



## SAM FOUNDATION NEWS



ISSUE #3/95

DECEMBER 1995

### *Season's Greetings*

## Feds to match funds for aviation museum

**ANDREA NEMETZ**  
Staff Reporter

At dusk in May of 1941, 15 biplanes took off on a next-to-impossible mission to attack the German battleship Bismarck.

Despite poor weather, the slow-moving Fairey Swordfish severely damaged the steering gear of the Bismarck, enabling the British Naval force to deliver the coup-de-grace the next day.

Today there are only three of the historic airplanes left, and one is at Shearwater Aviation Museum, founded in 1978.

Officials hope to build on exhibits like the Fairey Swordfish to turn the museum into a world-class tourist attraction.

That dream was given a shot in the arm Monday, when Dartmouth MP Ron MacDonald announced that Ottawa would provide up to \$2.25 million to match funds raised by the volunteer Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation in its \$4.5-million, multi-year campaign.

Harry Porter, chairman of the fund-raising committee, said a 20,000-square-foot addition would be attached to the existing 13,500-square-foot building.

The museum has 12 planes and 6,000 exhibits including flags, uniforms, medals, paintings and a large number of historical documents.

The material dates from the founding of Shearwater, around 1918, when the U.S. Naval Flying Corps established a base during the First World War. The exhibits continue up to modern peacekeeping activities in the Gulf War.

The facility is the only maritime aviation museum in Canada, said Doug Peacocke, past-president of the aviation museum foundation.

"I'm very excited about the announcement, because it sends a signal to all Canadians that the government has considerable respect for our history. Museums are an important feature of every community."

Mr. MacDonald agrees.

"When you have an aviation museum, it's been proven you get a substantial number of visitors and dollars generated," the MP said after a news conference at the museum.

While the museum expansion is a stand-alone project, it also ties in nicely with a redevelopment of the Eastern Passage wharf area.

THE MAIL-STAR Tuesday, August 29, 1995

## SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION

INTRODUCING COL(RET'D) FRANK WILLIS  
NEW SAMF PRESIDENT

Frank joined the RCN in 1952. He trained as a Midshipman (Air) in HMCS Cornwallis and HMCS Quebec, thence to the RCAF for pilot training on Harvards and T-33's. Operational training was in UK on Seahawks and Vampires.

Between 1955 to 62, Frank served operationally in Shearwater flying T-33's, Expeditors and some Seafury time. Bonaventure in Banshees. From 62 - 64 he flew Trackers on proficiency while serving in HMCS Outremont for a watchkeeping qual.

1964 - 66: HU 21 as XO flying HTLs, H04S, and Seakings.

1966 - 72: Staff College in Toronto followed by a staff tour in Ottawa.

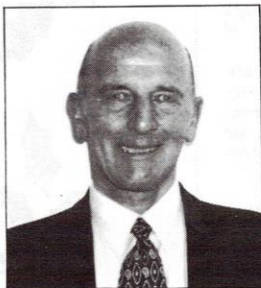
1972 - 74: CO HS-50.

1975 - 81: MARCOM and MAG HQ

1981 - 88: Bonn and Rome in staff duties.

1989: Retired in the rank of Colonel (CF).  
Resides in Dartmouth, NS, with wife Mona,  
several children and grandchildren.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



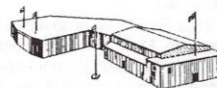
As the new SAMF President, let me first say how honoured I am to have been asked to take on this vital job. I know I have big shoes to fill but I know I can depend upon the same support and teamwork enjoyed by my predecessor, Doug Peacocke.

Secondly, congratulations to all on the official opening of the new SAM and the marvellous funding breakthrough announced on our cover page. What a great Christmas present! None of this could have happened without the contributions of each and every SAMF member, the men and women of 12 Wing, past and present, and all our volunteers and supporters. By demonstrating our individual commitment to the project, we were able to win the trust and support of our politicians who, in turn, came through for us in spades. My first request from the President's chair is to ask everyone to continue their personal commitment to the SAM.



Shown above is the Hon Ron MacDonald MP, announcing federal fund-matching support for the SAM. Left to right are: Adm Harry Porter, John Eden CNAG, Doug Peacocke, Mr MacDonald MP, Frank Willis, and Col John Cody, retiring 12 Wing Commander.

