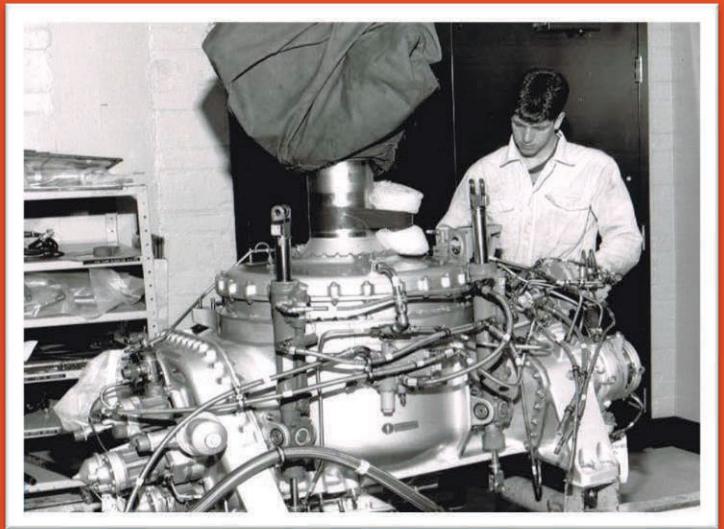
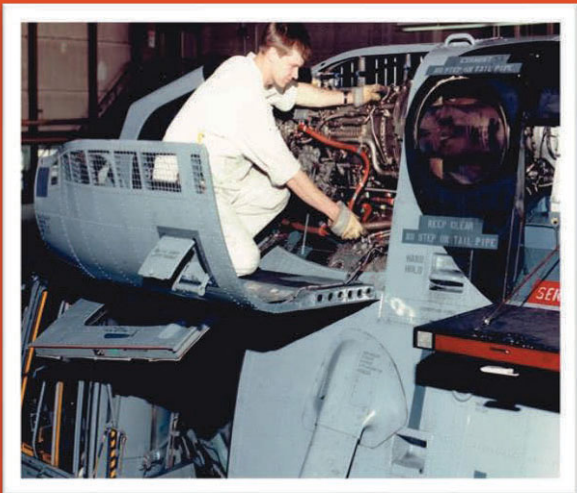
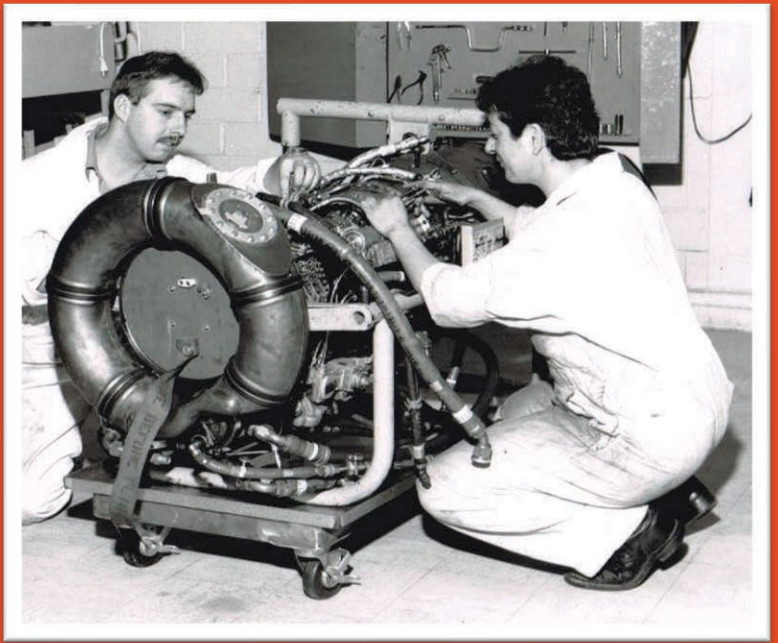


WARRIOR

SUMMER 2021





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We will format the text for you. No need to centre headings, indent paragraphs etc. Graphics are best submitted electronically; they should be 300 dpi and a .tif file. A jpg file at 300 dpi is acceptable if no compression is used.

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 or SAM Foundation 12 WING PO BOX
 99000 STATION FORCES HALIFAX, NS B3K
 5X5**

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To contact us:

Administrator: Karen Collacutt – McHarg
SAMF website: www.samfoundation.ca
 Newsletter Editor: Karen Collacutt - McHarg
samf@samfoundation.ca

1-888-497-7779 (toll free)
 (902) 461-0062 (Phone)
 (902) 461-1610 (fax) or (902) 720-2037 (fax)

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WE NEED YOUR SUBMISSIONS. Please send us your stories, pictures etc. We look forward to hearing from you. Any opinions expressed herein are deemed to be those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation, its members, the Shearwater Aviation Museum and/or 12 Wing Shearwater.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Here it is, now 16 months into the Pandemic. I am happy to be able to report to our readers that we all have seemed to make it through in fine style. That is, if you can call Cabin Fever as a way to make it through in fine style. It has certainly been a very long winter and spring, as none of us on the board could go into the building during this period. Just staff are allowed, no visitors until we get the all clear from CFB Halifax. This has given the staff a great opportunity to catch up on paperwork, and of course, of prime interest to us, for Karen to harass everyone for dues, articles, raffle tickets, etc. We seem to have made it to the other shore on this one, at least for now. Let us hope that this current footprint stays in place, and that we can get back to hugging our families, friends and neighbours very soon.

Karen did great work after the crash at sea of Cyclone 822. She along with Christine Hines arranged for “the memorial patches” to be sold from the SAM & SAMF that all personnel from 12 Wing and HMCS Fredericton put up on their flying suits during the month of April. The squadrons did not have to pay for the initial costs. It was a service that SAMF put together in jig time to allow folks the opportunity to drop by, hopefully stick their noses through the door and take a peek. Wing didn't have to put up any loose change. Great job, Karen & Christine!!

Speaking of the museum foundation, it is time for us to “Have the Talk” compadres. We have been discussing this for the past few years. Those chats were all about what we could see coming down the track. My friends and colleagues from a prior life, we have news to impart. That train has now left the station. As we carry on into the future, we are going to change our operating model. As our collective voices have been heard to say lately, “What are you going to do looking forward?” A few thoughts below for you to ponder.

The trouble in its essence is this my friends: there are not enough of us left to be able to sustain the level of “Naval Air” articles that satisfy our need for ditties on what life was like at sea “back in the day”. It is way more challenging for them to be writing the operating manuals which will assist the wing in taking all the necessary steps into the future for the next generation. We have received a few articles on Stalker 22 from the wing, which is a great start, and we look forward to any other stories or writings from 12 Wing from the authors in the group of very talented young men and women.

Yes, there are various Facebook pages to consult. Go to SEA KING 50, 423 Squadron, and 443 Squadron and 12 Wing Shearwater. The Bonaventure Website is very good in my view, just for exchanging hellos and various views on Maritime subjects as they pertain to times past.

How many young folks do you know who want to keep looking back on what others accomplished while they have the current watch with a very exciting new helicopter to operate with. They are definitely doing good work. We know that intuitively and from speaking with them from time to time. We need to find a middle ground to keep the communications up between the past and present aviators. In my view, the Warrior should be that vehicle.

Here is what I want to run by you all. Send us a quick note to tell us what you think about this challenge. New thoughts are often the best thoughts. As we are at the coal face and somewhat blind to picking up things the colour of coal, we require your input. We will try to keep space for our efforts on sea stories from the elder Naval Air Crowd, and equal space from the Cyclone community and others. Another idea: I would like to consider some reprints of some of the "best of the best" articles that have been written over the last 26 years since Warrior first hit the presses. Our new readers in particular might enjoy seeing them for the first time. Sort of like bringing back the "Friends" series on TV. Old laughs, but new to "tout le current gang".

Primarily Dear Readers, I would like for all of you to please send along your ideas about what you would like to see in future editions of the Warrior via email, snail mail or telephone. Any way you get it to us will be fine. We want to know how we can produce old and new Naval Air Stories. My suggestion is that we look back over past Warriors, drag out the best of the best, put them in our "Old Sailors Talk" corner for our reader's delight. That should get a bit of action.

The Wing erected and dedicated a beautiful monument in the Air Park at Shearwater. It was created in remembrance of the members of Stalker 22. There is a new Wing Commander coming in at the middle of July, and I will try to get a few words with him for a future edition of the Warrior. In future editions, I hope to get a few "roving reports" type of small snippets from the new gang on the block, so that we can all meaningfully measure what they are telling us about what it is like flying the world's most advanced helicopter at sea from the small ships we have. We may all be a bit surprised.

Lastly, the staff at SAM would like to wish Col Hawthorne our very best as he proceeds to the Canadian Embassy in London as the Air Attache. Some guys get all the luck. Ya done good here Sir, and we wish you the very best as you proceed through yet another career gate.

Be well, my old and new colleagues. Now, all prepare to sing with me:

Farewell COVID,
Goodbye you nasty piece of work,
So Long COVID,
And don't come back again!!

TTFN



John Cody
President SAMF

Standing proudly as the Gate Guardian to 443(M) Squadron Pat Bay is a veteran CH124 Sea King painted in RCN livery.



Retired from service on 31 December 2018, Canadian Sea King CH12417 stands at the entrance to 443(MH) Squadron, as a reminder of the fleet's 55 years of outstanding service to Canada, and as a poignant memorial to the countless RCN/CF/RCAF personnel who flew, maintained, and supported their operations.

The Sea King has a storied past as one of the longest serving and operationally deployed aircraft in Canadian Armed Forces history. It has served Canada well, deploying all around the globe, in peacetime and in conflict. With this rich history in mind, 443(MH) Squadron leadership planned to preserve and display CH12417 as a Gate Guardian, providing a fitting testament to all those who pass through the 443(MH) Squadron Arundel Castle gates.

In December 2019, the Gate Guardian project was initiated; the basic concept modelled after the 771 SAR Squadron Sea King display located at RNAS Culdrose, in Cornwall UK. Armed with the provision of technical information and photos from the Culdrose Engineering Organization, the first project meeting was held between the Squadron and Real Property Operations Unit (Pacific) in January 2020.

