

WARRIOR

Winter 2014



*Merry Christmas
from the
Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation*

LET US NOT FORGET!



A wise nation preserves its records, gathers up its muniments, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, repairs its great public structures, and fosters national pride and love of country by perpetual references to the sacrifices and glories of the past.

Joseph Howe , 31 August 1871

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Submissions: Text submissions can be either paper, email or electronically produced - Word Perfect (preferred) or Word. ***We will format the text for you. No need to centre headings, indent paras etc.***

Graphics are best submitted electronically, they should be 300dpi and a .tif file. A jpg file at 300dpi is acceptable if no compression is used. We will attempt to use any pictures, whatever the format.

NOTE WELL: When sending mail of any kind, newsletter articles, letters, membership renewals, donations etc., please ensure the envelope is addressed correctly to:

Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation or

SAM Foundation
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Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

Deadlines for receiving submissions are:

Spring	1 March
Summer	1 July
Winter	15 October

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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

SAMF website: www.samfoundation.ca



FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

By Christine Hines

I always find it a challenge to write this article, as we have so much to write on: restoration work, volunteer projects of all sorts, and new exhibit components; I find it hard not to chat about them all, at length!

I would like to be sure I acknowledge Kay Collacutt in my musings this issue. Her dedicated work on the WARRIOR, the great work in the SAM Foundation office, and her loyal support of the museum and advocacy of all things Naval Air, is legendary. I would personally like to say a heartfelt, public, thank you to Kay for her recent advocacy in organizing a call for volunteers this summer. In our time of need, Kay advertised for new volunteers to assist us, especially in front-end operations. To my delight, we have recruited a significant number of new volunteers, and "re-enlisted" some retired volunteers, to come back in to lend a hand over the busy summer! We recruited some really knowledgeable and interesting people to assist with guiding, shop and collections work. Way to go Kay!

Late in August we received another of the series of interactive computer programs designed to interpret the Fairey Firefly FR-1. Of course, it has the usual interpretive text describing the aircraft and specifications, but it also features animations on deck landings, armament and weapons systems. We have also commissioned a scale model of HMCS WARRIOR to augment the exhibit, and expect it to be delivered in early winter. I'll be sure to include photos of the completed model in the next issue of the WARRIOR. An update on the Firefly appears elsewhere in this issue, but cosmetic repairs are coming along very well, and we remain hopeful that a ground run may be possible in future.

We are making progress on the museum's projects surrounding the Hawker Hurricane. A large exhibit on the CAM Ships (Catapult-armed Merchant Ships) and "Hurricats", or Sea Hurricanes, of the WWII period, is currently in production. Used to protect convoys from German long-range aircraft, these CAM ships were maintained from RCAF Station Dartmouth. The CAM ship sailed in convoys between Britain & Gibraltar, Murmansk, and North American waters, but the program was discontinued by 1943. As you will know from the last issue of the WARRIOR, WO Dave Rowe continues work on his replica Hurricane for us, having recently delivered some parts of the tail-plane.

As always, the team at SAM are grateful for your support and encouragement. In these tough times, it is wonderful to have your moral support and appreciation for our work!



Firefly Restoration Update

By Christine Hines

As many of you will know, we have been working on the Fairey

Firefly FR-1 restoration since January of 1994. Many team members have come and gone over the years. They have given their all to the accomplishment of the goal of flight, with your stalwart help and that of the SAM Foundation. The volunteer team achieved much over the years, culminating in a successful engine run in 2009, which was repeated several times since then. This accomplishment was a milestone many thought we would never achieve, and many congratulations are owed to the volunteers whose dedication and hard work made it happen, hand in hand with your financial and moral support.

The current update is that a decision has been made by the Board of Trustees not to pursue the goal of flight, due to many mechanical issues that have presented themselves in the last year or so. While disappointing, especially for the volunteer team, we can remain very proud of all of the accomplishments on the restoration project, and will have a beautiful static example of a Fairey Firefly for our collection. We have recently taken delivery of an interactive bilingual exhibit to assist with interpreting the aircraft, and expect a scale model of HMCS WARRIOR to complete the exhibit in the next few months.



From all of us at SAM, we wish to thank you for all of your support over the past years of this project, for your financial contributions and for your encouragement! I can assure you it has been very much appreciated.

LS Paul Walter credited with photos. Thank You.