We all know what we want to accomplish in Phases 2 and 3 so I need not comment further. But let me say a few words about the way ahead. The matching funds announced by our MP, Ron MacDonald, are conditional upon us proving we can succeed without coming back for additional help once we are up and running. We are providing this proof through a marketing study and business plan. These documents are nearing completion and a team is busy refining design, cost and time parameters for the expansion. Others are working on related issues including outfitting, coordination, communications, research, artifact acquisition and restorations. A thousand and one other tasks remain to be more fully defined and accomplished.



Because of our fortunate new circumstances, it is important that we build and open the new museum as quickly as possible.

This, of course, means that our fundraising effort must be tackled with as much new energy and zeal as we can bring to it. We are therefore revising our initial fundraising strategy to reflect our new situation, and I will keep everyone informed through the newsletter as things progress.

While the foregoing indicates we are shifting gears somewhat, let me assure everyone we will not select a pace that will cause us to stumble or even become short of breath. Nor has there been any change to our original goal, "The construction of an appropriate facility for the Shearwater Aviation Museum." As we look back to what we've already accomplished, and add to that our expectations of corporate support, we can all be confident of success.

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President (Con't)

A final word - and my second request. As we go forth seeking business and corporate support, our task will be infinitely more easy if we can demonstrate to potential donors that our own commitment is even stronger now than it was in the beginning. I would therefore ask everyone to dig a bit more deeply for those extra bucks (all tax deductible) and to persuade every friend, relative and acquaintance to join us.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Frank Willis  
President, SAMF

#### PRESENTATIONS

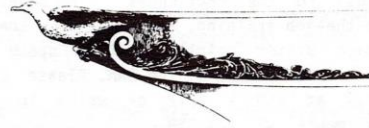
At the October '95 CNAG reunion in Edmonton, the SAM received a beautiful framed print of a painting by Ray Honisett, showing HMAS SYDNEY launching Seafuries in Korean waters during a 1951 - 52 deployment. It was brought from Australia by David Mowat and presented at the reunion to Bud MacLean.

Bud later handed the print to Col Mark Aruja, the Wing Commander SHEARWATER, during a formal series of presentations at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. It will be displayed in a central place to remind visitors of Australia's contribution during the Korean war, and of our similar histories in carrier operations. It will also show the close links developing between our two museums, which share the common goal of preserving each country's maritime aviation heritage.



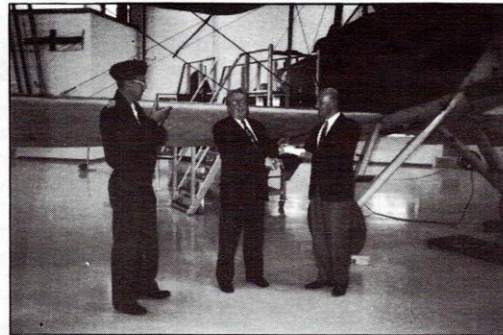
The inscription on the frame reads, "Presented to the Shearwater Aviation Museum by Bob 'Windy' Geale and David Mowat on behalf of the Australian Naval Aviation Museum."

Also presented to Col Aruja were the WW 1 medals of "Spider" Sheard's father, donated by Spider at the reunion. One of the medals has "HMCS Shearwater" etched on the obverse, showing that Mr E. Sheard had served in this historic warship, which later gave base Shearwater (and the museum) its name.

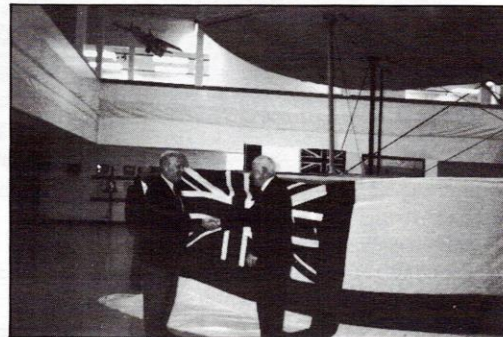


Figurehead from HMS/HMCS Shearwater.

George Hotham and Bill Johnson were again out in front when yet another large check, representing their latest fundraising results, was handed by Bud to our new President, Frank Willis.