In order to display CH12417 in a manner fitting of the Sea King's proud heritage, the Squadron chose to mount the aircraft in a prominent location adjacent to the front gate entrance, and in the spread configuration. The project team also elected to maintain CH12417 as close to its original configuration as possible. This needed to be balanced with the need to ensure that certain mandated equipment was removed, and the need to preserve the integrity of the aircraft so as to mitigate the effects of Mother Nature.

Given the unique nature of the work required to preserve the aircraft for display, formal CH124 technical orders did not cover all contingencies. A checklist provided by the CH124

Weapon System Manager and articles covering museum preservation, formed the basis for much of the work that needed to be accomplished. Where gaps in information existed, a number of innovative solutions were developed; including the technical design to secure the main rotor head, the use of semi-transparent mesh to discretely cover intake areas, and the manufacture of hidden restraints to secure windows and doors. Although not a technical airworthiness requirement, all tasks were documented to maintain historical records and track the progress.

During the course of the project, a number of other logistics related challenges needed to be overcome, not the least of which resulting from COVID-19 restrictions and the significant workload associated with the Squadron's need to maintain Aircraft Structures (ACS) maintenance support to CH148 Cyclone operations. The only suitable display site was identified along the fence line, adjacent to the entrance of the Supply loading dock. This "confined area" required numerous measurements and adjustments to the concrete pad orientation, to ensure a fully spread Sea King would fit onto its final resting place. The resultant positioning of CH12417 also required shortening #5 blade and repositioning the granite stone that had been found during construction of the Squadron hangar in 2016. This rock proved to be embedded over 4 ft in the ground and weighed over 35,000 lbs.



Throughout the project, the Esquimalt Real Property Operations Unit (Pacific) and Farmer Construction Ltd of Victoria were invaluable in working with the Squadron to design and construct the pedestal concrete pad, hardscape retaining wall, and subcontract the recessed LED lighting installation to illuminate CH12417 during night time hours.

As the only ACS technician assigned the monumental task of preparing the aircraft, MCpl Sylvain Fortier worked tirelessly to design and implement practical solutions

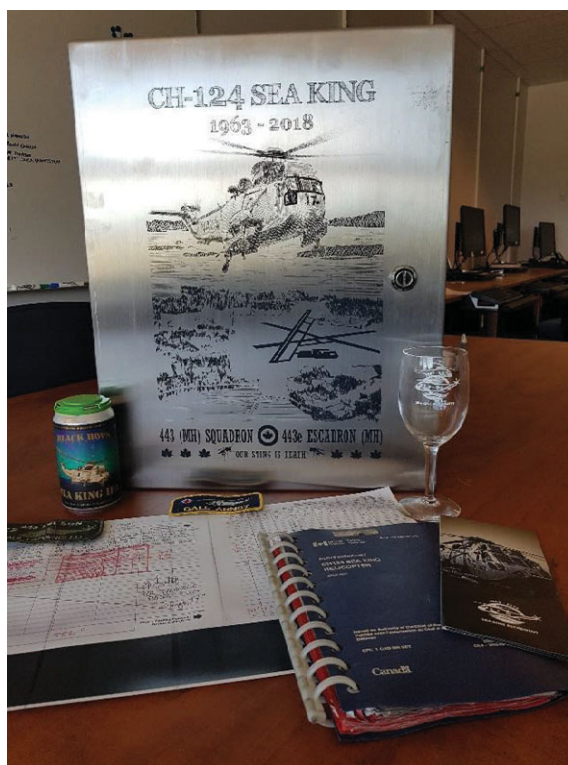
that enhanced the display, while preserving the aircraft's security and integrity. Based upon photos from RNAS Culdrose and measurements provided by MCpl Fortier, support stanchions for the main and tail wheels were engineered and manufactured by Harjim Engineering of Victoria. Support collars for the oleos, along with main rotor blade tie downs and lashings, were manufactured by MCpl Fortier in the Squadron ACS shop.



With the aircraft fully prepared and the crane ready on site, the 2nd of June 2021 proved to be a warm, sunny, fair winds day - excellent craning conditions - but also a somewhat bittersweet event for former Sea King alumni. Under the leadership of MWO Paul MacQueen, the final CH124 Sea King “crane off” occurred and 417 was successfully lifted and mounted onto its final place of retirement by Squadron technicians and Farmer Construction.



To add a future context to the Gate Guardian, a time capsule was designed to be securely displayed inside the aircraft. Cpl Shannon Clayton and Avr Mohammed Mohammed of 443(MH) Squadron designed the artwork for the stainless steel cover and Capt Don Leblanc assembled the various historical contents and memorabilia.



On 7 July 2021, the CH12417 Gate Guardian was dedicated by 443(MH) Squadron's Commanding Officer, LCol Ryan Sexsmith, and Honourary Colonel Mike Sudul, with the placement of the time capsule inside the aircraft. On the 50th anniversary commemorating the Sea King's Final Flight with the RCAF, December 2068, the time capsule will be opened.



CH12417 now has a place of honour at the entrance to 443(MH) Squadron. Its final resting place is a fitting testament to the proud legacy of the Sea Kings' service with the RCN and RCAF.

Indeed – “No better King for a Castle Gate Guardian”

443(MH) Squadron Gate Guardian Team Members:

- Maj Philip Dodge
- MWO Paul MacQueen
- Sgt Eric Duchesne
- MCpl Sylvain Fortier
- Cpl Glenn Grinyer
- Cpl Shawn Connolly



It should be noted that the successful completion of the project was a team effort which could not have been accomplished without the support of the following agencies:

- Esquimalt Real Property Operations Unit (Pacific)
- Farmer Construction of Victoria BC
- Tournour Masonry Victoria BC
- United Engineering Ltd/Harjim Industrial Services Sidney BC
- Thomis Electric Ltd Victoria BC
- Rotor MAXX Support Ltd Parksville, BC

Highlights of CH12417 Service

- Built at the Pratt and Whitney plant in Longueuil PQ
- Delivered 30 June 1965 to the RCN as Sikorsky Serial Number 61283
- Accepted into service 8 September 1965
- Over its entire life it amassed **17776.1** Total Airframe Hours
- B Category Damage March 1971 – Starboard landing gear collapse on board ship Aircraft recovered ashore, repaired and returned to service.
- Gulf War Veteran, modified to a CH124A configuration as one of 6 aircraft for OP FRICTION in Aug 1990. 417 provided stellar service throughout the conflict, proving to be the most reliable of the five aircraft assigned to the Canadian Task Group. She earned the nickname “Big Bird” after the Sesame Street character as she always seemed to be “hovering around in the background”¹
- Painted in RCN livery in 2017 at 12 Wing Shearwater
- Last official deployment of CH12417 occurred during OP Lentis where she and her 443(MH) Squadron crews made a significant contribution to fighting BC wildfires in the summer of 2018
- Final Flight 17 December 2018.

CH12417 Final Flight Crew 17 December 2018, Victoria BC:

- Major Paul Faganello – Crew Commander
- Capt Rob McMullen – Co-Pilot
- LCol Travis Chapman – ACSO
- MWO Bruce Hollington – AESOp

¹ Certified Serviceable Swordsfish to Sea King – The Technical Story of Canadian Naval Aviation by Those Who Made it So; Peter Charlton, Michael Whitby and Leo Pettipas Copyright 1995 CNATH Book Project



Karen Collacutt-McHarg Office Administrator,
Fundraising, and Editor of the Warrior

One of the best parts of my job is to hear from you. Here are just a few from our Facebook page, on the phone or in letters.

My father was a hull tech and while on duty and caring for me as a little guy, he got called in. So, he had to take me with him. He deposited me with a cook while he went to take care of something below the decks of the Bonnie.

The thing I remember clearly was him coming through the hatch, and cursing out the cook, and how much trouble we would be in with my mother.

He just interrupted me with a dinner spoon in my hand sitting in front of a five-gallon tub of chocolate ice cream. Lol, I was allergic to boot but didn't know any better.

After that we went to Camille's for fish's chips. In later years I was given his black leather jacket from the Bonnie to wear. It was lined with sheep skin. A prized possession for many years. Years later and after seeing the movie "The Great Impostor," he told me that Doc Savage replaced the real great impostor on board the Bonnie. He uses to tease Doc Savage as I'm sure others did when they had a chance to meet. That's my Bonnie story. God bless those who sailed and served on her as well as the Magnificent our other aircraft carrier.

David Wilson

Dear Editor,

May I add to the research article in your spring issue titled "Early US Navy Operations at Shearwater", in which the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service (RCNAS) is briefly mentioned.

It is true that a Canadian Naval Air Service was created to bring the first air patrols from Bakers Point in 1918 and that this plan was shelved with the end of WW1.

The Canadian Naval Aviation did not end at the close of WW1. It re-emerged during the early 1940's and, by 1948, had reached the point where a re-organized RCNAS, now called The Royal Canadian Navy Air Branch, took possession of an obsolescent airfield in Eastern Passage, NS, named it HMCS Shearwater, and gradually transformed it into one of Canada's foremost all-weather Air Bases.

The RCN Air Branch introduced Canada's first effective air-to air missile system (sidewinder), produced breakthrough technology (Beartrap) that made possible worldwide the revolutionary marriage of small ship and helicopter, attained a level of professional excellence second to none in air ASW operations, completed major upgrades and expansion of base facilities, acquired modern Trackers and Sea King aircraft and equipped them with the most advanced tactical systems then available, established a network of naval air reserve squadrons, and operated from Canada's three coasts (coastguard arctic air detachments included). All the foregoing and much more was made possible by a relatively small group of skilled people of all ranks whose achievements must not be forgotten.

The SAM itself is the product of a purely naval air vision, brought to life in the 1970's / early 1980's mainly by retired air personnel and built with heavy inputs of Naval Air sweat, muscle and nation-wide fundraising that continues to this day.

To ensure permanent pride and place in the SAM for Canadian Naval Air, a large sign should be placed at the SAM entrance reading: Shearwater-The Birthplace of Canadian Naval Aviation.

