the 12<sup>th</sup> AGM of the SAMF will be held at 0830 hrs on Sat 12 Sep 98 in the Bonaventure room (theatre) at the Shearwater Aviation Museum.



And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.



**FLY NAVY**

**HOW LOVELY IT WAS.**  
(Tune: Thanks for the Memory)

Thanks for the memory,  
Of biplanes in the sky,  
Of pilots who could fly,  
Of four-hour trips,  
Attacking ships.  
Returning with a sigh,  
How lovely it was.

And thanks for the memory,  
Of drunken nights ashore,  
Of blacks put up galore,  
Of gin and lime  
And flying time  
And poppies by the score,  
How lovely it was

Many's the time that we've pranged 'em  
On many an ALT,  
And many's the time we've stranged 'em,  
No ASV, no WT.

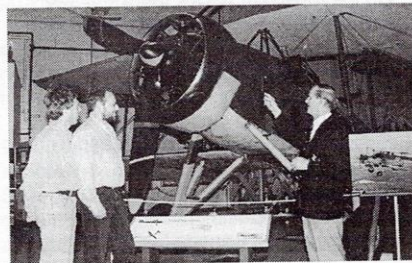
Thanks for the memory,  
Of large fixed under-carts,  
Of evenings playing darts,  
Of WRENS galore  
When we're ashore  
And lots of broken hearts,  
We thank you, so much.

(The verb 'stranged' seems to be a nonsense word used in desperation for a rhyme.)

**A25**

I fly for a living, and not just for fun,  
I'm not awfully anxious to hack down the Hun,  
And as for deck-landings at night in the dark,  
As I told Wings this morning, 'Chuck that for a lark.'

Chorus: Cracking show, I'm alive  
But I've till got to render my A25



**VOLUNTEER GUIDE:** Sam Johnson  
extolling the virtues of the Stringbag.



**CANSO 11091 (CF-NJC)  
WON'T YOU RETURN HOME**

(by Col. Ernie Cable (Ret'd) SAM Historical Researacher

The Canso was Canada's most widely used maritime patrol bomber in during WW II and was the most populous aircraft at Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Station Dartmouth in that era. The RCAF took delivery of the first Canso in 1941 and after distinguished wartime service the Canso proved so adaptable to Canada's needs for an amphibious aircraft that it served with the RCAF until 1962. The Canso, although rare, still flies in several civilian capacities today.

In the fall of 1939, at the outbreak of WW II, the RCAF began to look for a successor to its current Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) aircraft, the Supermarine Stranraer flying boat (bomber reconnaissance was the WW II terminology for maritime patrol). In December the RCAF announced that the American Consolidated PBY had been selected and according to custom was named, "Canso", after the Strait of Canso between Cape Breton Island and the mainland of Nova Scotia. Because of wartime demand the U.S. Navy and the Royal Air Force (RAF) had contracted for all the PBY flying boats Consolidated could produce (the RAF PBY was called Catalina, a name that was later uncharacteristically adopted by the U.S. Navy). Therefore, in May 1940 negotiations were begun that would allow Canada to build its own PBY's.

In September 1940 the Boeing Canada Company in Vancouver, BC, received the first contract for 55 PBY-5A's assembled from parts made by Consolidated. The PBY-5 was the fifth mark or version of the basic PBY and the "A" indicated the amphibious version of the original PBY flying boat. In early 1941 the Canadian Vickers plant at Montreal began tooling up for PBY-5A production. Boeing produced the first Canso A (PBY-5A) on 27 July 1942; Canadian Vickers first rollout came on 3 April 1943. However, the RCAF actually received its first PBY's much earlier when nine RAF Catalinas were diverted from Bermuda while en route from the United States to Great Britain in 1941.

From the beginning of the Battle of the Atlantic, the RCAF had been lobbying the RAF and the Americans for a share of the coastal patrol Catalinas coming off Consolidated's production lines. The RCAF required these long-range aircraft to counter the heavy U-boat toll on convoys in the eastern and mid Atlantic that was anticipated to migrate to the western Atlantic. But, since the U-boat had yet to present a serious threat in the western Atlantic the RAF and the Americans had higher priorities for the Catalinas and the RCAF had to

make due with their shorter range biplane Stranraer flying boats, Douglas Digbys and Lockheed Hudsons. In the spring of 1941, the RAF finally agreed to loan nine of their Catalinas as a fall out of the increasing Royal Navy and RAF success in countering the U-boat in the eastern Atlantic. This led to the U-boats shifting their attacks on convoys to the western Atlantic, west of 35 degrees west longitude.

On 20 May 1941 convoy HX 126 was heavily attacked 680 miles east of Newfoundland. The RCAF pressed again for immediate delivery of Catalinas; the plea was strengthened by the fact that a number of these aircraft were lying idle in the United States and Bermuda waiting to be ferried across the Atlantic. The next day bearings on a German radio transmission placed a U-boat at 55 degrees North 50 degrees West, on the fringe range of RCAF Digbys based in Gander Newfoundland. The RCAF made the point that Catalinas with an effective range of 600 miles could have made a thorough search of the area. On 24 May the Air Ministry informed RCAF authorities in London that nine Catalinas on order for the RAF, en route from the United States to England, were being diverted from Bermuda to No. 5 (BR) Squadron at RCAF Station Dartmouth. The aircraft were being lent subject to replacement from the first delivery of Catalinas (Canso A's) from the RCAF's own orders.

Also on 24 May the RCAF's need for a more effective maritime patrol aircraft was underscored when the German battleship Bismark and cruiser Prinz Eugen broke contact with shadowing Royal Navy cruisers. Digbys from the RCAF's Eastern Air Command base in Gander searched for the Prinz Eugen, which had continued to cruise the western Atlantic, but well beyond the range of the RCAF's land based aircraft in Newfoundland.

The nine loaned Catalinas were promptly delivered to No. 5 (BR) Squadron at RCAF Station Dartmouth in June. Having already sent personnel to Bermuda for training on the Catalinas, 5 (BR) Squadron, by the end of the month, was well advanced in converting to their new flying boats. However, the squadron was considerably shaken by orders to transfer its most experienced personnel and all of their Catalinas to No. 116 (BR), a new squadron forming at RCAF Dartmouth. By the end of July, 116 (BR) Squadron had dispatched a detachment of four aircraft to the seaplane station at Botwood Newfoundland, where it carried out the important task of escorting convoys routed through the Strait of Belle Isle, en route to England. In the meantime, 5 (BR) Squadron reactivated its Stranraer flying boats but was able to convert later to the Canso A in October 1941, as more

PBY-5A's followed in large and small batches from American and eventually Canadian production lines.