From the SAMF President
John Knudsen

When we look at the Warrior (SAMF Newsletter), we see that it is filled with pictures, stories and other material from our past activities, but we also find that there is almost no material from 1980 and onward, what happened? Did the Maritime Military Aviation cease to exist: yes and no. "Naval Air" as we knew it no longer exists; but in our hearts and minds it is still there. Many of the personnel who served at sea still see themselves as "Naval Air", mainly because the jobs on and with helicopters at sea still goes on - not really much different than before. The people who took over from us are doing a bang up job, but no stories or pictures for the Warrior. The pictures and stories are there, in the papers and on Face Book, but that does not carry forward, so that the next generation can see what they did.

How do we ensure that History (those things that took place yesterday and before) is recorded? We (pre 1980) must spread the word. Introduce the newly retired or currently serving, neighbour, friend, family member etc. to the Warrior.

Lend them your copy, or better still, encourage them to join SAMF and receive their own copy. If you really want to help, buy them a membership for Christmas so they get their own copy. During your discussions with the next generation of Maritime Military Aviation personnel, encourage them to submit pictures and stories to the Warrior, so their experiences may be shared and kept where they belong, with the SAMF (Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation) and the SAM (Shearwater Aviation Museum).

PLANNED GIVING

by Ed Smith, V/Chairman SAMF

This is nothing more and nothing less than a financial appeal to all those associated with, or have knowledge, of the Shearwater Aviation Museum. The Museum is in a critical planning period which will require much support from all the financial avenues available.

Support comes basically from five sources:

- (1) 12 Wing Shearwater;
- (2) SAMF;
- (3) some astute investing by our treasurer;
- (4) government grant opportunities by application from the Museum;
- (5) donations from individuals, companies or corporations.

Essentially Base Shearwater provides the basics such as the initial building and the land (egs. the old gym, ex RC church and surrounding properties) and much of the ongoing infrastructure for light and heat as well as museum employee wages such as our Curator. Shearwater has been seriously reduced in its Non Public Funds(NPF) from which comes SAM'S infrastructure and employee finances.

SAMF is, by it's constitution, tasked financially to provide funds for the presentation, upkeep and improvement of the museum including new construction for expansion, acquisitions (eg. Avenger) and restoration of A/C for the museum. (eg. Firefly). Fund raising is SAMF's main function and is carried out as many know, by a variety of means; wall tiles, golf tournaments, auctions etc. An immense amount of work for volunteers who are diminishing in numbers.

Investing is difficult at this time to make any substantial gain in a safe manner even with our very able and knowledgeable Treasurer.

Grant money, at best these days, has only limited

success.

New donations from corporate sources at present is minimal. There have been some generous personal donations to the Museum and/or SAMF but are limited in numbers and variable in amounts.

So raising money for the Museum is becoming more difficult, but still critical, for its continued success. All five avenues of SAM and SAMF sources are less reliable in amounts and frequency.

Another critical factor is the aging of our volunteers in SAMF. Bluntly put, there are less of us to do these tasks and those still left are running out of energy and time.

What is the money required for?

Beyond the daily support for the museum, the curator has identified and developed a critical and detailed plan for the ongoing function of the Museum which will total some two million dollars.

The plan includes: a broad based purpose - built restoration facility to accommodate needed space, health and safety requirements / policy: accommodation for Sea King(s) and related exhibits: an increased artefact processing space for receiving, cataloguing, preparation and storage space. In essence, this requires a new hangar right next to our present and newest display area.

Which leads to the crux of this small epistle.

There have been a number of ex-Naval Aviation personnel who on their passing, either through their Wills or family, left substantial donations to the Museum or Foundation. These donations have been very valuable and helpful to the Museum. All those who receive the Warrior are invited to read and pass on the PLANNED GIVING information in the centre section of the Warrior for the ways the giving can be accomplished.

It is the fervent hope that more of those with a Naval Aviation history and others to consider such legacies to support the future of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation and therefore, the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Let us now Praise Famous Aircraft

by John Orr



First Flight!

4005 at UACL Plant 9 April 1964.

Credit: UACL and Don MacNeil Collection

Do individual aircraft have personalities?

I'm sure that all those Sea King personnel who read the WARRIOR will recall the pre-embarkation scramble as each HELAIRDET struggled to ensure that they would get a 'flier' for the upcoming deployment. This led to an almost totemic trust in the 'personality' of a particular aircraft and drove maintenance officers crazy as they sought to ensure that

there were enough aircraft available to deploy with sufficient hours to preserve the stagger of aircraft into and out of heavy maintenance.