Cheers Tom Copeland

Dear Tom

Thank you for writing. I think the sign at the entrance to SAM is a fantastic idea. Your knowledge of Naval Air and the history of the SAM will never be forgotten. The Warrior is a fantastic magazine for members and all who read her to tell their stories and share their memories with us. Through the stories and history, we will never forget our past.

As time moves forward, memories sometimes are lost forever, this is why it is so important to document and print photos of our history of Naval Air and all who passed through Shearwater at one time or another.

I get to hear hundreds of stories, some short snippets and some long and fascinating. Our social media platform has been a big part of getting the word out about the SAM and SAMF as well as Warrior.

If I can share any of these stories to keep the love of our beloved SAMF alive, I am only too happy to do so.

Karen

Birthday Wishes:

I had a request from Sara Donnelly daughter of Ron Vallillee of Greenwood, NS.

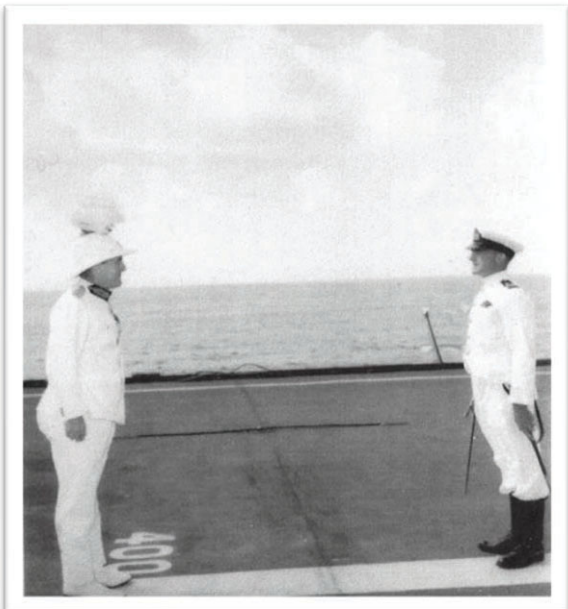
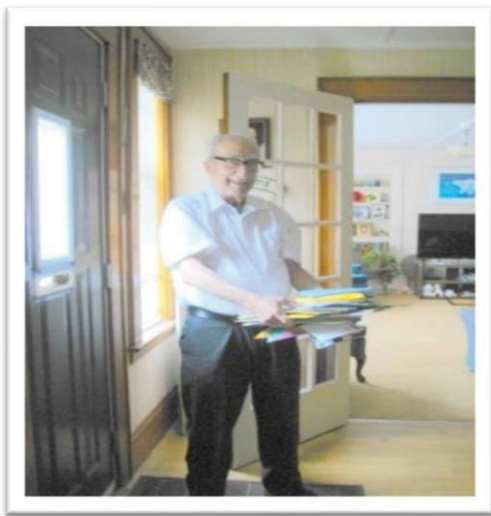
On June 11th our dad is turning 90 years old ❤️ Retired CP02 Ronald Vallillee proudly served 30 years in the Royal Canadian Navy (1951 to 1981). Covid 19 is making it difficult for us to have a birthday party for our dad, so we are asking veterans past and present to help us make his birthday extra special by sending him a birthday card, or a post card, maybe let him know where you are serving or have served.

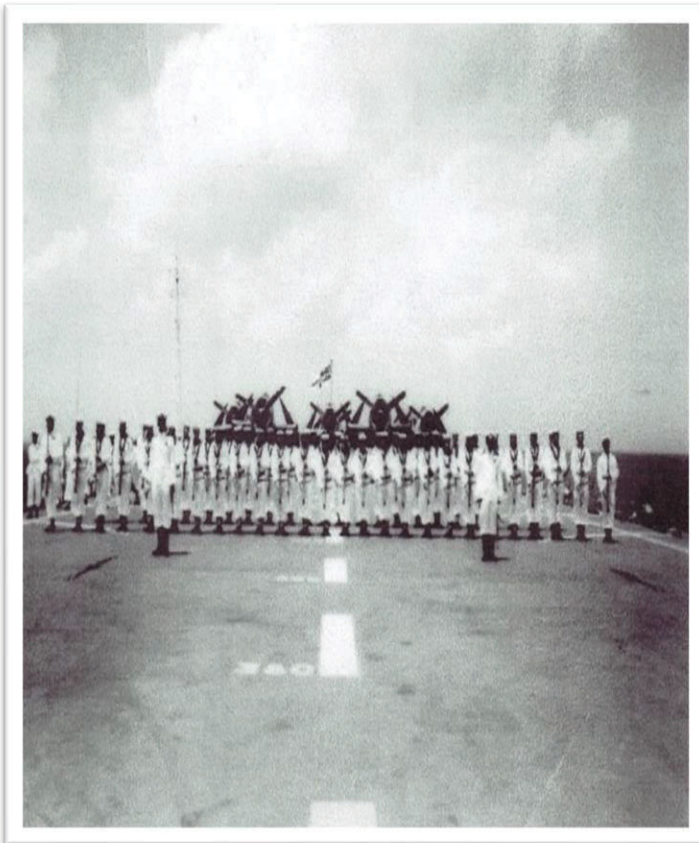
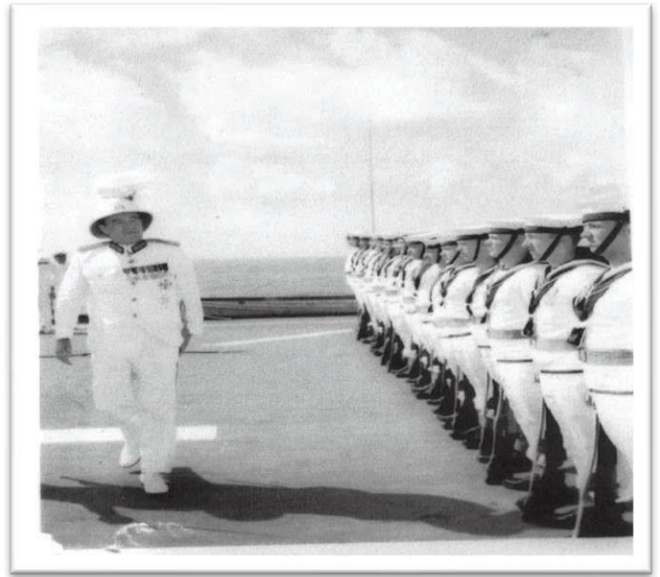
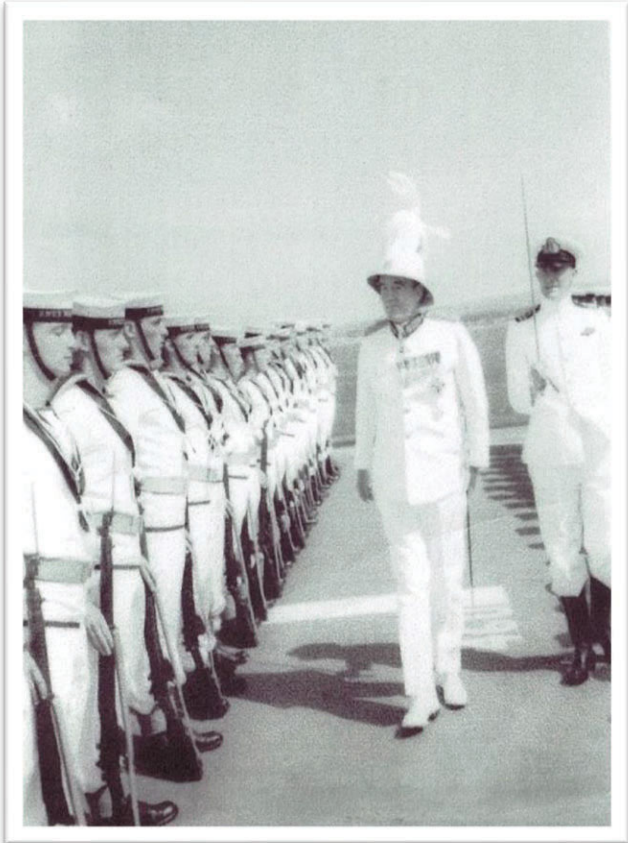
Ron served on ships, HMCS Cap de la Madeleine, HMCS Nootka and HMCS Saguenay, travelled to Texas, San Juan Puerto Rico, Hudson Bay and on many patrols up and down the Atlantic. He was also stationed on various bases, HMCS Stadacona, HMCS Shearwater, HMCS York, HMCS Cornwallis, HMCS HOCHELAGA and HMCS d'Iberville. I posted this on our Facebook page, and he received hundreds of cards and letters. Thank you all for helping make his birthday a special one.



Dear Karen

Reading about your need for pictures, I dug out the Paton Archives. The honour guard were of me with the sword and the 48-man guard on the flight deck of "The Magnificent" welcoming the then Governor of Barbados during our visit there in 1955 or 1956. The guard officer is yours truly.





This is a fly past over Aberdeen, Scotland in the formation of an anchor, there were 4 Canadians, 2 Aussies, plus some Kiwis and RN types flying Fireflies and Spitfires.

Best wishes
Weldy
WELDON (WELDY) PATON

AND NOW THE REST OF THE STORY

In the Spring/2013 edition of the warrior the late Dave Tait wrote an article entitled Bearcat and Rooster. It pertained to the friendly rivalry between VS 880 and HS 50 involving the “Cock of the Walk” competition that went on in sports on the base. VS 880 had been fortunate to be victorious for a long time until HS 50 took it one month.

The late Colin Curleigh as CO of HS 50 sent a message to Dave asking if he had seen who won? Dave relates the happenings which then took place, HS 50 painted a large red rooster on their hanger, he and the late Joe Saunders (Sqn Chief) “arranged” to have the bearcat mounted atop the rooster. At that they decided that was enough, well it wasn't!!! Here's the never before told (officially) rest of the story.