By war's end 50 Catalinas and 224 Canso A's would see service with 12 squadrons of the RCAF, five on the West Coast, five on the East Coast and two with the RAF Coastal Command. West Coast squadrons Nos. 4, 6, 7, 9 and 120, equipped with Cansos during the last two years of the war, flew anti-submarine patrols and on search and rescue. On the East Coast, squadrons Nos. 116, 5, 162, 117 and 161 received Cansos during the second and third years of the war. Their anti-submarine patrols accounted for 25 of the 84 attacks on U-boats made by Eastern Air Command aircraft in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Of the two RCAF Catalina squadrons in Coastal Command, No. 422 was short lived as a Catalina equipped unit. Formed in Northern Ireland in April 1942 flying Saro Lerwicks, the squadron quickly changed to the Catalina before becoming operational. Squadron crews flew anti-submarine and convoy escort patrols over the North Atlantic until November 1942 when the squadron converted to Sunderland flying boats in the same role. No. 413 Squadron flew Catalinas its entire service life. Formed in Stranraer Scotland on 1 July 1941, the squadron flew Catalinas on north Atlantic anti-submarine patrols. In March 1942, the squadron was quickly transferred to Koggala, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to conduct surveillance flights to detect Japanese naval forces. On 4 April, Squadron Leader L.J. Birchall, whose aircraft and crew had arrived only two days earlier, sighted and reported a large Japanese fleet 350 miles south of Ceylon. The Catalina AJ155 "A" was shot down by carrier aircraft, Birchall and the survivors of his crew were taken prisoner, but their warning had alerted Ceylon's defences and the Japanese attack was repulsed. Winston Churchill later dubbed Birchall the "Savior of Ceylon". (Birchall had served on No. 5 (BR) Squadron at RCAF Station Dartmouth prior to joining 413 Squadron). No. 413 Squadron flew Catalinas until the end of WW II.

No. 162 (BR) Squadron was the most successful of Canada's anti-submarine squadrons either at home or overseas, accounting for five U-boats sunk, sharing in the destruction of one and damaging another. Formed in Yarmouth NS on 19 May 1942 with Canso A aircraft, the squadron was transferred to RCAF Station Dartmouth in October 1943. However, its stay in Dartmouth was short lived as in January 1944 it was loaned to RAF Coastal Command and stationed in Iceland to help fill the mid-Atlantic air coverage gap in the North Atlantic convoy routes. During June and July 1944, the squadron operated from Wick Scotland and scored a series of brilliant successes by sinking

four U-boats and sharing in a fifth, that were attempting to break through the North Transit Area (Shetland Islands) to attack the Allied D-Day invasion fleet.

The most famous of these attacks occurred on 24 June when Flight Lieutenant D.E. Hornell and crew, in Canso 9754 "P", sank U-1225 at 6300N 0050W. Hornell immediately turned to attack the surfaced U-boat. The submarine opened with anti-aircraft fire, which was increasingly fierce and accurate. Two large holes were torn in the starboard wing, the engine caught fire and the flames spreading along the wing endangered the fuel tanks. The Canso was vibrating so violently that it was difficult to control. With near superhuman strength, and on only one engine, Hornell descended to 50 feet and released his stick of four depth charges in a perfect straddle. The bow of U-1225 was lifted out of the water and sank.

The starboard wing was completely engulfed in flames and the aircraft was vibrating violently. The engine then separated from the wing and fell away, making the Canso virtually uncontrollable. With incredible skill and determination, Hornell managed to gain altitude, turn the blazing aircraft into wind and execute a near perfect ditching into 12 foot waves. Miraculously, none of the crew was injured. Unfortunately, two members died of exposure during the 21 hours in the water with only one dinghy while awaiting rescue. Hornell, who was instrumental in the remainder of the crew surviving, died shortly after rescue and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for inspiring leadership, valour and devotion to duty. No. 162 (BR) Squadron flew Canso A's until disbanded at the end of WW II.

After the war Cansos continued to fly with the RCAF Squadron Nos. 13, 408, 413 and 123 as well as Rescue Flights 102, 103, 111 and 121 (Dartmouth). Thirteen RCAF Cansos were converted from patrol bombers to freight carriers, with a crane mounted on board for handling cargo. These were used to haul freight and supplies to remote communities and outposts during the aerial mapping of northern Canada and the Arctic. One Arctic expedition relocated the Spicer Islands, whose exact position had been lost for fifty years. In the twilight of their military life the RCAF Cansos were used almost entirely for search and rescue. The Canso A's were retired from the RCAF in November 1962.

Many Cansos continued to fly in civilian roles after retirement from the RCAF. Of all the tasks performed by Cansos in the post war era, forest fire fighting has undoubtedly been the most beneficial. The Cansos were modified for forest fire-fighting by

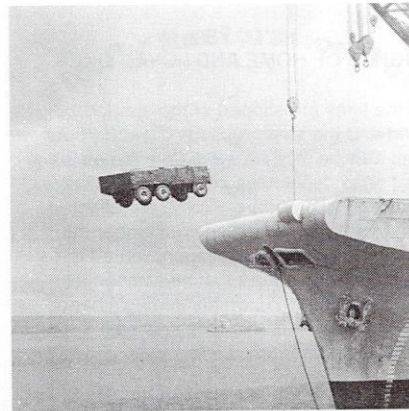
building a divided 1,000 gallon (US) water tank into the lower half of the Canso's center compartment that replaces the bottom of the hull in that section. The tank is filled by a 4-½ inch diameter electrically operated probe behind the step that the pilot lowers and raises from the cockpit. The load is released by the pilot pressing a button on the control column that opens a door in the bottom of each half of the tank. To fill the tank the pilot performs the normal checklist for landing the aircraft on water, but rather than cutting the throttles on touch down, the pilot maintains flying speed, lowers the probe and in 14 seconds sends 8,000 pounds of water surging into the tank. The pilot then makes a normal takeoff.