The purpose of this article is not to engage in a theological (or even metaphysical) debate about aircraft 'personalities' – but I'm sure that your editor would entertain any reflections that you may have on this topic. Rather, the intent is to tell the story of the introduction of one particular aircraft - CH 12405 – the first of the 'Canadian' Sea Kings.¹

Those who have studied the topic will know that only the first four Sea Kings acquired by the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) were manufactured by Sikorsky Aircraft at their plant in Stratford, Connecticut. So why were the remaining 37 aircraft assembled in Canada? The answer gives an interesting insight into the state of the Canadian aircraft industry and the defence industrial policy of the day.

United Aircraft Canada Limited (UACL) – (later Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC)) - was a subsidiary of Pratt and Whitney America under the overall umbrella of United Aircraft. Importantly, within this framework, UACL was a sister company to Sikorsky Aircraft.

UACL had, over the years, built up a profitable business as the technical representative for the overhaul and maintenance of Pratt & Whitney engines in Canada. Following the Second World War, UACL expanded and became the agent for the sale and repair and overhaul of Sikorsky helicopters for both the Government of Canada and the emerging commercial helicopter market.

According to Milberry and Sullivan², in the late 1950s UACL became aware that the Government of Canada was planning to acquire more than 90 S-58 helicopters for both the RCN and RCAF. Seizing this opportunity to break out of the relatively routine helicopter R&O business, UACL suggested that this large order should be used to establish a helicopter manufacturing base in Canada. This proposal did not come to pass, because the 1957 federal election replaced the Louis St. Laurent government with that of John Diefenbaker. But a marker had been laid down for the future.

A number of years later, the RCN again submitted a bid for a new ASW helicopter to replace the aging Sikorsky HO4S-3. Without going through the machinations of the selection process, the Sikorsky Sea King was eventually chosen to become the Navy's new ASW helicopter.

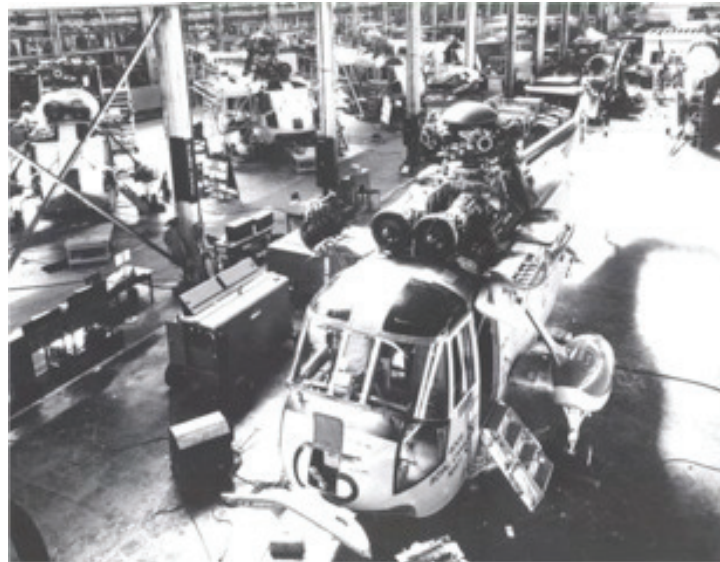
At the urging of the Department of Defence Production and the RCN, a proposal to provide a significant 'Canadian' content for this order was once again submitted by UACL. According to Rear Admiral Bob Welland, the RCN's Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air and Warfare), the prospects were excellent for combined orders of up to 500 Sea Kings for the military and civilian markets in Canada!

Where would UACL get the expertise to carry out such a venture? Fortunately, Montreal, UACL's home base, was, and remains, a hub of Canada's aviation industry. Canadair

was entering a slack period with little on their order books so a good deal of 'poaching' of talent took place. Furthermore, with the decision to assemble rather than manufacture the Sea King in Canada - using sub-assemblies provided by Sikorsky - the engineering challenges were somewhat reduced as the sub-assembly approach was in many ways quite similar to UACL's R&O work, but obviously on a larger scale.

Accordingly, once the contract was signed for the purchase of the Sea Kings, UACL formed a Helicopter and Systems Division and company technicians and aircrew were sent to the Sikorsky plant and integrated into the Sea King assembly line. There they not only learned the 'tricks of the trade' but also developed the processes that would be transferred to the UACL plant at Longueuil near Montreal. It was a daunting task but with the willing cooperation of Sikorsky, it was accomplished.