A group of us 081's of 880 hatched the plan to attempt to carry out a very brave and dangerous night time “attack” on HS 50's hanger roof. We gathered at the old building 52 which was kitty corner to our hanger around 2100. I went over to see the duty officer and got permission to get the keys to the paint store on the pretext of painting a room in the building. Done deal. We gathered together, got a five-gallon pail of white runway paint and proceeded to get across the tarmac to the edge of HS 50's hanger. This, approximately 400 yards, was a task in itself as the rotating tower light had to be timed. Once in the shadows of the hanger, the plan started to take place. The group of us were Jim Cope, the late Bob Winger, the late Bobby Campeau, the late Ron McKinnon and yours truly. “Scampy” (Bobby Campeau) went up the drain pipe to the first level, gained entrance to the hanger, came down and opened up the doors for us. Quietly, we ascended to the roof and started to work. The plan was to draw a large (50 feet by 25 feet) bearcat outline, then fill in the drawing with the white paint. Jim Cope being the artist of the group did the prep, and we all took turns at filling in the bearcat. At all times there was one of us advising of the tower rotating light (we were literally beneath it) and another watching for the cruising patrols around the base. Getting this done without being caught was upmost in our plan, never mind the ramifications of being caught. We had it all completed in about 1 hour, and reversed our route back to the safety side of the tarmac around midnight.

After getting our pulses down, we slipped and proceeded to our homes. Joe had arranged to have a chopper from HU21 and a base photo tech to take up at first light, a proof positive that the deed had actually been done, and had prints sent to Colin and Dave. At the morning briefing, we could hardly control ourselves as Cdr Tait held up the photo and congratulated “whomever” was responsible for this fine work. We tried to be as surprised as all the rest, but I think Dave had a pretty good idea who had been “up all night”.

Thinking back even as I write this the excitement and cause for concern is still of that night is still felt.

Cdr Dave Tait was the absolute very best C.O. I ever had the privilege to serve under and for that I will be always grateful. As an aside, Jim Cope was having a party of us friends, maybe 10 couples at his home one Sat night, Dave somehow heard of it and asked Jim if he and Mary could attend? Well you can imagine the answer and complete surprise when they showed up, joined in, had a drink and sang with us. It just cemented our feelings for him. At a CNAG gathering in Ottawa many years later we recalled that night in AW.

Now you know “The Rest Of The Story

Chuck O’Neill CPO Ret



Chuck O’Neill (standing) Jim Cope (sitting)

Sand Kings over Somalia

Ernest Cable
Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian



Sea King in the Sands of Somalia (DND Photo)

At one time, Somalia was highly coveted for its geographical location, situated near oil wells in the Persian Gulf and along the shipping routes from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea. The country was released from its history of British and Italian imperial rule in 1960, but when Maj. Gen. Mohammed Siad Barré seized power in 1969, Somalia entered a new era of undemocratic rule. At the dawn of the Cold War, Somalia aligned itself with the Soviet Union.

Soviet money, along with powerful weapons, flowed into the country to seal the partnership. But, in 1977 Somalia engaged in a border dispute with Ethiopia and the Soviet superpower dropped their alliance. The United States subsequently cemented a coalition with Somalia, sending over weapons and foreign aid. As the Cold War thawed, clan warfare in the country intensified as powerful Cold War weaponry fell into the hands of rebel warlords who struggled for power.

The United Nations, recognizing that immediate action was required, passed Resolution 794, which authorized **Operation Deliverance** (November 1992 – March 1993) in an effort to bring an end to the famine and civil war that was ravaging the small African country. Canada responded by sending *HMCS Preserver* loaded with tons of supplies to help ease the famine. Lieutenant Colonel Jim Cottingham headed up *Preserver's* Helicopter Air Detachment (Helairdet) from 423 Squadron consisting of three Sea Kings, 16 aircrew and 28 maintainers. Fortunately, the Sea Kings retained most of the additional equipment with which they had been modified for **Operation Friction** in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. In particular, the Sea Kings still retained the Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) sensor and the Global Positioning System (GPS). The Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) operated the FLIR that could be steered in azimuth and elevation to acquire and record day and night imagery of targets of interest; the GPS provided the TACCO accurate navigation over the uncharted regions of the desert. The Airborne Electronic Sensor Operator (AESOP) was equipped with night vision goggles to visually search for targets of interest in the night darkness. The AESOP also manned a 5.56 mm, C9 machine gun, mounted in the cargo door opening, to provide self-protection for the aircraft.

All aircrew stations had cooling pumps installed for the individual aircrew cooling vests and Kevlar inserts in the seats provided armour protection against small arms fire. The ALE-37 flare and chaff dispenser and the ALQ-144 infrared jammer were the notable exceptions to the Persian Gulf War protection suite.

Preserver also had an army headquarters staff embarked that provided a planning and command function for the Canadian army units (1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Canadian Airborne Regiment and the Combat Engineer Regiment) prior to their getting established ashore in Somalia.

Shortly after arrival in the Indian Ocean *Preserver* took up station off the coastal city of Mogadishu. Since the port facilities could not accommodate the ship the Sea Kings were tasked to sling all of the supplies on board *Preserver* to the Bale Dogle airfield, 55 miles (90 km) inland, where the Canadian Airborne Regiment would soon be arriving. The task required slinging a load of supplies over unknown territory then returning for another. The round trip time plus refueling meant that each crew flew two sorties of three hours per day, moving three loads per sortie. When C-130 Hercules aircraft became available the Sea Kings started to sling their loads into the Mogadishu airport for subsequent airlift onwards to Bale Dogle. With superb coordination with the ship and exceptional support from the maintenance crews, the Sea Kings were able to sling a load ashore every six or seven minutes. Most crews averaged 20 loads per sortie with a record 23 loads in two and a half hours being achieved. The Sea Kings established an airlift record by slinging over 400 tons ashore in less than seven full flying days.

Being accustomed to flying in cool weather over the North Atlantic, the aircrew, maintainers and aircraft encountered many new challenges flying overland in the heat of the Somali desert. The heat limited the engine torque available, and the sand and dust kicked up by the rotor downwash created zero visibility while landing. To minimize corrosion in the maritime environment most moving parts of the Sea King were lathered with grease, but in the desert the sand not only adhered to the grease, causing excessive wear on the moving parts, but also collected in every nook and cranny on the aircraft. For their remarkable durability in the desert the Sea Kings were affectionately dubbed the "Sand Kings". With no self-start capability the Sea Kings had to remain flying, or engines kept running until they could return to *Preserver* to shut down or hot-refuel and change crews. The long duty cycles and high-flying rate put a strain on the aircraft and maintainers alike. Despite these challenges the maintainers were able to produce at least two serviceable aircraft more than 90 percent of the time.

After all of the supplies had been slung ashore, the Sea King crews were thrust into the role of providing tactical air support to the army field units, a role for which they were not trained. The Sea Kings were primarily used for reconnaissance missions for the Canadian Airborne Regiment, the U.S. Marines and the U.S. Army Rangers. The aircrews' expertise had been in anti-submarine warfare, surface surveillance, over-the-horizon targeting and ship recognition. But, in their new ground reconnaissance role, the crews had to teach themselves to recognize the various types and roles of army field vehicles, identify the types of weapons observed among the various groups of rebels and become familiar with the techniques that the warlords used to camouflage arms caches and vehicles in the desert. Other tasks included venturing farther inland to map alternative routes for future multi-national ground force moves.

Later, when the Airborne Regiment had been assigned to patrol a sector farther to the north, near the town of Belet Uen, the Sea Kings reconnoitered the route the Regiment would take to convoy their vehicles 200 miles (330 km) inland. During the two-day trek the Sea Kings provided continuous top cover to warn of impending danger. To fill the intelligence void on rebel activities in the area around Belet Uen, the Sea Kings conducted a series of reconnaissance missions. Departing *Preserver* at night, the Sea Kings staged through Bale Dogle where they refueled and then flew another 130 miles (220 km) to Belet Uen to determine the nighttime movements and disposition of a local warlord faction. Later, when fuel became available at Belet Uen, crews

flew to Bale Dogle, refueled, flew to Belet Uen, refueled, and then flew a three-hour reconnaissance mission before returning to Belet Uen and repeating the refueling process on the way back to *Preserver*.

These long six-to-seven-hour missions provided excellent intelligence on the rebels, their weapons and their villages that proved to be invaluable to intelligence officers.



Sea King on Road Reconnaissance (DND Photo)

Not all of the tasking went as planned as the Sea King crews had to be prepared to respond to urgent requests for help such as when a Sea King responded to a distress call from the *MV Red Cross Free Trader*. The off-loaded cargo of relief supplies ashore was being hijacked by a large number of armed Somali bandits. By the time the ship directed the Sea King to the scene the bandits were readying heavy trucks to move the food away. The Sea King made its initial pass from over the water at 150 knots. Many of the Somalis ran away but those who remained were heavily armed. Continued low level passes by the ten-ton helicopter intimidated the remaining bandits who fled without a shot being fired. The Sea King patrolled the area for a further twenty minutes until five joint force helicopters landed U.S. Marines to secure the area and ensure the relief supplies reached their intended destinations.

The Sea King crews also conducted several medical evacuations saving many lives including a number of Somalis. On two separate occasions in the early days of **Operation Deliverance** U.S. Marines were flown from inland after they had been bitten by poisonous snakes and insects. On another occasion a Sea King crew spotted a car accident at a remote location. They landed and loaded five severely injured Somalis into the helicopter and delivered them to a field hospital. The Sea King had extracted the injured before an American medical evacuation team could arrive, leading a senior U.S. Navy medical officer to affectionately label the Canadian Sea King crews “The Body Snatchers”. In another notable incident U.S. forces requested immediate evacuation of a wounded Somali and a U.S. Army surgical team to *Preserver’s* operating room. With a battle raging in the city, Belgian and U.S. helicopter crews refused the mission. A Sea King crew believing the task was within their capabilities, launched, flew a flawless approach into a poorly lit area festooned with unlit obstacles and returned the patient and a surgeon to the ship. The Sea King crew was lauded by the allies for their professionalism.

Many of the Sea King crews witnessed firefights between rival clans. At night, tracer rounds and mortar explosions were visible as the Sea Kings ferried people to and from the airport or the American Embassy where the **Operation Deliverance** Joint Staff had set up headquarters. One of the more dangerous missions was Sea King 410, assigned call sign Talon 19. The crew was briefed to conduct a covert Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) reconnaissance of the Kismayu area, located about 400 km to the south of Mogadishu, in support of American and Belgian ground forces. Talon 19 launched from *Preserver* and proceeded to their search sector north of Kismayu. The town, smaller than Mogadishu, was built on a gently curving hillside overlooking the ocean (like an amphitheater); there were some buildings up to three stories high. The infrastructure was in a state of decay hence there were no lights in the town and only the port area on the peninsula to the south was lighted.