For the past number of years the Newfoundland government has operated a fleet of ex-RCAF Cansos to fight forest fires. However, the Cansos are finally ready to retire for the last time as they are becoming difficult to maintain and expensive to operate. Today only two Cansos remain and the Newfoundland government has stated its intention to retire these in the very near future. One of these Cansos, ex-RCAF 11091 (built by Canadian Vickers), belonged to 162 Squadron, which served at RCAF Station Dartmouth before being transferred to Iceland where it won wartime distinction. The Shearwater Aviation Museum has requested the Newfoundland government to donate Canso 11091, currently registered as CF-NJC, to the museum. This aircraft would fill a tremendous gap in the portrayal of Shearwater's history, as not only was the Canso a mainstay at Dartmouth during the war, but this particular aircraft belonged to a squadron that actually served at Dartmouth.

Indeed, many Canso squadrons based in Dartmouth during the second world war frequently detached to Newfoundland and flew from Goose Bay, Botwood, Gander and Torbay on convoy escort and anti-submarine patrols. It would seem most appropriate that a Canso donated to the Shearwater Aviation Museum should have its last flying tour with the Newfoundland government.



*And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying.*



*I told you Wilbur - it ain't gonna fly.  
A/C type readers?*

#### CANADA'S AIR SHOW TEAM HERITAGE

LCol Dan Dempsey, Ret'd) writes: (abridged)

I am chronicling Canada's air show team heritage. My motivation for writing this book stems from my 23 yr Air Force career, in particular two tours with the Snowbirds, the latter as commanding Officer and Team Leader. The project has been officially sanctioned by the Chief of the Air Staff and strong support has been received from many quarters, including Air Force Magazine and the National Aviation Museum.

The book will document all of the official and semi-official air show teams that have flown in Canada since William Barker led an aerobatics display at the CNE Air Show in 1919. There have been scores of excellent teams and solo performers that have flown over the last 79 years in the CAF, RCAF, RCN and CF. Writing has commenced as I continue my research.

To those who have good photos, please forward me a photocopy for now - to avoid duplication. I will be contact with each individual who ha photos when I get closer to publication.

Please contact me at:

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ (preferably) or

LCol D.V. Dempsey (Ret'd)  
1174 Sloan Terrace  
Victoria, BC V8Y 3C4

### THOUGHTS OF HOME AND LOVED ONES

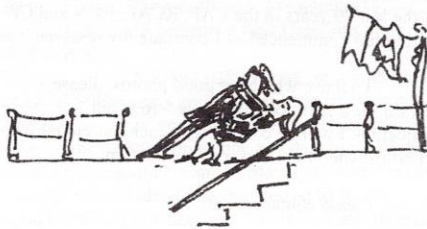
When the lines are slipped or the anchor weighed and the ship proceeds down-harbour for what may be months away from the embrace of loved ones, loneliness invades and occupies the hearts of all on board. Some are affected more than others. How many remember the lament of the sailor who so much wanted to be back with his sweetheart that he wished he were a diamond ring upon his darling's hand? How many remember this lady's name?



So shalt thou, lest perchance thou grow weary, in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Pray for leave, for the good of the Service, as much and as oft as may be.

### POLITICALLY CORRECT CORNER:

It is rumoured that, in keeping with the current wave of political correctness, in lieu of exchanging salutes at the brow, the Officer of the Day (or Watch) will now exchange hugs with returning sailors. Mixed gender crews could make this change a mixed blessing.



Who hit the inner wave-off light at night,  
in a Banshee, on **BONAVENTURE**?

### RCN TECHS TRAIN WITH THE USN

When the RCN decided to purchase the twin-engine S2F-1 anti-submarine aircraft to replace the aging Avenger, it was also decided to send maintenance personnel to the USA for on-the-job-training. The first group of RCN Techs headed south to Norfolk, VA to serve with the USN on VS26 Sqn at NAS Norfolk. LCdr(P) Dickie Bird and LCdr (P) Robbie Hughes led the det which consisted of the following people: Art Turnbull, Gus Gower, Bob Spicer, Don Tetlock, George Hotham, Bill Cowan, Bob Matchett, Ron Andrews, John Scott, Bob Cade and Bill Campaign. These were the first RCN aircrew and groundcrew to operationally work with the S2F-1 Sentinel, yes!! the Sentinel (it was renamed the Tracker later in 1954 or early 1955) and experience flying operations at sea on board an angled-deck carrier USS ANTIETAM. A second group of maintenance personnel arrived in Norfolk in Apr 55: Rollie West, Chuck Hynes, Jim Hadden, Al Lowe, Ben Beckett, Frank Wooder (observer's Mate), Kerry Briard, R.L. Smith, Ken English, Don Kavanaugh, George Otley, Hank Henry (Observer's Mate) and Lt(P) George Daugherty.

The Riggers and Fitters changed shops in order to learn their opposite trade needs on the Tracker. This was beneficial a few years later when we became Aviation Techs.

VS26 received a few of the first S2F2 aircraft in the USN. This particular model had an enlarged torpedo bay which was to accommodate their new MK90 nuclear depth charge. For the provision of better stability on the MK2, the horizontal stabilizer was lengthened five feet longer than the S2F1 and the CS2F. More valuable experience gained.

June 1956 brought in the third and last contingent to Norfolk. Just prior to their arrival, VS25 Squadron disbanded and personnel were assigned to VS26. Hence the new group did their tour with that unit: Roy Findlay, Dean Rawding, Cyril Heaton, John Harrington, and Bill McKinney. They also rotated through the squadron shops and sailed on board VALLEY FORGE. Upon returning to Shearwater, personnel were dispersed into VX10, VS880, VS881 and the Naval Aircraft Maintenance School.

(Prepared by Rollie West. Abridged.)

### An ancient aviator writes.....

I was utterly depressed by the most recent issue of COPA's Newsletter. The Regulators are taking the last of the fun out of flying - rules and regulations and restrictions like you wouldn't believe! Extensions of controlled air space, lowering of floors, increase in visibility minimums under 1000 feet in uncontrolled airspace and on and on. Lists of pilots fined for low flying in non-built-up areas. If you are below 500 feet within 500 feet of an open-air gathering that is now a punishable offence! There go the beat-ups of nudist colonies! The next thing you know, the airspace under bridges will be declared off-limits to all but taxiing seaplanes! It's a sad winding-down of what was once an exciting and most satisfying way of life. Billy and Wop must be turning over in their graves!