As mentioned above, Sea Kings 4001 – 4004 were manufactured in Stratford, Connecticut. Acceptance flights of these aircraft were conducted by the UACL test pilots, John MacNeil and Ross Lennox in Stratford and eventually, on 24 May 1963, 4001 was formally transferred to the RCN. 4001, 4002 and 4003 ultimately found their way to the RCN 'Fleet Introduction Program' for RCN aircrew and maintenance personnel conducted under the auspices of the USN at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland. 4001 and 4002 were flown back to Canada and arrived at Shearwater on 1 August 1963. 4003 remained at Patuxent River for instrumentation by the USN and 4004 was 'bailed' to Sikorsky for evaluation of the Canadian Marconi Doppler system (AN/APN 503 (V)) and an HF radio.



First RCN helicopter in assembly area 1964.

Credit: PWC

During the next year, 4005 slowly took shape at the UACL plant and on 9 April 1964, the

first test flight was carried out by company test pilots John MacNeil and Ross Lennox. On completion of the company test flights, 4005 was transferred to the RCN on 27 August 1964 to begin its 'first' half-century of service to Canada and Canadians.



**RCN acceptance of 4005 27 August 1964.
Credit: UACL and Don MacNeil Collection**

While the record of 12405 over the intervening fifty years is only available in the log books of those that flew her, we can happily record that through the good offices of the Commanding Officer and personnel of 443 (MH) Squadron, a fitting tribute was paid to this stalwart warrior on 27 August 2014 on the occasion of her Fiftieth anniversary.



Fifty Years On!
443 (MH) Squadron Pat Bay and 12405 27 August 2014
Credit: DND

In a note from the CO, LCol Pat MacNamara, it was explained that on the day, 12405 was assigned to HMCS WINNIPEG operating in local waters. As fate would have it, the aircraft developed a snag while at sea and required maintenance ashore - thereby ensuring that she would celebrate her 'birthday' at Pat Bay – complete with a birthday cake!

And who says that aircraft don't have personalities?

¹ The original Royal Canadian Navy side number of this aircraft was 4005.

² Larry Milberry and Kenneth H. Sullivan. *Power: The Pratt and Whitney Canada Story*. Toronto, ON: CANAV Books, 1989.

50/50 DRAW

FUND RAISER FOR NEW BUILDING PROJECT

Over the years, notes/letters/email messages etc have been written looking for donations for many things. We are in great need of an expansion - so this fund raiser is in aid of our Building Fund Project. **If every person in the Foundation bought one book of tickets (\$10) the winner would receive approximately \$4000 +.** Please get involved. Only 96 people purchased tickets this year.

You are so generous to our cause(s) that we want you to have a chance to get something back from this appeal. Tickets will not be numbered and can be used for the draw of your choice. **Tickets will be sold by the book** - each book of 6 tickets is worth \$10 - if you want more tickets, just **call us toll free 1-888-497-7779 or local calls to 461-0062** or email us at samf@samfoundation.ca Those tickets you did not use may be used for the next draw.

Next 50 50 draw to be held late November 2015 - more info re the draw will be in Spring or Summer Issue.

Mail your tickets to:

SAM Foundation
PO Box 5000 Stn Main
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

Here is an easy way for you to play. Just call us at either of the two numbers above and give us your credit card number - tell us how many books of tickets you want and we will fill them out and add them to our draw. Can't get any easier than that.

The winner of the 2014 50/50 draw is Mr. George Hulan of Mount Pearl, Nfld.



Marc-Andre Poirier receiving the CNAG award from Aviation Institute Senior Avionics Instructor Donald O'Leary in June 2014.



Donald O'Leary accepting the award on Marc-Andre's behalf from Eldon Johnston at the Akerley Campus awards ceremony on June 11. Marc-Andre was unable to attend as he accepted an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer position with Forest Protection Limited in Fredericton New Brunswick. The award also included a cash award of \$500 from CNAG

**It's time to renew your
SAMF Membership.**

Second Dawn of Aurora

Ernest Cable, Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian

After an extensive evaluation the Canadian government selected the Lockheed CP-140 Aurora to replace the obsolescent Argus long-range maritime patrol aircraft. The Auroras first dawned at 14 Wing Greenwood, NS in May 1980 with the 18th and last aircraft arriving in August 1981. The Aurora was derived from the US Navy's four-engine P-3C Orion from which it inherited its long range and endurance. The avionics and sensor suite incorporating the latest technologies in the US Navy's new carrier-borne S-3A Viking were married with the P-3C airframe to make the Aurora one of the most advanced Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) aircraft in the world. The air force's fleet sizing study called for 24 Auroras to perform the tasks envisioned by the Canadian government, however, Prime Minister Trudeau unilaterally reduced the fleet to 18 Auroras as cost cutting measure with no commensurate reduction in tasks. After establishing an impressive operational reputation among Canada's allies, the Aurora was in continual demand for NATO maritime surveillance and enforcement operations in regional conflicts; where it frequently demonstrated over 95 percent mission availability despite being heavily tasked with 25 percent of the surveillance missions with only 10 percent of the in-theatre assets.