Completing the event was the donation-on-loan by Bob Stewart of a White Ensign, made of bunting and measuring over 25 feet in length. Bob was given this beauty on completing a pilot exchange tour in HMS ILLUSTRIOUS. Bob and his family are strong supporters of the SAM. Bob's father, John Marshall Stewart, was lost in a Seafire mid-air collision over Halifax Harbour in 1948. Bob is a Venture grad. He flew Trackers in VS-880, Argus in VP-405, Seakings in HS-443 and 814 Sqn in HERMES and ILLUSTRIOUS.





### **From The Secretary**

**HELP WANTED :** A volunteer to serve as Secretary of the Foundation commencing on or before the next Annual General Meeting. No special skills required. **REMUNERATION** - nil; **CHALLENGES** - many; **REWARDS** - equal to the challenges. I am prepared to provide on-the-job training, an Apple IIC computer and an Image Writer printer. Office space complete with desk is available at the SAM. Please contact Dennis Shaw at 469 - 2212 or write to SAMF, Box 577, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 3Y9.

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS:** There has been a significant increase in memorial donations during the past year, over \$1,200 since 1 Jan 95. These gestures represent a lasting memorial to relatives or friends who have passed on because, through the donations, their memories become permanently linked to their maritime air heritage via the SAM. All donations are tax deductible.

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:** At our '95 AGM, Doug Peacocke noted that almost all members of his vast "clan" have become members of the Foundation, and he challenged others to do likewise. Pat Williamson, Whitey's better half, has already accepted the challenge and enrolled Susan, Shelley and Steven. With Christmas close at hand, may I suggest that membership in the Foundation for friends and family will make a fine gift; tax deductible, sincere, convenient and in just the right price range.



George Hotham and Bill Johnson at the '95 AGM presenting the Swordfish painting donated by the CNAG TRACKER Chapter (Toronto).

**SAMF GOLF:** My very first comment on this outstanding event is to thank as warmly as possible the management and members of the Hartlen Point Golf Club for allowing us the use of their facility. Their generosity made possible the

tournament's success which, this year, was better and bigger than ever. Thanks go to SIAS and our many corporate sponsors including Lockheed Canada and MT&T Mobility as the major contributors, with support from Moosehead Breweries, Litton Systems Canada, Air Nova, Computing Devices of Canada, Survival Systems, Allied Signal Aerospace, IMP Group, Boyne Clarke, Indal Technologies, Pilots Pub, Bell Helicopter Textron, Access Cable TV, and Carlow Security. If I have missed any of the sponsors I apologize. Special thanks, of course, to the many golfers, the volunteers who braved unusual gale force winds to be there, and the Registration Desk workers; also, many thanks to Denny Shaw for entertaining us at the follow-up luncheon, and particularly the committee volunteers chaired by Maj Ken Whitehead. Together, the time and treasure contributed by everybody netted \$11,000 for the Foundation. With Federal fund-matching, this translates to \$22,000! BRAVO ZULU!



Bill Farrell, Pat Whitby and Alec Fox at the 4 Aug 95 SAM official opening. Check out the new sign.

**CNAG:** The members of the CNAG have yet again proven themselves among our greatest supporters. Atlantic, Tracker, Seafury, Swordfish and Banshee chapters have all contributed to the Crew Room in SAM. Adding to CNAG's previous generosity, additional funds have come in from the Florida reunion (\$460), and Tracker Chapter Pubs, aka Bill Johnson and George Hotham, have again raised a substantial sum (\$1,000) through their traveling airshow booth. Canavair 50, although not a CNAG function per se, was organized by CNAG members and has contributed significantly to both SAM and SAMF through attendance, and new members. As a result of a raffle of a commemorative plate donated by Tom Tonks, and a brooch and pin donated by Don Rubin, another \$488 was raised for the SAM. Last but not least we have recently learned that through the generosity of Hampton Gray VC Chapter, 140 copies of "Certified Serviceable", the excellent story of the aircraft maintainers published by the CNATH Project Team, have been donated to SAMF for sale through the SAM gift shop.

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### SAM GENERAL MANAGER

Over 400 members and guests were present at the SAM on 4 August to witness Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor, the Hon J. James Kinley CD, officially open the new museum. As me auld mither would say, "Twas a glorious grand affair!".