Thank God for the elixir\* that lets me travel back to better days!

(\*a blend of processed sugar cane juice and orange juice.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### QUIZ FOR THE COGNOSCENTI:

Who remembers the miserly, cave-dwelling necrophile from Belgrave who was adept at saving money?

### DID YOU KNOW.....

31 Jul 41: A Hudson of No. 113 (BR) Squadron (Captain - Squadron Leader (Molly) Small scored Eastern Air Command's first kill by sinking U754, southeast of Cape Sable.

Who were the only two RCN pilots to fly across the North Atlantic in Banshees?



The restoration of PP462 grinds steadily on. When it was discovered that some thousands of corroded rivets needed drilling out and replacing (a monstrous job) the response was "So Mount Everest just got a little higher." Without meaning to single out any one volunteer for special praise, it's hard to avoid mentioning that George Cummins, while awaiting open-heart surgery, was still plugging away at his workbench in 'C' Hangar, putting the instrument panel in shape. With spirit like that success can never evade this team - all we need now is some angel with an open purse to buy us some new prop blades and a few other items.

John Ley's log shows PP462 (Jack Steel, Observer) March 1948 (he sends a cheque toward the restoration too).

Dick Bartlett logged a flight in PP462 two years earlier and speculated that his landing on WARRIOR may well have been the first ever for this old treasure of ours

Ed.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Colin Curleigh writes:

Last month, I was asked to write and read a three minute *commentary* for CBC Radio on the subject of Sea Kings and the New Maritime Helicopter. To my surprise, the CBC sent me a cheque for \$150 (less \$2.33 Union Dues!)

I would like to send this cheque as a modest donation to the new fundraising drive of the SAM Foundation. Good luck on this new drive for a very worthy cause

(Editor says "Hey guys with pens and voices take example from Colin.") IDEA Write vignettes about our museum artifacts for CBC eg Stringbag, Firefly - at \$50 a minute this could be a source of revenue )

### Memories from the pen of Ted Gibbon:

Rod Bays' recent article in the Newsletter got me thinking about my association with that distinguished gentleman. There were many pleasant memories but here is one that may give you a chuckle.

It was the afternoon of 25 Apr 63 (from my log book) I was a utility pilot with VU32 following a full tour in VS881/880 and it was assumed I had some expertise in launching torpedoes from the Tracker so I was assigned responsibility for the Tracker firepower demonstration put on for the visiting Army Staff College off the Shearwater jetty. Goose McLennan was the Master of Ceremonies. The plan, written on the back of a cigarette package I think, went like this. The Tracker would do a low and slow fly by south to north between McNab's Island and the jetty with the torpedo bay doors open to show the Tracker in all her offensive glory at a pace even a grunt could hoist in. Angel would then appear and rescue a downed aviator floating in a dinghy a suitable distance from the jetty following which the Tracker would appear from the south and drop the torpedo using the empty dinghy as the "swirl". The scenario was to be described and embellished in Goose's usual flamboyant manner. Apparently I had acquired an undeserved reputation for finger trouble so it was decided that the co-pilot would be replaced with a technician who would ensure that all switches were correctly set for the drop. PO Dunham was selected.

On the first pass, I noticed a Blue Boat departing McNab's Island with a full load of sailors who, it was later determined, were from HMCS Victoriaville which was alongside the Shearwater jetty and were undergoing small arms training on the Island. I didn't think the Blue Boat would be a factor although I did think the cigarette package had not been circulated to all concerned.

The first pass went well, on time and suitably impressive. As I exited stage left, the gaggle of grunts was being drawn by Goose's lively commentary to the next event, the dinghy was in the water and Angel was just arriving. I went around McNab's Island and the jetty. PO Dunham nodded when I enquired about the readiness of the armament panel and I lined up

the target. Airspeed and altitude perfect, punch the button and quick as a flash nothing departed the aeroplane. A rapid scan determined that the switches were correctly set but the Armament Master Circuit Breaker had not been made. Too late for anything but another circuit of McNab's and another run leaving the dependable Goose to entertain with this imaginative description of the events that would, by necessity, include a lot of BS to explain the finger trouble to our Army brethren. There was nobody more capable.

By the time I lined up for the next run the Blue Boat was approaching the target area but shouldn't interfere and Victoriaville's sailors were watching the air show with considerable interest. The switches were checked two or three thousand times and all was in readiness. All PO Dunham had to do was make the Master toggle switch when I called and the damned torpedo would go when I punched the button. Lined up, Blue Boat beyond target, called for the switch, altitude/airspeed perfect I hit the button and oh shit once again nothing happened. A quick look confirmed that the spring loaded toggle switch had not made it to the detent so I flicked it on and hit the 'T' button - Torpedo Away! I followed the trajectory, noting the chute opened as advertised - perfect. The torpedo would overshoot the target but not so anybody on the jetty would notice. OOPS!! The Blue Boat was not in jeopardy. In my left hand turn I noticed the torpedo enter the water close aboard the Blue Boat and several of the sailors got wet watching this awesome display of air delivered weaponry. Apparently from the jetty it appeared that I made a direct hit and Goose was momentarily at a loss for words (as unlikely as that may sound) before exclaiming in a loud clear voice "my God he hit the F----g Blue Boat. The Blue Boat emerged from the water spout and continued towards the jetty, the sailors cheered and the Pongos filed to their bus, suitably impressed I assumed by another successful demonstration of Naval Air Power.

On returning to the hangar flushed with pride in my dexterity and swift resolution of the unexpected problems, I was informed that Little 'F' wanted me to call. Great, instant recognition but when LCdr Bays began to speak even I could discern that all was not well. He

Continued

## Memories continued

concluded his brief review of my mental capacity, dubious parentage and suspect aeronautical expertise by "requesting" my reasons in writing for imperiling one of Her Majesty's craft and all who served in her, on his desk, by 1600. I had about an hour to think of an explanation and get it on paper.