To minimize the visual signature, Sea King 410 was flown "lamps black" with all external lights turned off. To further reduce the nighttime visual signature the crew wore their dark blue flying suits rather than the tan suits normally worn in the desert. Instrument lighting had to be switched on, as neither pilot was equipped with night vision goggles. Unfortunately, their white helmets reflected the cockpit's dull red glow, providing a potential aiming point for enemy gunners. All lights in the aft cabin were off so as not to degrade the performance of the night vision devices worn by both observers. The cabin window over the port sponson was removed to provide an optically "pure" field of view for the night vision devices. The pilots' side windows were open for no tactical reason other than to provide some relief from the hot night air.

Towards the end of their planned mission, *Preserver* tasked Talon 19 to investigate a suspected concentration of heavily armed rebel troops that had been detected by a previous mission. After a thorough search of the area yielded inconclusive results, the Talon 19 crew believed that the troops could be advancing on Kismayu. A search closer to the town revealed a small group of possible rebel forces. Low on fuel, Talon 19 was forced to return to *Preserver* to hot refuel, change crews, in which Captains Sam Michaud and Bruce Ploughman were the pilot and co-pilot respectively, and return to Kismayu.

Intelligence assessed that the troops could be part of a Morgan (one of the feuding warlords) move to attack Kismayu and the crew was tasked to search west of the city to search for further troop movements.

Talon 19 was then called upon by Bandit 11, the American ground force controller, to investigate reports of gunfire in Kismayu. Approaching the city from the west, the crew observed small arms and heavy machine gun fire and numerous flares throughout the city. Although the threat from ground fire was high, the crew decided to fly over the city at 300 to 400 feet to optimize the FLIR's effectiveness in detecting targets of interest. This was demanding flying as without the aid of night vision goggles the pilots had to rely on their instruments and directions from the FLIR operator. As the aircraft began to fly over the city a major battle was being waged, muzzle flashes from small arms, the flash-pause-bang from Rocket Propelled Grenades and tracer fire from heavy machine guns were apparent in several areas of the city below. Approaching the harbour area, the aircraft was fired upon by heavy machine guns. The tracers passed harmlessly astern of the aircraft. The situation was reported to Bandit 11.

Captain Michaud, the crew commander, then decided that pinpointing the location of the enemy forces would be important to the coalition ground forces and decided on to make a second low level pass over the city. As the Sea King began its over flight of the city, the aircraft was illuminated by searchlights and the crew was engaged by two heavy machine gun positions situated on either side of the aircraft. The tracers passed 25 meters behind the aircraft. A third site fired a short burst that passed in front of the aircraft. Captain Ploughman, who was flying the aircraft, instinctively pulled Talon 19 up into an evasive climb and the aircraft escaped unscathed.

Later, Captain Michaud realized that he made a tactical error on the second pass as he allowed the lights of the port area behind him to silhouette the aircraft, thereby enabling the gunners to engage the aircraft with greater accuracy than on the first pass. Also, on the second pass the element of surprise had been lost instilling renewed credence in the axiom for survival, “One pass, haul ass”.

The aircraft took up station over the northern limits of Kismayu to continue monitoring the ground battle and pass important intelligence to the American and Belgian forces. As the aircraft circled to maintain its vigil, searchlights sporadically probed the area near the aircraft; the Sea King maneuvered randomly to avoid illumination.

As the battle progressed, the Talon 19 crew detected 40 to 50 vehicles withdrawing from the northeastern section of the city. During the low-level identification run, FLIR imagery revealed the vehicles to be Jess (warlord) troops withdrawing from the battle. The aircraft remained overhead to count the vehicles and ascertain the direction of their withdrawal.

Talon 19 was then tasked to conduct low-level FLIR searches in the area of the American forces to ensure that there were no warlord troops lurking to attack from the flanks. After ensuring the coalition ground forces were secure, the aircraft returned to the city to continue reporting troop movements to coalition headquarters.

At first light, Talon 19 recovered onboard *Preserver*, having flown 7.1 hours.

Unfortunately, *Preserver*'s and the Helairdet's sterling contribution to **Operation Deliverance** was overshadowed by the media frenzy covering the needless death of a 16-year-old Somali boy, Shidane Arone, at the hands of soldiers of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. The resulting investigation led to the demise of the Airborne Regiment and, unfortunately, much of Canada's military was tarred and feathered with the same black brush.

But, for *Preserver* and 423 Squadron's embarked Helairdet, Somalia is not a dirty word. In fact, the Squadron has every right to be extremely proud of their achievements. The Helairdet achieved an unprecedented airlift record of slinging over 400 tons of relief supplies ashore in just seven days. They then operated without mishap in the desert, a foreign environment for which they had not been trained; and they made wise use of their maritime expertise to adapt to the challenges of ground reconnaissance; again, a new role for which they had not been trained. These aircrews and ground crews demonstrated innovation, professionalism and determination to succeed when faced with new and unforeseen challenges.

As a result of the Sea Kings' greatly expanded roles during **Operation Friction** and **Operation Deliverance** the Air Force recognized that the Sea King was much more than an anti-submarine helicopter. Consequently, in 1994, the Air force changed the Sea King squadrons' prefix nomenclature from HS (anti-submarine) to MH (maritime helicopter) to reflect their unique capabilities over both land and sea. By forging the way ahead with new-found capabilities, the Sea King community demonstrated that they were true to their Air Force motto, “Sic Itur ad Astra” (Such is the way to the stars).



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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.

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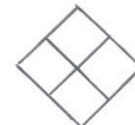
\$300

Option B & C



\$600

Option D



\$600

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(Wall Tiles (continued))

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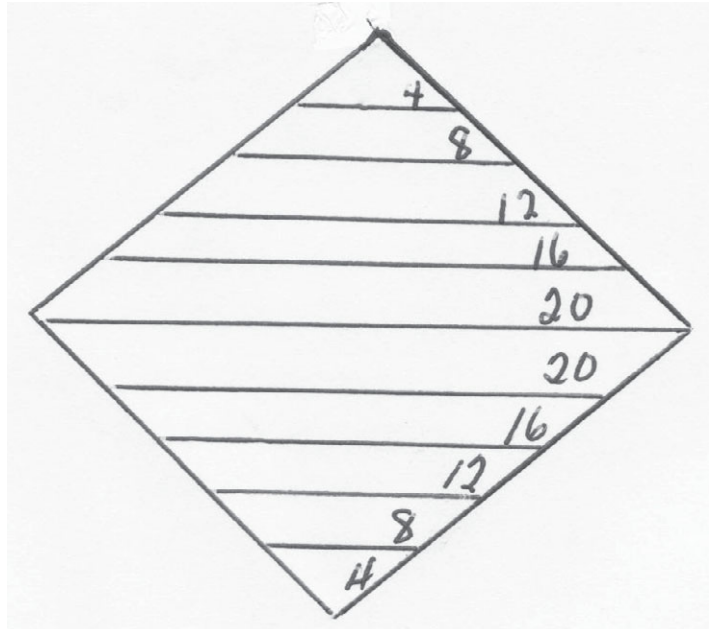
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PLANNED GIVING

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 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.

Or 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

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

A Gift to the SAMF

I don't normally write about donations made to the SAMF because every donation is important and keeps us going, but this one deserves a special mention.

On Feb 15th 2021, CPO (ret'd) Allen John Darwin passed away at the young age of 95. In his honour, his son David has donated over a Quarter Million Dollars of his inheritance to the SAMF building fund. Allen and David were always one of the first to purchase tickets to help support the SAMF as they have been members for years. I asked David to send me some information on his dad's service, and a few photos of his dad for the *Warrior*. Here is what David provided:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

The RCN Air Branch was very special to my dad and he had many memories of his years of service, the majority of them at Shearwater. (Thus, the reason for the donation to the building fund.) He felt the air tech side of the Air Branch did not get sufficient recognition. Many of the stories he said were about or from pilots or air crew. Whenever there was something referencing or acknowledging the support function, he was sure to note it or point it out.

I am currently going through the past issues of the *Warrior* (and the *SAMF Newsletter* as it was originally known) which he kept. There are little annotations here and there on particular stories or the names of former colleagues. I am compiling a record of these as best I can. Some examples:

Summer 2013, pages 11-12

A Naval Air Maintainer's Recollections, by Frank Dowdall, is a story about Naval Air maintainers which provides some insight to the work Dad did.

The incident described in the first paragraph of the right column is about the sad crash of a Banshee on 31 May 1953. The story says "We were all out on the Tower hill watching..." Dad was one of those watching the event unfold. He related the story to me many times. It was very sobering for him, and his fellow mechanics, to see one of their beloved planes break apart and crash into McNab's Island in Halifax Harbour.

Summer 2014, pages 12-15 and 36-38

History and the Historic: Canadian Naval Aviation is a long article presenting the history of the RCN Air Branch. It was written by a friend of our family back then, Leo Pettipas. Of note are Dad's little marks on pages 14 and 15 where the article mentions the support trades. Again, he was extremely proud of their work ethic and accomplishments.

Winter 2014, pages 36-38

A Sense of Danger, by Allan Browne, is a story from the lower deck of the aircraft carrier. This article is notable because the photo on page 37, with the caption *Avenger in fog*, is none other than the aircraft to which Dad was assigned, per his margin notation.

I have put together an overview of his naval service using his original *Certificate of Service* and *History Sheet for Men of Naval Aviation* documents.

Dad entered the Royal Canadian Navy on November 6, 1946 at the age of 21. He signed on for a five-year stint which he renewed three more times. His final period was for two years and 150 days to bring him to 25 years of military service (as he also served previously in the RCAF and Army).

He came into the Navy, following his basic training one supposes, as an Air Mechanic (A) 2/c [second class]. This was on October 2, 1948.