By the mid 1990s the Aurora was losing its operational edge as its obsolescent sensors and avionics were not as effective against the latest more sophisticated and diverse targets. More critically, the original electronics manufacturers were not producing spare parts and were no longer committed to repairing and overhauling a relatively small volume of obsolescent equipment. In 1997, the government approved the "Aurora Incremental Modernization Program" (AIMP), which aimed at modernizing the flight and mission avionics by replacing the original systems and subsystems to restore operational capability, and improve reliability and supportability. The AIMP would not only restore the aircraft's impressive maritime capabilities but also provide new dimensions in surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. The improved Aurora would be a truly national strategic surveillance aircraft capable of operating over land or sea anywhere in the world.

Ideally, the new avionics and sensors should have been installed while each Aurora underwent its regularly scheduled periodic third line inspection under an omnibus program. But, because of fiscal considerations the government decided on an incremental approach to be implemented over a 10-year period, with completion in 2008. With the incremental approach the \$1.1 billion program cost was more expensive than the omnibus scheme, but was more affordable by stretching the costs over ten years. The AIMP consisted of 23 individual projects that were grouped into four blocks.

Block I.

Legacy projects that had to be implemented to keep the Aurora compliant with international aviation regulations and to replace avionics that were no longer supportable. Scheduled for completion 2002.

Block II.

Navigation and Flight Instruments Modernization (NFIMP) and a new Communications Management System (CMS) to integrate new UHF, VHF, HF and SATCOM radios. Scheduled for completion 2004.

Block III.

Replace mission computer, software and displays, acoustics processor, electronic surveillance, electro-optics and synthetic aperture imaging radar. Scheduled for completion 2006.

Block IV.

Mission computer phase II enhancements, magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) and defensive electronic warfare system (DEWS). Scheduled for completion 2008.

It was planned to sequentially install Block I in each of the 18 Auroras. Upon completion of Block I each aircraft would sequentially return to the contractor (IMP in Halifax) three more times for the installation of Blocks II, III and IV. Since the contractor could have up to five Auroras in the modification line at any one time the number of aircraft available for operations was significantly reduced and prompted a commensurate reduction manning levels. Because of the phased approach there would be a mix of Block II, III and IV Auroras available for operations during the ten-year implementation period. This complicated training because maintenance and aircrews had to be concurrently qualified on more than one aircraft Block configuration. Additionally, as the aircraft were sequenced through the modification process, flight simulators and maintenance training devices had to be similarly modified to reflect the latest Block I, II or III configuration.

Because of the small fleet size and heavy tasking the Auroras were exhibiting signs of structural fatigue much sooner than anticipated. In fact, the Auroras were flying at a 50 percent greater rate than the US Navy's P-3Cs, which were also showing early signs of structural fatigue. If the flying rate persisted the Aurora's life expectancy was projected to expire much sooner than planned, around year 2020. The Aurora life expectancy problem was compounded in early 2000, when during a routine third line periodic inspection corrosion was detected in the interior structures of the Aurora's wings and horizontal stabilizers. A follow on structural assessment program, a shared venture with Norway and other P-3C nations, confirmed that fleet-wide corrosion would compromise the structural integrity and reduce the life expectancy of most P-3 type aircraft to the 2012-2015 timeframe. An Aurora Structural Life Extension Program (ASLEP) would be required to extend the life of Canada's Auroras until 2025. The ASLEP cost was estimated at \$25M per aircraft, \$450M for the fleet of 18, bringing the total Aurora AIMP and ASLEP cost close to \$1.7 billion.