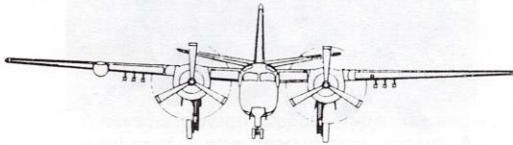
There is no more daunting a task than trying to articulate "reasons in writing" for a screw-up. As I laboured at this requirement, still stunned by the turn of events, my CO (LCdr Bob Williamson) walked in and asked me what I was doing. I explained, wasting I thought, valuable time but he told me to stop. "Only a CO can demand reasons in writing and I don't want to hear any more about it" "what about Little 'F'? I inquired, "I'll talk to him, meet me in the Wardroom" he replied. Hell of a deal I thought, I screw up, I've got two two and a halfs fighting for jurisdiction and I get sent for a beer. What a great outfit this is thinks I - and I still do.

For Rod's edification and for others who may recall the event, the above constitute my much delayed "reasons in writing".

I have the honour to be  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant

E. H. Gibbon  
Lieutenant  
RCN

PS: These events transpired on Friday afternoon. On Monday morning AC #1530 rested in the hangar emblazoned with a well painted depiction of a sinking Blue Boat under the pilot's window. Artist unknown.



*Is kicking the bucket in your plans? If so, be sure to mention SAMF in your LW&T.*

## FLASHBACK! Mr. Midshipman Bartlett

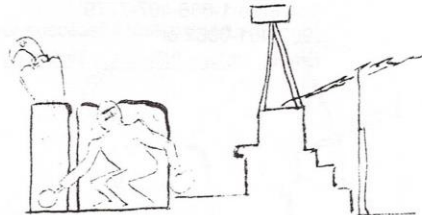
Dickie Bartlett, after much coaxing, gives us a few snippets of his brief\* career as a Skua (two-seater fighter/dive-bomber) pilot in the Norwegian campaign (Ark Royal). The Royal Navy, he tells us, taking note that the USN's self-sealing fuel tanks were probably (anticipating Martha Stewart) "a good thing", asked for technical details. Then, while waiting for a response, the RN introduced an Admiralty Pattern interim measure - the air gunner was issued (and signed for) a brown paper bag of corks of assorted sizes with which to plug holes in the fuel tank (located midships between the cockpit). "Let me see, seems a tad large for a nine millimeter hole - let's try a #37 cork." The genius behind this elegant solution must surely have been the Fifth Sea Lord himself!

In pressing home an attack on the German battleship Scharnhorst, "My own aircraft was attacked by 109s and had quite a few holes in it, as had I... engine shaking so badly I could hardly read the instruments and to make matters worse I had lost a lot of blood and was quite dizzy." So, Dickie, where was your gunner with those corks?

\*brief, in that, after delivering his bomb, he crashed and was made a POW for the next five years, as was the gunner. The gunner eventually escaped and made his way back to England where he, because he had been officially "discharged dead", had to re-enlist to resume his naval service. Dick was at Stalag Luft 3 tunneling for "The Great Escape" for part of his long POW ordeal. He saw much brutality and horror and this may explain his long silence about this part of his life. LCdr Dickie Bartlett RCN (Ret'd) lives in Victoria.

## Memory Lane

Responses to this Newsletter indicate that more than one or two of our members were involved in operations against major (and minor) German warships (Scharnhorst, Tirpitz and others). And Japanese and Italian? Share your memories with our readers. Write please. Ed





### From the Scy:

Hi there. Well summer is coming to an end - too fast. Things are progressing steadily at the Foundation. However, we are still waiting to hear from **You**. Unfortunately, there will be some

who won't be receiving the Newsletter this time - more of those who aren't interested will be deleted from our mailing list. So, if you want to be on the receiving end of some great info - like my column - Ha - then please become a member. It only takes a toll-free call or a letter.

This has been a fun summer for me. I heard from and met several people I worked with over the years - a wonderful surprise. Hopefully it won't be another number of years before I speak with, or see, them again.

A short while ago we received a call from a gentleman asking the whereabouts of Jake Birks. I had never heard of him and asked if he served at Shearwater. The caller said; "Are you telling me you don't know who Jake Birks is? You must be the only female in the Maritimes that doesn't know him. No - make that all of Canada." I thought, gee, who is this Birks guy. Checking Robbie Hughes Canada's Naval Aviators Book I found a picture of this handsome fair-haired devil and when I asked others if they knew him - wow - what stories and not all of them were about his 'flying' abilities. My apologies for not knowing who you were Mr. Birks. ( And I thought I knew all the good-looking men.)

Frank, I had fun working for you as the SAMF President. So far they haven't tossed me out of the job - thanks to you probably. I'm glad you're still going to be with us as Past Pres.

I'm sure you know that the SAM is online - ([www3.ns.sympatico.ca/awmuseum](http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/awmuseum)) If so, have you checked out the Naval Air Net link? Good stuff. They also can use your stories. (But remember we asked first.) I believe the SAMF part of the Home Page could say a little bit about Naval Air - not just that this was RCAF Station Dartmouth / Shearwater. Any comments?

Don't forget the CNAG reunion in Trenton, ON.

Keep in touch. Kay

Toll Free: 1-888-497-7779  
(902)461-0062 or  
Email: [kcollacutt@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:kcollacutt@ns.sympatico.ca)

*And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.*

### Did you know.....

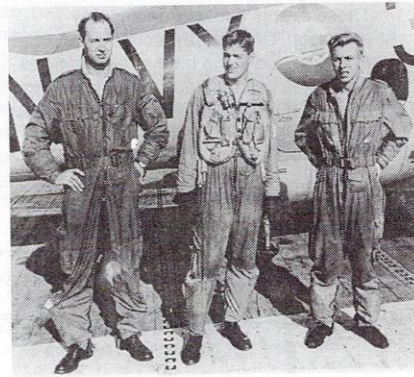
RCN fighter aircraft - a Sea Fury Squadron (VF871) - almost operated in Korean waters. In early 1953, at the request of the First Sea Lord in a personal letter to the CNS, it was proposed that RCN aircraft should form part of a Carrier Air Group in either WARRIOR or CENTAUR. The loan of a fully equipped squadron of 12 Sea Fury aircraft with 14 pilots for one operational tour in Korea from May to October 1954 was approved. However, an Armistice intervened in July 1953 and the Squadron was not required. Pat Ryan, did serve in Korea as an official Naval Aviation Observer in HMS THESEUS and USS PHILIPPINE SEA.

Lt (P) J.J. MacBrien RCN, on exchange appointment with the USN, flew Panther jets in Korea and was awarded the DFC.