He became professionally qualified for Able Seaman (trade) on February 11, 1949 and was promoted to that rank on the same day.

He was promoted to Petty Officer 2nd Class on January 15, 1951. Exactly three years later, on January 15, 1954, he was promoted to Petty Officer 1st Class.

His final promotion was to Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class on December 1, 1965.

He was Honorably Discharged on April 1, 1969.

During his service, Dad was awarded:

- November 19, 1949 – Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, War Metal 1939-45.
- October 16, 1956 – Canadian Forces Decoration.
- October 16, 1966 – First clasp to the Canadian Forces Decoration.

Dad was a proud member of the CNAG, once serving as president of the Ottawa Lt. Hampton Gray Chapter when the national reunion was held in Ottawa. In his later years, my brother Eric and I often accompanied him to various military events like receptions, presentations, memorials and such. Here are some photos from my personal collection:







IN THE DELTA

BALDWIN Peter	May 2021
COCKERNILL Dennis	Unknown
GUATTO Dolfo (Al)	May 2021
GRAY James (Jim)	Feb 2021
KENNEDY John (Jake)	Apr 2021
LENIHAN George	Apr 2021
MACLEAN Robert C.	Jan 2021
MACASKILL Neil (Mac)	June 2021
MITCHELL Marvin Earl	Aug 2020
MONTGOMERY George Barry	May 2021
MUIR, Jean Gwendoline	Aug 2020
NEARING, Thomas Edgar	Mar 2021
PORTER Tim	Apr 2021
SMITH Donald William (Smitty)	June 2021
SIMLETT Thomas Frederick (Fred)	June 2021
WHITE Frederick (Ted) Andrew Webster	June 2021

Remembrance

*You can shed tears that he is gone,
or you can smile because he has lived.*

*You can close your eyes
and pray that he'll come back,
or you can open your eyes
and see all he has left.*

*Your heart can be empty
because you can't see him,
or you can be full of
the love you shared.*

*You can turn your back on tomorrow
and live yesterday, or you
can be happy for tomorrow
because of yesterday.*

*You can remember him
and only that he's gone,
or you can cherish
his memory and let it live on.*

*You can cry and close your mind,
be empty and turn your back,*

*or you can do
what he'd want:*

*Smile, Open Your Eyes,
Love and Go on.*

Author Unknown

We will remember them



On April 29th 2020, a CH148 call sign STALKER crashed into the Ionian Sea off the coast of Greece, killing the four crew members and two passengers onboard. STALKER was deployed with HMCS FREDERICTON on OPERATION REASSURANCE.

As the Detachment Commander onboard FREDERICTON, this tragedy hit me very hard as I lost good friends that day. From half way around the world as we continued our search effort to find the remains of our fallen or any part of the aircraft that could help in our understanding of what happen, we did not feel alone as we know we had our community, our province, and our country behind us. After the crash was made public, an amazing outpour of support came from our community and the 12 Wing entrance became an impromptu memorial for the 6 lives lost. With COVID restrictions being in place, we were unable to properly honour the return of our fallen in May 2020 so we decided to wait a year hoping that the restrictions would have been lifted by then. We chose the 1st anniversary date as our ceremony date and commenced a planning cycle that included four components.

First, we needed to preserve the artifacts that were laid at 12 Wing entrance impromptu memorial. With fall around the corner, we needed to act before the winter could get its claws on the flowers, teddy bears, and art work that people from the community gave in support of the families. A great deal of effort was made by members of 12 Wing and the Shearwater Aviation Museum to collect, log, and clean all the artefacts. Then, a permanent display was created inside the museum to make sure this would never be forgotten. Additional pieces of artwork donated to the museum are also displayed in this section of the museum.

Second, we needed to create a monument that would withstand the rough Nova Scotian weather and forever tell the story of our 6 fallen. The artistic creation of Sargent Scott Galbraith from 423(MH) Squadron (who was also on HMCS FREDERICTON at the moment of the crash) took the form of a 4 feet tall obelisk made from black granite. The obelisk has 6 sides, one for each member where their names, role, birthplaces, and date of birth and death were engraved to immortalize their memory. An obelisk shape was chosen for this monument as this was one of the earliest forms of monument erected to commemorate those who have passed. Six maple leaves were added, as these symbols have followed our fallen in many forms. The Stalker image on the top of the monument was worn proudly by the crew of the HMCS Fredericton. The shoulder of the monument was cut at an angle of 38 degrees to represent the latitude and the monument has 18 points total to represent

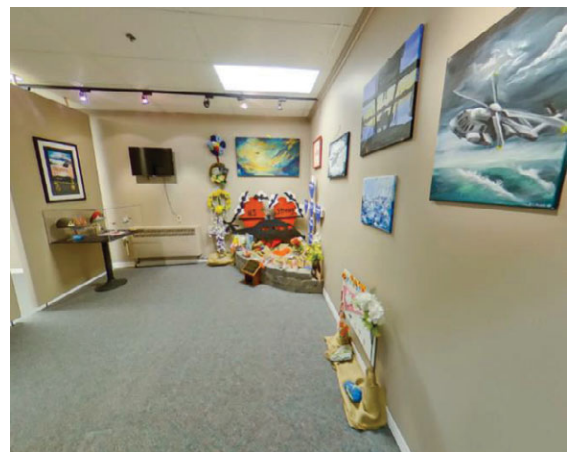
18 degrees of longitude of the crash. The top of each side are 8 inches across and the base is 22 inches across, representing the tail number of STALKER 822.

The third task we took was creation of a memorial patch for military members to wear in the period leading up to the anniversary date. Taking inspiration on the poppy that is worn yearly to remember those who made sacrifices for our country, we wanted to create a meaningful memento to be worn for a short define period that would convey a meaning of common loss, grief, and support felt by all those affected by the tragedy. It was once again the artistic genius of Sgt Galbraith that gave us the “Secure Flying Station” patch. The patch is round to give the perspective of an observer looking through a hangar door porthole. The thick black edge at the bottom signifies the black mourning band, donned by individuals looking to honour the life of those lost. The sunset represents the actual weather at the time of the accident, and how full of colour the sky was at sunset. The “Secure Flying Stations” vice “Stand Down Flying Stations” refers to the fact that the ship will not recover STALKER. This concept is compounded by the fact that the aircraft is in the hover with wheels up, and the bear trap is not on the flight deck.

Our final task was to organize the 1-year anniversary ceremony. With COVID-19 restrictions fluctuating with the status of the global pandemic, many iterations of the plans were created, from a big, open to the public, ceremony to a virtual-only version. Unfortunately, Nova Scotia hit its third wave of the pandemic at the end of April 2021 and we had no choice but to go with the virtual format. A video was created in record time to show the unveiling of the monument, a few words from the commander of 1 Canadian Air Division, and an emotional performance of “Farewell Nova Scotia” from the 12 Wing Pipes & Drums.

The loss of the crew and passengers of STALKER will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Their love for aviation, great camaraderie, and dedication towards the service of their country will remain an inspiration for me and I can only hope that we did them justice by honoring their memory the way we did despite all the challenges.

Major Simon Rocheleau
Deputy Commanding Officer 423(MH) Sqn, 12 Wing Shearwater
Canadian Armed Force





Sgt Scott Galbraith and PO2 Matt Carroll

OBSERVERS IN THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Leo Pettipas
Winnipeg, Manitoba

**“The time has come,” the walrus said,
“To talk of many things.
Of Lookers and Observer’s Mates,
Who once wore Navy wings.”**

(with apologies to Lewis Carroll)

“Few things are simpler,” wrote an anonymous scribe in the 1950s, “than getting lost in the air.” Getting lost in the air could produce any number of undesirable consequences for the military airman: it could compromise his combat mission by denying him access to the intended target. Or it could lead to a crash brought on by fuel starvation. Or it could result in unintended violation of unfriendly airspace and being shot down by enemy fighters or anti-aircraft fire.

To avoid such calamities, good navigation has always been of particular importance in times of armed conflict – so much so that it had a direct bearing on the philosophy of carrier-borne fighter design in Great Britain between the First and Second World Wars. Limited-range R/T communications capability and lack of appropriate homing devices discouraged the operation of single-seat fighters far from aircraft carriers.

A partial solution to the problem was made good by adding a second crew member. He was a navigator *cum* communications specialist -- in short, an Observer (aka “Looker”), equipped with homing instruments and a wireless telegraphy (W/T) set whereby contact with the carrier or a land base could be maintained.

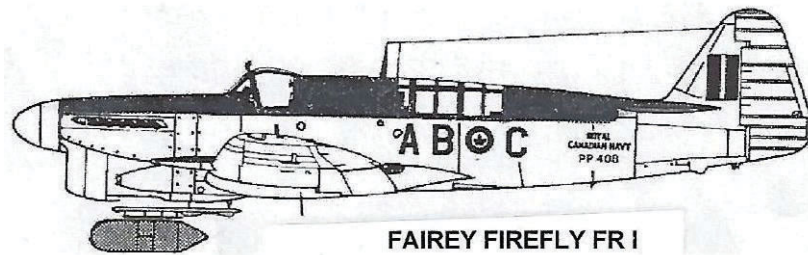
In this context, to “navigate” meant to plan and guide the movement and course of your aircraft. When operating over water, the airborne Observer had to find his way about without the aid of landmarks – hard to find on the open sea. He required skill and confidence in bringing his Pilot into visual or electronic contact with the enemy and, by providing a course to steer, in guiding him back, day or night, to the carrier which in all likelihood was far removed from where it was at the time of take-off. When aerial reconnaissance in search of the enemy was called for, the Observer’s presence aboard the aircraft had the added benefit of an additional pair of eyes.

The two-seat fighter configuration exacted a penalty in terms of speed and maneuverability, so during the Second World War the Royal Navy did make abundant and widespread use of nimbler single-seat fighters. Nonetheless, the two-man crew concept, best expressed in the Fairey Fulmar and its successor the two-seat Fairey Firefly, was retained to escort strike aircraft and to drive off enemy shadows and reconnaissance aircraft – tasks that did not necessarily require great speed and agility.