Among those gathered were many familiar faces from the past plus federal, provincial and municipal officials, including the area MP, Mr Ron MacDonald. Mr MacDonald subsequently made the marvellous announcement of financial support shown on Page 1.

Following the official opening, museum daily operations have grown steadily with over 3,000 visitors and several groups stopping by in the first ten weeks. This augers well for the museum's future since, apart from media coverage of the opening ceremony, we have not yet launched a museum publicity campaign. Moreover, this early success convinces us more than ever that our expansion plans are fully achievable.

The gift shop, too, is showing great potential. Indeed, we could already use more space. The price list enclosed with this newsletter will give everyone a good idea of what's in stock. We've provided this list specifically to give readers an opportunity to do some 1995 Christmas shopping by mail. Eventually, an illustrated catalogue will be available, but that's a bit further down the road. Meanwhile, please tell us what items you would like

us to carry, including clear descriptions, photos or sketches if you have them, and addresses of suppliers where known.

We will be co-hosting a Christmas Fair in the SAM with the Shearwater Community Resource Centre (CRC) from 6 to 10 December. The CRC will be sponsoring the 4th annual Showcase of Opportunity during the Fair.

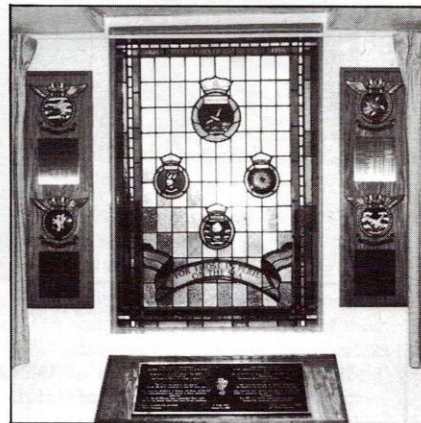
Volunteerism remains the key to our success. Gerry Brushett continues to do a great job scheduling museum guides and work parties. Many thanks to all who have given so freely of their time to bolster our slim staff resources. The ladies who put in long hours in the gift shop are especially important. John Benson, our part time shop manager, loudly sings the praises of these classy volunteers.

On a final note, please allow me to join the plea for members' financial support. Remember, the federal promise of funds for Phases 2 and 3 will kick in only if we raise money for the feds to match. This kind of opportunity will not come our way again.

Best wishes to all from Alma and I for a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



The SAM memorial window, donated by the CNAG, was dedicated at a special ceremony just prior to the official opening of the SAM on 4 August 1995. On each side are the crests of the RCN's 4 original squadrons, donated by the CO's who commanded them since 1945.



**SAM'S STAINED GLASS WINDOW**



**PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL**

The highlighted symbols on your address label indicate the last membership year for which we received your dues or donation. The membership year expires 31 August. If your label does not indicate Aug/96 please use this tearaway form and mail it with your cheque to: SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION, BOX 577, Dartmouth, NS CANADA, B2Y 3Y9.

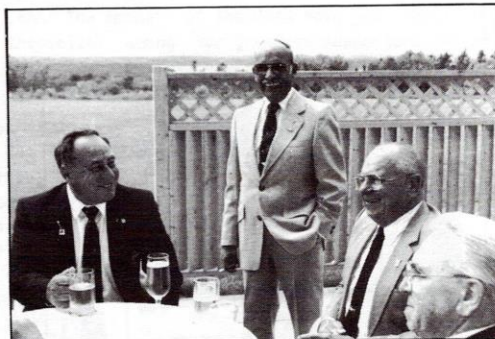
SAMF TEARAWAY MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

.....POSTAL CODE .....

Circle the appropriate membership category: Member: \$30/yr; Sustainer: \$100/yr; Patron: \$250/yr; Life: \$500.



These 4 photos show some of the SAMF supporters present for the 4 Aug 95 official opening, and for the receptions following.

Please address all correspondence to:  
**THE SECRETARY, SAMF**  
PO BOX 577  
DARTMOUTH, NS B2Y 3Y9



## SPIN ME A DIT

This good-natured yarn will remind all of us of equally humorous incidents from our own pasts. We all have warm memories of good friends like the "Admiral", who occasionally took life too seriously, and who later laughed at themselves when reflecting on the humour of it. We invite readers to send their yarns to the SAMF NEWS.