\*\*\*\*\*

### FIRST RCN AIRCREW TO LAND ON AN ANGLED DECK.

L to R: SLt I.T. Bouch, Observer, SLt "Tony" Cottingham, Pilot, AB Carlson, Observer's Mate, on board USS ANTIETAM after an emergency landing due to a rough running engine (23 Aug 54). They had just taken off from MAGGIE's deck - which was still fouled due to aircraft arranged for take-off, but ANTIETAM, in company, was clear. It is believed they were the first RCN operational aircraft to land on an angled deck."





## MY MOST FRIGHTENING AVIATION EVENT

By Eric Nielsen

At about 0340 on May 8, 1964, I was the Co-Pilot of Tracker 1553. The other crewmembers were: SLt. P. Barr, Crew Commander; PO H. Parsons and AB Gagnon, equipment operators.

On final approach to landing on board BONAVENTURE, we encountered turbulence over the "round-down". This resulted in a drift to the left and engagement on number 5 wire, well left of center. The left main wheel dropped over the edge of the flight deck. In a shower of sparks from the left propeller, we smashed into the portside mirror landing aid. The airplane teetered over the side, broke its back and crashed into the sea.

The longest seconds in my life followed as I tried to decide when to release my harness and escape. The decision was difficult to make. Get out before the airplane begins to sink or wait until the buffeting and rushing water stopped to avoid possible injury? Soon the rushing in of water stopped, I released my harness, climbed through my hatch and quickly popped to the surface.

After realizing that I was all right, I saw two other crewmembers and greeted them. Just then the last crewmember popped out of the water. We were very glad to see each other and even giddy from shock and the realization that none seemed hurt. I lit a flare and we chatted excitedly while we waited for rescue.

The plane guard, HMCS CHAUDIERE approached and played her searchlight on us. The light was very blinding so I lowered my helmet visor. The ship came closer and closer. Suddenly the light disappeared so I lifted my sun visor and saw the CHAUDIERE'S bow complete with a small bow wave right in front of me, or so I thought. "My God!" I thought, "After all this I'm going to be run over by my rescuers!" This scare was just an illusion as a second or two later the CHAUDIERE stopped with her side numbers just a few yards from me.

The rescue operation did not go well and some of the whaler crew fell into the water. A net was lowered over the ship's side and a number of us attempted to climb aboard. A sailor to my right appeared injured as we

competed for space on the net. "they can come and get me. I'm equipped for long term survival", I said to myself. Soon a swimmer came to my rescue and passed me a life ring on a rope. I managed to hang on as the ship's crew dragged me aboard.

It was quite a flight! I was frightened to be sure, but I also learned about the instincts to survive, the value of hard hats, shoulder harness, survival suits and the benefit of escape training. The "free" helicopter ride back to BONNIE the next day was a most welcomed trip.

\*\*\*\*\*



## A TRACKER TALE - THE COD

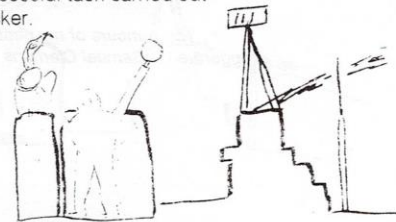
By Bob Bissell

Twice I had to rejoin my ship by ladder. Once, it was a ladder from the aft cockpit of an Avenger to the flight deck of MAGGIE...it seemed that in spite of my excellent back seat advice, the Ship did a dirty dart to port and we ended up in the starboard whaler sponson. The second time, was from the overhead hatch of the COD to the flight deck of BONNIE.

It all came about when the ships wine caterer (Jim Mills) obtained a not to be repeated good price for a quantity of rum for the Ship's Company duty-free and Wardroom stock. As the ship was not returning to Puerto Rico, the only option to avail ourselves of such good fortune was to send the COD. It was a cubic capacity load and had no effect on the aircraft's weight and balance. Bacardi supplied and the USN helped and every case was squeezed on board. There was only space left for two pilots - George Pumble and myself who had to be helped on board by the ground staff.

It was a short direct flight back to the Ship where a very smooth landing was executed into one wire with not a loss of one drop of the amber nectar.

Another successful task carried out by our versatile Tracker.



**CORSAIR PILOT**  
**("the late" Don Sheppard)**

To few amongst us is it given to read one's own obituary: Don has read his ( the first one anyway).

During the Second World War, Don's lady friend received the following letter in response to one she had directed to him. Her letter had been misdirected to the RN Carrier HMS VICTORIOUS (Don was nowhere near VICTORIOUS at that time).

H. M. S. VICTORIOUS,  
 c/o G. P. O. LONDON.

14th, June,  
 1942.

Dear Miss Carr,

I'm terribly sorry to have to tell you that Don Sheppard was shot down in an operation from this ship in February. There is a very faint chance that he may have been picked up and may be a prisoner of war, but we have heard absolutely nothing.

The only small consolation is that he died doing something very exciting and which he was specially trained to do-- his life wasn't just thrown away.

Your letter was only arrived to-day.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Herbert C. Renold,  
 Commander (Flying)

Don's post-war research solved this mystery, discovering that a torpedo pilot of "the exact same name" had, in 1942 (the time of his lady friend's letter), been lost from VICTORIOUS in an attack on the German Battleship TIRPITZ. It passeth all odds of coincidence that fate, two years later, had "the late" Don Sheppard attacking this same Battleship in her lair up a Norwegian fiord, from the same Carrier - taking up the torch from his precursor namesake.

*The rumours of my death have been greatly exaggerated - Samuel Clemens.*

**CNAG NEWS**

It is usual in June each year that the current President of the Atlantic Chapter of the CNAG is present at the graduation ceremonies of the I.W. Akerley Community College. The purpose of the President attending this function is to present the CNAG Aeronautics Technicians Shield and a cheque which is given to the deserving student. The selection of the recipient of these awards is made by the Community College instructors.

This year proved to be rather unique on two counts. Firstly, for the first time since the Award has been presented, the recipient was a female. Secondly, as the recipient had already secured employment in Alberta prior to the graduation exercises taking place, the CNAG President was not required to attend. A letter was sent to the winner, along with the cheque, offering our congratulations on her selection and wishing her every success with her future career in aviation. The Administrative Committee for the deserving student award consists of Dennis Shaw (Chairman), Tom Tonks and Al Moore.