With the addition of ASH air-to-surface homing radar and an F.24 camera, the Firefly emerged as a “fighter-reconnaissance” (FR) vehicle with anti-shipping, and limited anti-submarine capability, during the latter half of the Second World War. In addition, three-seat carrier-borne torpedo-bomber-reconnaissance (TBR) types like the Swordfish, Albacore, Avenger, and Barracuda also carried Observers.

During the summer of 1945, hitherto decommissioned 825 and 826 Royal Navy squadrons were reactivated with the intention of manning them with Canadian air- and ground-crews as part of the RCN’s immediate post-war establishment. Originally, both squadrons were equipped with the three-seat Fairey Barracuda Mk II. In addition to the Pilot and Observer, the Barracuda also carried a Telegraphist Air Gunner (TAG).

The name notwithstanding, the TAG was able to devote the lion’s share of his time to communications. The Observer could then focus his attention on navigation, both transit and tactical. However, by the time the two squadrons officially became Canadian in early 1946, their Barracudas had been replaced by Firefly FR Is. Although the two-seat Firefly was arguably a better aeroplane in some respects, its introduction at the expense of a three-seater was an unfortunate step backwards for reasons that will be explained below.



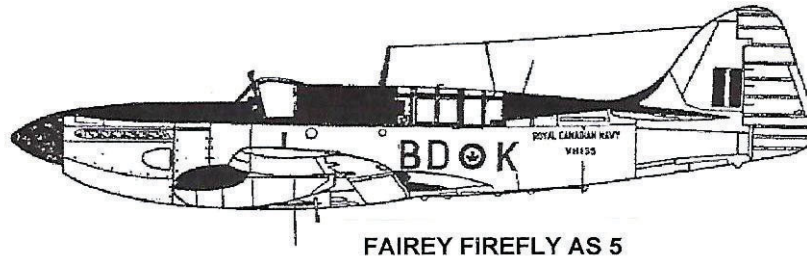
In 1948, the Firefly FR I was supplemented by the up-rated Firefly FR Mk IV, but this did not alter the two-man crew structure. The Observer was still responsible for high-frequency (HF) communications, navigation, and operation of the radar. In February of 1949, the Navy took delivery of the specialised anti-submarine version of the Firefly, the AS 5 which, in addition to the above-mentioned equipment and attendant tasks of its fighter-reconnaissance predecessors, carried sonobuoys and a sonobuoy receiver, the overall handling and operation of which was also the responsibility of the overworked Observer.

The sonobuoy was a small floating transmitter beneath which a hydrophone was suspended on a length of cable. The whole was encased in a cylinder that was dropped from an aircraft. The suspended hydrophone picked up underwater sounds and forwarded them to the transmitter, which in turn relayed them to the Observer via the radio receiver in his cockpit. The early post-war sonobuoys could pick up submarine cavitation’s as far as three miles away under the right conditions.

The early sonobuoys were limited by the fact that they were passive and “non-directional,” that is, they could listen only and could not provide an indication of the direction from which the noises were emanating. This shortcoming was dealt with by laying a pattern of colour-coded marker buoys in the area of known or suspected submarine activity. The location of each buoy was usually marked by a smoke float by day or a flame float by night, forming a well-defined

“box” pattern, with a sonobuoy in the middle of the box. The buoy nearest the submarine emitted the loudest signal, thereby indicating the approximate position of the sub.

The acquisition of the Fairey Firefly AS 5 was concurrent with the RCN’s assumption, under the aegis of the newly-established NATO, of a specialist ASW role in which the Service played



so heavily a part (albeit without its own air arm) during the late world war. In the spring of 1949, twelve RCN Pilots and Observers attended a five-week course in San Diego, California in the operation of sonobuoy equipment. Additionally, a three-week course in ASW doctrine and tactics was provided at the Royal Navy’s Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School at Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Back in mid-May of 1947, No. 1 Training Air Group (1 TAG) had been formed at *RCAF Station Dartmouth* wherein aspiring Observers could receive instruction in communications and navigation. The prime equipment of the flying phases of the course comprised a brace of Anson Mk Vs, fitted with ATR-11 radio equipment, that had been acquired from the RCAF. In addition, Pilots and first-line Firefly FR I aircraft of 826 Squadron were occasionally involved in the training exercises as well.



An RCN Anson V radio and navigational trainer, 1949. Jack McNulty photo.

Navigation from the back seat of a carrier-based aircraft was almost exclusively of the “dead reckoning” type, requiring the integration of aircraft course and speed, and the effect of wind.

Aircraft course and speed were readily available from aircraft instruments, but factoring in wind speed and direction was sometimes very tricky.

Thus, the syllabus of 1 TAG included wind-finding exercises that involved dropping a smoke float into the water and measuring the drift angles while flying over it on three different headings at least 60° to each other. Both the Firefly and the succeeding Avenger were equipped with a drift sight for this purpose. From this, the trainee could calculate a wind on his hand-held navigation computer.

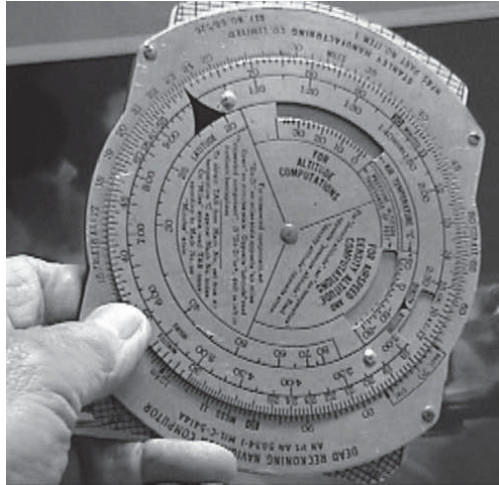
Again, the smoke floats were for checking drift over water by day, and the flame floats were used for the same purpose at night. The readings helped the Observer compensate for wind-induced course and ground-speed deviance. A good look at the ocean surface by a practiced eye would also provide a pretty good indication of wind speed and direction at low altitudes at which ASW aircraft normally operated.



The object in the sailor's hands is a Felsenthal air navigation plotting board well familiar to RCN Observers. DND photo.

A key electronic homing system carried in the Fireflies of the early post-war years was the ZBX receiver that picked up Morse code transmissions from the carrier. The aircraft's receiver indicated to the Observer which compass course the Pilot needed to follow in order to get the aircraft back to the ship. In his memoirs, former Firefly Pilot Roy de Nevers pointed out that ZBX allowed the Observer to determine if the aircraft was heading toward, or away from, the ship – a good thing to know if one's fuel supply was nearing exhaustion and nocturnal fog was closing in!

The airborne crew of a carrier-based aircraft had to keep tabs on their own position as well as that of their home vessel. The navigational-plotting “Bigsworth board” allowed the Observer to keep track of the movements of both ship and aircraft, and to calculate the return course to the



Example of a Dalton dead reckoning computer. Al Whalley photo.

ship. Another navigational aid was the Dalton hand-held dead-reckoning computer, a slide-rule-type instrument that could be used for virtually all navigational calculations.

As it turned out, the endeavour to train Observers at *Dartmouth* proved to be too ambitious for the fledgling air arm so early in its existence, lacking as it did sufficient aircraft to get the job done. So, in early 1949, it was determined that the training of Regular Service Observers would be taken on by the Royal Navy, in whose hands it remained for the next several years (of which more below). For a very good summary of the RN Observer-training programme in the early 1950s, see Cal Smith’s first-hand account in the Spring 2021 edition of *Warrior*.

That is not to say that such training ceased altogether at the *Dartmouth* air station: in 1951 the Navy put in place a programme for RCN Reserve cadets wherein they could obtain Observer-trade instruction at the Observer’s Mates School.

The cadet programme was comprehensive, incorporating in each individual’s training both Observer and Observer’s Mate subject matter. This strategy ensured that the right hand knew what the left hand was doing even though the eventual product was intended to be an Observer specialist. Navigation and, secondarily, communications were paramount. During the initial hours in the flying phase, carried out in the Ansons, the trainees worked alternately in pairs – one as an Observer, the other, an OM. Map-reading, fixing, and cross-country and cross-water navigation exercises (NAVEXES) in Avengers, keeping in continuous radio contact with the base throughout, were the order of the day.



Cadets learning the details of the Bigsworth navigational plotting board. DND photo.



Perspex blister fitted to an Avenger AS 3 Mk 1 to assist in Observer cadet training. DND photos.

Further to Avengers: the Fairey Firefly AS 5 had, to the RCN, proven to be very poorly suited to ASW. No sooner had it been taken on strength in early 1949 when the Navy was casting about for a replacement. The machine of choice was the Grumman TBM Avenger, an American-designed and -manufactured torpedo bomber of Second World War vintage. In total, Canada purchased 125 gently-used Avengers from the United States government in the early 1950s. The majority of them (all but eight) were originally TBM-3Es that were subsequently converted by Fairey Aviation of Canada to three-seat anti-submarine search-and-strike configuration. The eight exceptions were unarmed TBM-3W2 "Guppy" airborne early warning (AEW) flying radar stations, although these too, with their powerful APS-20 radar, could be applied to very good effect in the detection of air-breathing submarine snorkels.

The basic Canadian ASW type (i.e., not including the TBM-3W2 Guppies) comprised four variants -- AS 3 Mk 1, AS 3 Mk 2, AS 3M, and AS 3M2. Of these, only the AS 3 Mk 1s and 3Ms, along with the as-delivered TBM-3W2s, equipped the front-line squadrons.



An Observer in his station aboard an Avenger AS 3 Mk 1, facing aft. DND photo.

Structurally, the AS 3 Mk 1, by far the most numerous of the four Canadian-reconfigured front-line variants differed from the original, unmodified TBM-3Es in one obvious respect -- the ball turret was replaced by a rearward extension of the glasshouse canopy that housed those components of the Observer's equipment ("black boxes") that were installed internally within the aircraft. The RCN/Fairey Avenger conversion programme is noteworthy in that Observers were able to make direct input into the design of their own cockpit layout and then see it materialize at the factory.

The turret-turning mechanism was retained in the resulting Observer's station that was fitted with a seat that rotated through a 360-degree radius. This permitted the forward-facing Observer, simply by turning the seat 180 degrees, to operate the AN/APS-4 radar gear -- junction box, control panel, and indicator unit (scope) -- that were located directly aft of the seat. Adjacent to this radar equipment was a flight instrument panel and the controls for the sonobuoy receiver.