CP-140 Aurora Structural Life Extension Project

Lockheed Martin Proprietary Information

New Outer Wing

- Material change for skin panels & spar caps
- Redesign lower surface skin panels
- Redesign front beam lower cap
- Incorporate SLAP enhancements
- Rivet-less dome nuts where possible

New Horizontal Stabilizer

- Material change to upper & lower skin panels
- Material change to upper & lower spar caps, stringers
- Revised stringer trim at FS 1185, 1203, & 1221
- New frame webs at FS 1167, 1185, 1203, & 1221
- Fix surface seal horizontal stabilizer assembly

New Inboard Nacelle Upper Longerons

New Tailpipe Shrouds (FWD)

Fillet Fairings

New Center Wing Lower Surface

- Material change & redesign lower skin panels 1-9

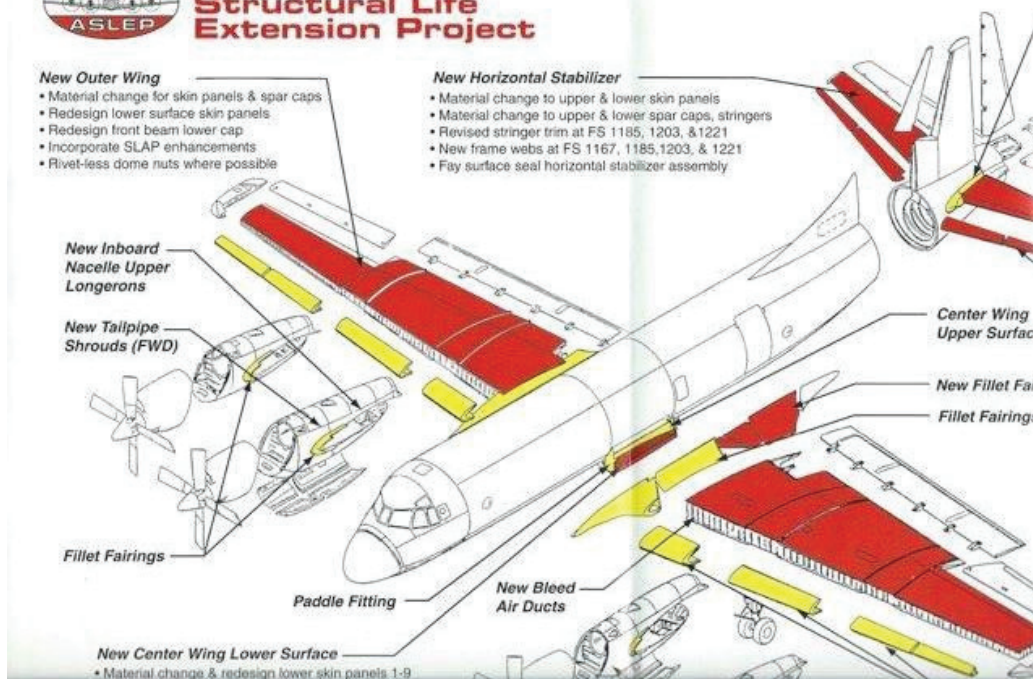
Center Wing Upper Surface

New Fillet Fair

Fillet Fairings

Paddle Fitting

New Bleed Air Ducts



The red areas indicate components requiring replacement.

The yellow areas are to be replaced as required.

In 2005, the government conducted a fiscal review and AIMP and ASLEP were put on hold to determine the most cost effective way to proceed.

In 2007, the government announced that as part of its austerity program the number of Auroras slated for the

incremental avionics improvement and life extension programs would be reduced to ten aircraft; a draconian reduction in surveillance capability for a nation with the world's longest coastline.

The government's 2008 Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS) included plans to replace the Aurora fleet with a new Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) such as the Boeing P-8 Poseidon, derived from the 737 airliner and selected by the US Navy to replace its P-3C fleet. Boeing estimated that it could provide Canada a fleet of P-8s for \$3.1 billion, but DND's analysis estimated the total program costs to be closer to \$5 billion, a cost that far exceeded the combined price for AIMP/ASLEP. Boeing also advised that the first Poseidon would not be available to Canada until 2015; too late to replace the fleet of Auroras. In addition to the P-8 other options such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and Canadian built multi-mission aircraft were considered. By 2011, there was no substantive progress on the acquisition of an Aurora replacement. DND was faced with the conundrum of having spent close to a billion dollars on AIMP to make the Aurora's sensors viable until 2025; but belatedly found that the Aurora airframe would be airworthy only until the 2012-2015 timeframe. Finally, after a period of indecision, false starts, lobbyist wars, and ill-considered qualitative and/or quantitative reductions, alternatives to modernizing the Aurora were rejected and the combined AIMP/ASLEP, now called the Aurora Capability Extension Program, was reaffirmed at ten aircraft. The former four-block program was streamlined into three blocks. Delivery of the Block II Auroras to Greenwood was finally completed in 2012 and the first Auroras were inducted into the Block III modification line at IMP.