The Annual CNAG Reunion will take place this year during Thanksgiving weekend in Trenton, ON. This is the first time Trenton has hosted a CNAG Reunion, and, from viewing the program, it looks as though it will be a real success. **Plan to attend and take in the fun.**



*"You normally cruise at 450 when you are flying and you forgot that you were in your car, is that it?"*



## Readers Response

Sir:

I have the honour to submit the following (loud) report in response to your query (p21) in the winter 1997 edition of the Newsletter. (Quiz for the cognoscenti: A cleric's daughter in an ancient and famous mid-east city is said to have once launched a sailor, dart-like, to the suburbs of that city. Was the propellant a compressed gas, a combustible gas or a gas that was both compressed and combustible?) This is from the King Neptune version.

It came to pass that a certain Matelot named Jack, didst chance to journey from Haifa unto Capernium, there to find a woman with whom to tarry the night. As he did pass upon the high road, the thieves fell upon him. Verily, I say unto you, they ragged him, they shagged him, and they debagged him, and left him by the roadside, there to die. It chanced that a certain Samaritan, Mark I Good, came upon him and seeing him, succoured him. Verily, he bound u his wounds, fed him and forced rum down his throat. The Samaritan asketh, "Jack, whither goeth thou?" And Jack saith, "Sire, I journey unto Capernium, there to find a woman with whom to tarry the night." And the Samaritan answered, saying, "And what have the Harlots of Capernium upon the Harlots of Jerusalem?" And Jack saith, "Sire, I knoweth not." Thereupon, the Samaritan saith, "Jack, I knoweth a fair maid in Jerusalem and I will take you to her." Quoth Jack, "Fair enough!"

So this unlikely pair journeyed together to Jerusalem and the Samaritan took Jack unto the Street of the Damsels. There, in a house of some repute, Jack met the Maid, Kathusalem, and saith, "Hi, ho, Kathusalem, the Harlot of Jerusalem, the Daughter of a Rabbi!" Then the Samaritan left the Matelot and gave him sustenance, chiefly beans, cabbage, and a handful of ground nuts. And Jack fell upon Kathusalem and knew her.

After many hours had passed, they fed together upon the beans, the cabbage and the ground nuts and their bellies were distended. This food produced much methane in their bowels but Jack knew Kathusalem yet again. Their fierce action compressed the gas in her belly and by and by this was expelled to a great rate. It chanced that the cooking fire was nearby and the methane was ignited. A tremendous explosion occurred and Jack was blown like a flaming dart o'er the walls of old Jerusalem! Away he soared right out to sea, just like a bloody

bumblebee, and left his parts upon a tree way above Jerusalem.

Here endeth the seventh bottle from the second case of Guinness.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Anon

Passed over(well) Lieutenant-Commander

\*\*\*\*\*

## HMS VENUS

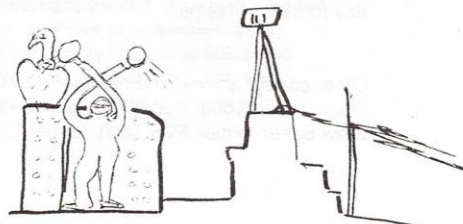
An ex-nasal radiator writes: "One egregious feature was the unstayed mast, a technological advance of the shipyard at Viagra-on-the-Lake; the other was the figurehead, a courtesan supine, en lit. It is understood that both model and keel were laid at about the same date."

*(The reader is invited to compare the couth of the responses of the naval aviators with that of those who did not benefit from a Naval upbringing as follows:)*

**Peter Holmes** identified the egregious features of HMS VENUS and chastises us for classifying this fabled vessel as an hermaphrodite brig when she was, in fact, a lugger. (The following is rated PG.)

'Twas on the good ship Venus,  
My God you should have seen us,  
The figurehead was a whore in bed  
And the mast a rampant penis.  
The Captain of our lugger,  
He was a dirty bugger,  
He wasn't fit to shovel shit  
From one hold to another.

Peter also identifies Gunner P.D. Budge (later Rear Admiral) and Sub Lieutenant R. Pope as co-composers of "Roll Along Wavy Navy".



responses continued

**Stan Connor** also correctly identified Adm Budge as the co-author of *Roll Along Wavy Navy*. Stan noted that in the 1950's, Adm Budge, then CO of HMCS CORNWALLIS, was famous for his "volunteer" choirs of sailors who sang at various events throughout the Annapolis Valley as well as at CORNWALLIS.

\*\*\*\*\*

**F/Lt E. Briggs** RCAF (Ret) also correctly replied with the above two verses of *The Good Ship Venus*. (From the Editor: We didn't know the Air Force sang rude songs too.)

\*\*\*\*\*

From **Don Cash**: I was the Squadron pianist on "NABOB" and I have been deafened many times by having many other verses of the *Good Ship Venus* bellowed in my ears!

(Editor's Note: Don Cash, a NABOB Turkey Pilot no less!)

\*\*\*\*\*

From **Dave Tate**: The pilot who parachuted into the field adjacent to the Museum was Paddy Moore.

Lt Paddy Moore was doing FCLPs/ADDLs when the engine caught fire. He landed in the old football field and the Avenger ended up in the harbour by the jetty. I was coming through the old main gate when I looked up and saw the TBM pouring smoke and Paddy just leaving the aircraft. His chute had just started to deploy. I was the first one to greet him as he was unstrapping his chute.

In the event you are not aware, he was killed on the West Coast during a water bombing mission.

**Winner!** From the Editor: Dave Tate is the winner of the prize cruise trip for being the first to correctly name the pilot as Paddy Moore. Dave may pick up his tickets at the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal and present them to the SAMF Scy for reimbursement.

\*\*\*\*\*

Other correct answers came from Stan Conner, Murray Westwood, Paddy Moore's son and from Stew Baker former AVS Tech, former EA,

former LM who writes:

I was a "fish head" electrician, ABLM1 (serving in crash boat 208 (or was it 228?). At the time, I was in the old gym when the dying engine of the Avenger caught my attention. I ran outside, saw somebody jump off the wing and the plane plunge down over NAMS. A column of smoke rose up and I feared for my buddies on the boat. I ran back toward the Boat Shed and saw the PO Motor Mech, in his Austin, crash through the downed Commissionaires Gate. The Avenger had gone in almost directly in front of the Boat Shed in shallow water. The crash boat was unhurt, but my fellow electrician Joe Daigle, while casting off shore power, looked up and saw the flaming Avenger coming straight down. In full parka and winter pants, he dove under the jetty! He was hauled out about 20-30 minutes later, given a tot of rum and sent home for the rest of the day.