### DID WE REALLY WIN THE WAR?

If anyone asked me the abiding memory of my days as a TAG, I would have to say it was the day I helped to put most of the North Atlantic Fleet out of action. It was like this.....

We were on a communication flight in a Sea Otter and were asked to pick up an Admiral and fly him to the Clyde where most of his Fleet lay.

It was a cold, wet and windy day, so we dressed the old boy up in a borrowed helmet and flying jacket, stuck him in a seat and took off. As we flew towards Glasgow, I tried to impress him by twiddling dials and pretending to send messages, but I don't think he noticed as he had a tendency to nod off.

Suddenly the engine started to smoke and splutter before stopping completely. We started to lose height rapidly so I sent out an SOS, or whatever one does on such occasions. I got ready to get out quickly without an 'after you' to the Admiral, who was looking more than a little concerned.

Luckily, however, the Clyde appeared on the port side and the pilot turned, dived and managed to get it down in the middle of the sea lane. It was a near thing. Some of you may recall that landing an Otter on rough water can be likened to landing a dustbin on a gravel path. You feel the bottom is being ripped out and by the look on the Admiral's face he seemed to think the end was nigh.

As we came to a stop and I opened the hatch, he suddenly came to life. Pushing me aside and much like Corporal Jones in Dads Army, he said, "Don't panic - I'll take over."

Well, I wasn't exactly panicking, I had a Mae West and a rubber dinghy and he had nothing. I thought it was wiser not to point this out to him.

Looking out I could see we were drifting amidst a virtual forest of ships - big ones, small ones, some anchored but most coming and going within a few yards of us.

"It's alright", said the Admiral, "they are all my ships, I'll soon get some help."

He struggled to stand up as we pitched and tossed on the wind swept water. Waving his arms he

shouted to passing ships to throw us a line, or take us in tow.

Unfortunately for him, it was impossible for the ship's crews to know he was an Admiral, THEIR Admiral, for he was still wearing the flying jacket and helmet. With the usual RN courtesy to the FAA they just gave us the 'up you' gestures or called out 'get some time in', 'get stuffed', or other naval niceties as they sailed past.

By now, you may have guessed, that the Admiral was not very pleased. In fact he was hopping mad, if a man perched on a rocking plane can be so described. Such were the elements on that day that I had to hold his legs to prevent him falling into the water, as he waved his arms in a primitive form of semaphore.

"Gunner," he bawled, for we were not yet on first name terms. "Get the names of those bloody ships, I'll court martial every bloody Captain in the Clyde," as another frigate swept by hooting and cheering. "I'll have every last seaman on that Bloody boat on a Bloody charge before they eat their Bloody breakfast." Bloody it seems was his favourite adjective.

I started to offer helpful suggestions but he wouldn't listen. I didn't argue, you don't with angry Admirals, and anyway, I was beginning to enjoy myself.

"There goes that idiot Campbell," he howled as a destroyer swept past majestically.

He exploded, "Gunner, get your pad, put his name down. By the time I've finished with him he won't be ranked high enough to command a Bloody tug boat. And that moron Benson", this was the Captain of a frigate whose deck hands were particularly abusive, "he'll never go to sea again, Bloody wavy navy, part timer, put his name down". If he didn't know the Captain's name he called out the name of the ship.

The list steadily grew, Captains, Commanders, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, and even a passing submarine.

Now and again he would shout, "underline that one Gunner, he's a Bloody part timer." By now he was red in the face and his language was what you might call salty in the extreme.

Finally, a small boat manned by civilians came out of the dock area and towed us in. His humiliation was complete, there was murder in his eyes.

"Give me that list, Gunner," he said as he staggered ashore. "I'll hang the whole Bloody lot of them. Think of it", he screamed, "rescued by a boatload of Bloody civvies in the middle of my own fleet. I'll be the laughing stock of the whole sodding Navy."

It's not often that one gets taken into an Admiral's confidence, so with a bit of boot licking I said,



(SPIN ME A DIT - Continued)

"disgraceful, how dare they, and what is the Navy coming to?" I thought to myself, here comes a gong or at least a mention. But no, he was more interested in taking things away from Captains than giving them to heroic TAG's.