In 2012, the air force advised the government that with only ten Auroras all the proposed tasks in the CFDS could not be fulfilled. On 19 March 2014, the Harper government announced that the fleet of modernized and life-extended CP-140 Auroras would be expanded to 14 aircraft. In the first phase of the \$548 million undertaking, the existing contracts for the first ten aircraft would be extended to complete the work on the four additional aircraft. The second phase added three new major capability enhancements. The Block III modifications plus enhancements on all 14 aircraft are expected to be completed by 2021, extending the operational effectiveness of the modernized Aurora aircraft from 2020 to 2030.

The Block II Auroras made their first operational debut in Task Force Libeccio, the air component of Operation Mobile in Libya in 2011. The two Block II Auroras brought a number of unique capabilities to the campaign. The new communications management system allowed aircrew to talk with as many as six agencies simultaneously. This capability along with its endurance and space to embark specialist personnel made the Aurora an excellent airborne command and control node. Concurrent with the Block II modifications an Overland Electronic Mission Suite (OEMS) was installed to replace the original forward-looking Infrared (FLIR) camera with the WesCam MX 20 electro-optics/infrared (EO/IR) camera. The EO/IR camera was capable of collecting imagery day or night from long standoff distances; the GPS position of the camera's bore sight intersection with the ground provided precise location of the target of interest. The OEMS not only greatly improved situational awareness, but also provided smart cueing of the EO/IR camera to targets of interest. The EO/IR imagery can be stored for post-flight analysis or assigned to the Tactical Common Data Link (TCDL) for transmission to other remote video receivers or to surface terminal equipment where target specialists could take control of the camera to scan for collateral information. The OEMS also received contacts listed in the automatic identification system (AIS) that provided real-time position and movement of shipping traffic, significantly reducing the time to identify unknown targets during both expeditionary and domestic maritime surveillance.

Operation Mobile's successes were built largely on experience gained from Aurora ISR missions during the Vancouver Winter Olympics, the 2010 G8/G20 Summit, the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit and the Applanix camera mapping missions in Afghanistan in 2009. Aurora crews also manned the tactical control van for "Heron" unmanned aircraft ISR missions over Afghanistan then rotated back on to the Aurora.

In the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) context the Aurora's endurance provided persistence over an area of interest seen only in unmanned aircraft. Being a multi-crew/multi-sensor platform the Aurora had an array of sensors to simultaneously collect uninterrupted imagery and fuse it with other intelligence sources (radio chatter, electronic emissions, vehicle movement, etc.) to provide an integrated accurate picture of the situation below. During Op Mobile it was not uncommon for Aurora crews perform multiple tasks simultaneously; carrying out overland ISR with EO/IR, monitoring vessels of interest with AIS and radar while also transmitting "warning and compliance" (psychological operations) messages to Gaddafi fighters over the radios. The presence of the Block II Aurora over Libya marked the second dawning of Aurora as it was again acknowledged as a world-class surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft.

The Aurora's transition to an overland role was not immediate. Only after the anti-air threat and the intelligence picture were better understood were the Auroras allowed to reduce the standoff distances from over the Mediterranean to closer to shore. Closing nearer to the coastal cities and inland supply routes increased the quality of the imagery. Analysts and mission planners were better able to follow troop movements and fuel trucks and monitor traffic flows and other indicators of everyday life. With other ISR platforms stretched thinly the Aurora became the preferred ISR platform. Canadian imagery products were praised at higher headquarters for their quality and were often the first with "eyes-on" important intelligence. The Aurora's endurance and Block II modifications made it a natural choice for coastal and eventually overland intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and control (ISR&C) missions.

In its coastal ISR&C role the Auroras were the preferred platform for Naval Gunfire Support (NGS). When naval units operated in an area of responsibility, contacts were located with the EO/IR camera enabling an embarked naval observer to positively locate and identify targets, verify compliance with the rules of engagement and pass the information to the naval attack units. The Aurora EO/IR camera provided superior imagery from a standoff distance and the communications suite allowed seamless reporting without compromising communications security.

After the Libyan capital, Tripoli, fell the Aurora's ISR&C missions moved from over the Mediterranean to entirely overland where the reduced target standoff distances improved image quality exponentially. Cross-cueing and information flow from the Aurora to other units were more timely enabling the Aurora to undertake Strike Coordination and Armed Reconnaissance (SCAR) missions where fighter aircraft were talked-on to their targets using Aurora sensor information. Similar to the NGS missions an embarked SCAR coordinator was responsible for positively identifying military installations as legitimate targets and confirming compliance with the rules of engagement then communicating the target location to the attacking units. Again, the Aurora's endurance allowed it stay over the area of interest for sustained periods to build an accurate intelligence picture by correlating targets, estimating potential collateral damage and assessing post-attack damage.