\*\*\*\*\*

For the quiz "NAME AND RANK" comes the following:

From **Jeremy McGreevy**: The name of the cartoon gentleman in your winter edition is "Flatspin Fumble". I can't remember if he served in VU32 or VF870. In any case he was the creation of (I'm doing this from a long ago memory so I may not have it all correct) Sandy MacDonald who authored a general aviation primer entitled "From the Ground Up". Anyone who took a private pilot's course in Canada in the 19950s, and probably other decades as well, would be familiar with him.



He had his antithesis, of course, a Mr. Perfect Pilot named "Captain Wise" (as per your quiz). The two were used throughout the book to illustrate the Do's and Don'ts of flying.

\*\*\*\*\*

From page 11: Hockey Players names supplied by **Buck Buckoski**:

Back Row (L-R)  
Bruce Scott, Bob Clark, Dick Cooper, Mike Ryan

responses continued

**Middle Row (L-R)**

Don Fraser, Marv Brown, Alvin Johnston,  
George Sly, Mick Stevenson, Cliff Armstrong

**First Row (L-R)**

Buck Buckoski, Gord Roy, Mort During, (?),  
John Leduc, (?), Doug Nicholson, Tommy ?,  
Ken MacDonald

\*\*\*\*\*

**NON QUIZ COMMENTS:**

**From Murray Caldwell (in part)**

I am truly impressed with the work you and the others are doing in preserving our naval heritage. I regret that my locale keeps me from direct participation. I know you need funds and because I recognize that the RCN trained me in a profession that provided me with a reasonable living for 30 years in the airline industry - I feel that I owe something to the RCN.

**From George Pumble (in part)**

One should never forget the 'good old days' of Naval Aviation - they were great - absolutely GREAT! Keep up the good work!

**From Bob Bissell (in part)**

Sorry to hear that there is a shortage of old hands to keep the show going.

We joined for the fun and the opportunity to represent the country by doing a good job. Now without modern equipment and public interest there is not much chance of inspiring an esprit de corps in the Navy.

A couple of years ago, I visited on board IROQUOIS in Athens on R & R and discovered that the crew knew nothing about Naval Air and never heard of BONAVENTURE.

Without knowledge of the past, you cannot inspire progress!

*(By the way Bob, I bet our readers would like to hear about your voyages under sail - Med, Atlantic, Spanish Main. Nice to know we're not all golf wimps. Ed.) (From Kay: Should be some good stories with Marsh Dempster on board.)*

**Don Rubin writes: (in part)**

Dennis Shaw's tale about his recent visit to Malta brought back fond memories of that island to me also, even though I was only there once in 1958.

I just hope that you are able to receive many such articles to keep us up to date on what went on many years ago. I am sure that these stories will refresh the memories of those tough times - but we still had lots of time to have fun too!

Regarding the horse on board BONAVENTURE, I can remember it very well and some of the other stories about Scotty Guthrie and his sidekicks, Al Downey and Dan Coakley. I know because I was there!

**Rick Anscomb writes: (in part)**

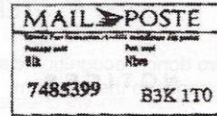
I have some very fond memories of my time in Shearwater, most of them positive. I was, unfortunately, too late to fly off of the carrier, although my course mates all made it: Jim Pollitt, KJ MacDonald, George Smith etc. When we got our wings in Portage, 21 Jun 68, they were integrating and needed a token Navy pilot instructor on the mighty Wichita ice magnet. So there I was, trapped on the prairie with LCdr Swish McNish. Joe Paquette was my mutual partner on the C45 instructors' course and he told me many lies about the cradle of Naval Aviation.

I arrived in Shearwater in April 1970. Joe was one of my instructors on the Tracker at VU32. This was the best flying that I have ever done; well, not necessarily my personal best but the most challenging and fun. What a collection of personalities and talent, it was awe inspiring. I don't believe that this could be duplicated with the present incumbents of our Air force.

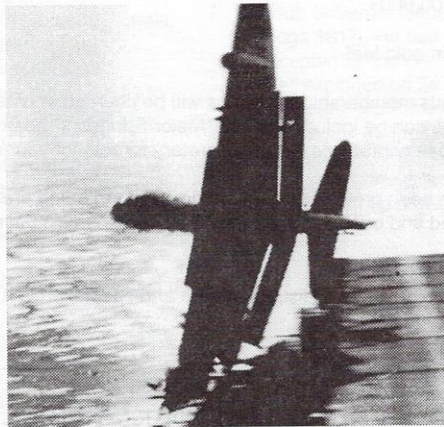
Thank you for carrying on the memories of those glorious days - thank God we were able to participate in some of those memories.

**Clark Mecready writes:**

The article on MAC ships was very interesting. Not much has been written on their endeavours. I do think, however, that this bit about losing the Stringbag astern of the convoy must have been apocryphal. In a 50kt gale the convoy would be hove to or barely making headway. Even if only indicating 90kts, the aircraft would be closing at 40kts and surely would not be that far astern in any event!



FAIREY  
FIREFLY  
"TORQUING-IN"



825 SQUADRON  
HMCS MAGNIFICENT

SEPTEMBER 1948



**PILOT: Dickie Bartlett**

Dickie spent much of the war as a POW (starting a few seconds after dive-bombing the Scharnhorst in 1940). He had, thereby, one fewer landings than take-offs with Ark Royal – similarly with Magnificent – see photo at top and article "Flashback".

LCdr R.E. Bartlett, RCN (Ret'd) lives in Victoria, BC.

*"Sorry about that Peter"*



**OBSERVER: Peter Berry**

Peter spent much of the war in HMCS Kootenay, hunting U-Boats. His ship got three (two confirmed only post-war by Doenitz's archives) and Peter got a *Mention In Dispatches* for his tenacity as ASDIC Officer.

Cdr P.C. Berry, RCN (Ret'd) lives in Milton, ON.

*"Not to worry Dickie, we're fine aren't we?"*