In the most basic of terms, then, the Avenger crew structure now comprised a Pilot, a Navigator (Observer), and a Communicator (Observer's Mate). To this team fell the pursuit of three tactical objectives: Find, Fix, and Strike, in that order; and in the first two of these the Observer well and truly came into his own. Submarines were "found" via visual surveillance and by radar, and they were "fixed" (pin-pointed) with the aid of sonobuoys that were later supplemented, in the AS 3M, with a magnetic anomaly detector.

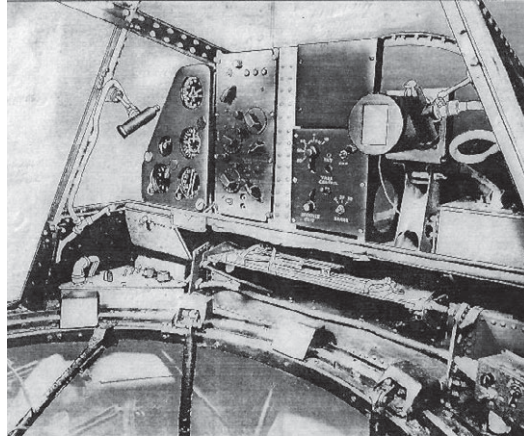
The Guppy version of the Avenger is noteworthy here because the normal crew structure included two Observers rather than just one. The reason for this was crew fatigue; radar operators found that after an hour of watching the screen their “Mark 1 eyeballs” were rotating in time with the strobe and they had to pull their eyes away from the scope and rest them.

It was the OM’s job to use the drift sight, and to drop smoke and flame floats and sonobuoys, but it was the Observer’s role to order these actions at the right times and places. Of course, in the Fireflies the Observer was expected to execute all of these functions himself! As the tactical commander of the aircraft, the Observer kept his navigation plot, made decisions on when and where to go, and ordered localization to close in on a submarine. He ordered the deployment of sonobuoys and assessed the noise emanating therefrom, in consideration of which he kept track of the target, calling out the range and any course changes if/as necessary.

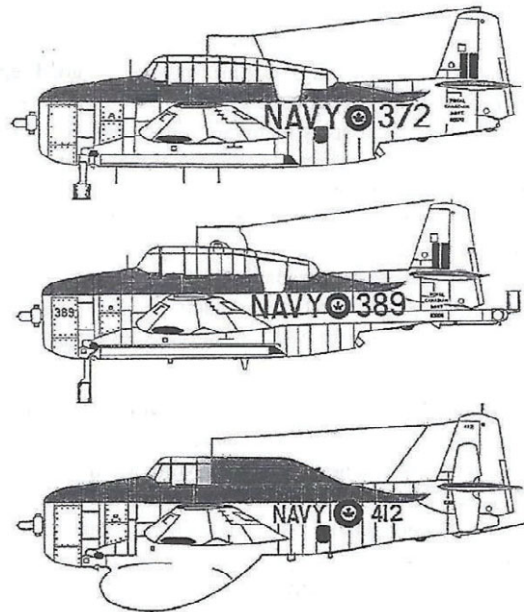
The upgrading of navigation aids in the AS 3 Mk 1 -- and in the AS 3M that succeeded it -- did not evolve much beyond the addition of an ADF, i.e., an automatic homing and direction-finding instrument that could utilize the transmissions of commercial broadcast stations, radio-range stations, and HF radio beacons.

The advent of the TBM-3W2 Guppy brought with it coordinated two-plane hunter-killer tactics and teamwork. The Guppy functioned as an unarmed hunter and control aircraft, while the AS 3 Mk 1 or AS 3M aircraft was the weapons-equipped killer (“Scrapper”). The exercise began with the two planes flying in loose formation as the Guppy scanned the seascape from a distance with its powerful, long-range radar operated by the Observer in the back seat. His objective was to detect tell-tale signs of, if not a fully-surfaced submarine, at least a snorkel or even a periscope. These activities comprised the aforementioned search and “finding” phases of the tactical sequence. At this time, the Scrapper remained passive (“silent”), not emanating any electronic signals until, under the control of the Guppy Observer, it was above the target. The reason for the silent approach was to ensure that the sub would not be able to detect, with its ECM, radar signals from the approaching aircraft.

In the event of a contact, the Scrapper was directed toward the target by the Guppy’s Observer. When the Scrapper was in the right position relative to that of the sub, the Guppy ordered it to activate its short-range APS-4 radar. In so doing, the Scrapper entered the “fixing” phase and its Pilot was soon in a position to attack (“strike”) the intruder with rocket projectiles, depth-charges, or a homing torpedo. If the submarine sought to evade the attack by diving beneath the surface, the attacking aircraft could sow a sonobuoy pattern or activate its magnetic anomaly detector to track the sub, and then destroy it.



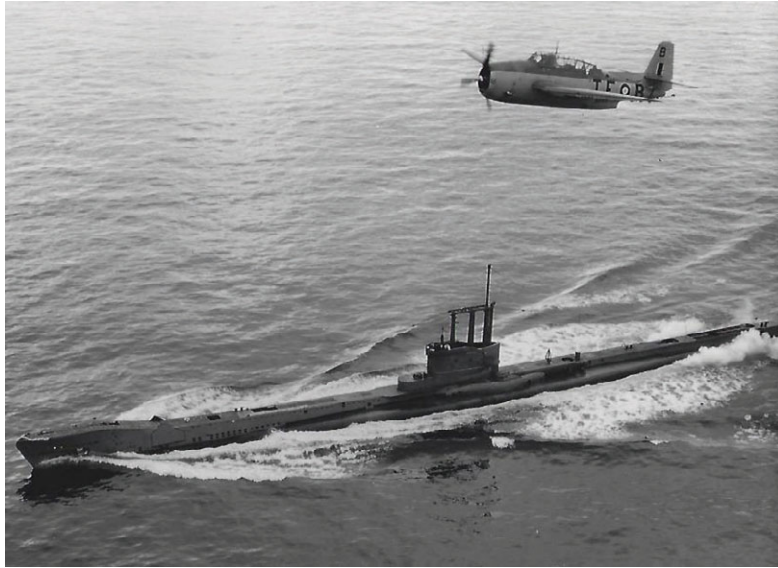
Observer's boudoir in an Avenger AS 3 Mk 1, facing aft. The round object in the upper right quarter is the A/N APS-4 radar indicator; the black box directly to the left of it is the radar control unit. DND photo.



The Avenger variants that equipped the first-line ASW squadrons in the RCN: top – AS 3 Mk 1; middle – AS 3M; bottom TBM-3W2.

In October 1952, staff of the Royal Navy's Observer School arrived from the UK to help form the first NATO Air Observer's course in the Observer School at *Shearwater* which, since the spring of 1949 and except for the Naval Reserve cadets, had been tasked solely with the training of Observer's Mates. For the next three years, training of RCN and RN Observers took place at the air station. For this work, Avengers and Pilots were provided by FRU 743, soon to be re-designated VU 32.

By the summer of 1956, the all-Avenger VU 32 squadron was equipped with twelve aircraft, and the bulk of its work comprised training of both British and Canadian Observers and Canadian-only Observer's Mates. Prominent "targets" were the long-suffering Sambro lightship (a Coast Guard vessel moored in the approaches of Halifax Harbour) and units of the Royal Navy's 6th Submarine Squadron that was based in Halifax to participate in training aircrews in anti-submarine warfare.



RN submarines were no strangers to RCN aircrew instructors and trainees. This photo was taken in December 1951 when the Observer's Mates School was the only act in town. The submarine is HMS Artful. DND photo.

The *Shearwater*-sited Observer School was destined not to last. Over the three-year history of the program (it commenced in January 1953), seventy-five men passed through the school, one-third of whom were Canadians. However, the impending demise of the Avenger as the Navy's première first-line ASW aircraft brought with it the end of the air Observer trade classification in the RCN. The anticipated introduction of the CS2F Tracker engendered different aircrew manning requirements, and the new airborne ASW sensors greatly reduced the need for an officer on board with the original specialized expertise.

It became more expedient and cost-effective to train a Pilot in the appropriate sea navigation skills along with the associated duties of a Co-pilot, and to allocate the back-seat crewmen (OMs) the tasks of operating the radar and various new sensors. The last students of the *Shearwater* Observer training programme – five RN and two RCN -- graduated on 13 January 1956 and readied themselves for departure for the final phase of their training at *RNAS Eglinton*, Northern Ireland. With that, the Observer trade *per se* disappeared from the RCN. The new crew complement now comprised two Pilots and two Observer's Mates.

Veterans Corner Shout Out

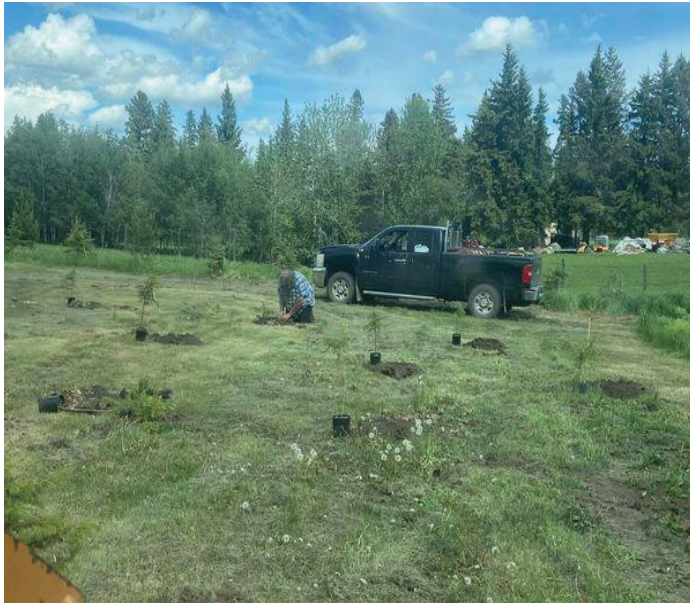
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