As he took off his flying gear, enough gold braid was exposed to frighten the entire Navy and I began to regret that I hadn't added my CO's name to the list. I had a score to settle with him.

Looking at the Admiral's departing figure, I didn't hold out much hope for the poor devils on that list.

I never did get a medal for that days work and I never did meet another Admiral in the course of duty; but a week later, when back at base, I noticed a disgruntled matelot cleaning out the heads who looked suspiciously like a certain Captain of a passing frigate.

Of course, I may have been mistaken.

\* *Eddie Mortlock*

**CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CAHS)** Has been formed in Halifax and is welcoming Charter members. CHAS is a non profit organization operating under a federal charter. Six chapters are now open between Vancouver and Halifax. The nearest is in Ottawa. The main objectives are to recognize and stimulate interest in Canadian Aviation Pioneers, and to bring together all those who share an interest in it's history....with those who have been active participants. A superb 'Journal' and newsletters are published quarterly. Membership is open to those with wide and varied interests in all phases of aviation. Membership fees are \$ 30.00 (or \$ 27.00 for seniors and students) for the National group and \$10.00 for the local chapter operation..for the year. Meeting costs are met by collecting a nominal "landing fee". On Oct. 19'th an executive of five was elected with Allan Coggon of Mahone Bay as President. The next meeting will be at "Scotia Branch Legion, 5839 Cunard St., Halifax. Further information is available from Cyril Dunbar (v.p) - 442-0270, or Lynne Fitzgerald - 425-0817 (news letter). Potential members are always welcome to attend.

The SAMF is pleased to announce its support for the newly formed local chapter of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society (CAHS), details of which are shown above. Please address all CAHS correspondence to:

Allan F. Coggon  
RR #2 Mahone Bay, NS, B0J 2E0

#### SLATE OF DIRECTORS 1995 - 96

Denny Shaw, Chairman of the SAMF Nominating Committee, is pleased to announce the following SAMF Slate of Directors for 1995-96, approved at the 1995 AGM:

Chairman.....Adm Bob Falls  
V-Chairman.....LGen L.A. Ashley  
President.....Frank Willis  
V-President.....Bud MacLean  
Past President.....Doug Peacocke  
Secretary.....Eric Edgar  
Treasurer.....Peter Staley  
Directors: J. Bowser (RCAF Assn); Gerry Brushett;  
John Eden (CNAG); Sandy Kerr; Al Moore; Harold  
Northrup (RCAF Assn); VAdm Harry Porter; Bob  
Pattison; Denny Shaw; LCol Joe Hincke (Ex Off);  
Chuck Coffen (Ex Off and SAM GM).

#### BOOKS

HANDS TO FLYING STATIONS! Volume 2 of this book is now available to remind us of how things happened in a hell-of-a-hurry when that "pipe" was heard. Thanks to a special donation by Stu Soward, VOL 2 is available for Christmas both in the SAM Gift Shop for \$34.95 (all incl) and at the same price by writing Neptune Developments, 657 Beacon St, Victoria, BC, V8V 1K1. A special set of Vols 1 and 2 is also available at both locations for \$59.95 (all incl).

CERTIFIED SERVICEABLE has met, even exceeded, expectations. It is a great read, full of yarns and photos, all carefully woven together to tell our Fleet Air Arm's story, mainly from the maintainers side, but lots of aircrew involvement as well (to add some class!). You'll see photos of many people you know, likely one or two of yourself, and read about key events as told by our buddies. The bad news is that this book was printed in 1,100 copies, 850 of which are already sold through subscription. Another 100+ were sold at the '95 Edmonton CNAG reunion. But the good news is that the Ottawa CNAG chapter bought the remaining 140 copies and donated them to the SAM, where they are now available from the gift shop for Christmas at \$39.95. After 31 Dec 95, the price increases to \$59.95.

CANADA'S NAVAL AVIATORS. A few copies are still available at \$36.27 (all incl) from the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, 28 Bastion Sq, Victoria, BC, V8W 1H9 and through the SAM Gift Shop thanks to the kind donation of a nice package by Robbie Hughes.