A BLOCK III AURORA with the dome just ft of the cockpit housing the BLOS antenna

The imagery from Block II Auroras was limited to EO/IR video and still photographs. Block III Auroras equipped with synthetic aperture radar will provide almost monochromatic photo quality of the terrain and targets such as tanks and buildings at much greater ranges. The new radar's moving target indicator (MTI) will track moving targets undetectable by the naked eye or EO/IR camera in both the overland and maritime environments. An improved electronic support measures (ESM) system will give the Aurora a true electronic intelligence (ELINT) capability. A new sonobuoy acoustic processing system and

magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) system will increase the Aurora's ability to search, detect, track and prosecute increasingly sophisticated subsurface targets. The three new enhancement systems to be installed during the second phase of Block III will add a quantum increase to the Aurora's surveillance capability; the current tactical data link will be replaced by link 16 to improve

interoperability with allies; a large aircraft infrared counter measures (LAIRCM) system will provide a self-defence capability, which will autonomously detect and track a missile launched from the ground then direct a laser beam to jam the missile's infrared guidance system. The third system, a Beyond Line of Sight-Video, Voice, and Data Communication (BLOS-VVDC) satellite system will revolutionize ISR&C missions. The BLOS-VVDC system incorporates a live chat facility and can send photos and recorded video, and most impressively send live video from the EO/IR camera to a distant ground station, even from very high arctic latitudes.

The Aurora Structural Life Extension Program breathed an additional 15,000 flight hours into the Aurora, extending its life expectancy to about 2030. The relatively modest \$2 billion cost of modernizing the Aurora will give Canada one of the most capable MMA in the world with outstanding IRS&C capabilities that will rival those of the newer and more costly P-8 Poseidon currently entering service with the US Navy. The Block III modernization will provide a highly coveted ISR&C capability that will be interoperable with our allies' latest equipment for the foreseeable future. The Aurora will be able to detect targets of interest from standoff ranges and transmit precise target plus amplifying information (live video, electronic intercepts, etc.) directly to the fire control systems of allied ships and aircraft. Most importantly, the modernized CP-140M Aurora will provide a significant reduction in sensor-to-shooter delays, which will greatly increase the probability of successfully engaging the target.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS AT SHEARWATER



Circa 1952. Frank Dowdall and Mickey Owens sport their finest aircraft maintainer's working clothes in front of Block 59, one of the most up to date living quarters for the lower decks at HMCS Shearwater at the time. How times have changed!! I still maintain "there was no life like it".

***"Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end,
We'd sing and dance, forever and a day,
We'd live the life we choose, We'd fight and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way."***



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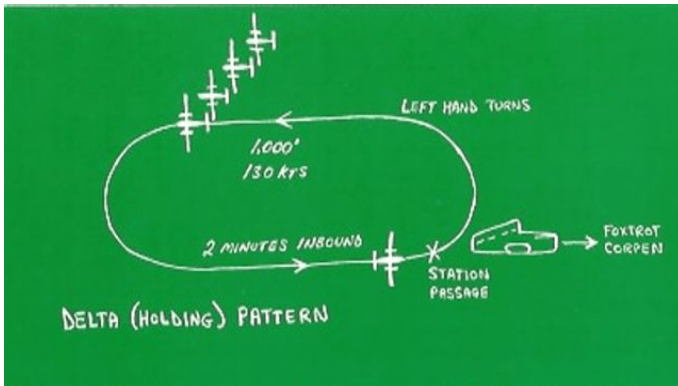
Merry Christmas!

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this reminder.***



IN THE DELTA

- AGGAS, Robert "Bob"**
- ALLEN, Howard "Howie"**
- ARNOLD, John "Stretch"**
- BAYNE, Dave**
- BRAMBLEY, Kendrick John**
- BREEN, Hugh**
- BRIARD, Kerry**
- BURKE, Patrick James**
- CAMPBELL, Ryan**
- CRAIG, Ed**
- CREELMAN, Michael 'Mike'**
- FERGUSON, Harry**
- GENDRON, Marc J.**
- HOTHAM, George**
- HOWE, Jean (Pumple)**
- HULAN, George**
- HYNES, Mrs Chuck Hynes (Anne)**
- LABUTE, Ken**
- MacKINNON, Donna**
- MOFFORD, Robert (Bob)**
- MOLLOY, John Brian Alexander (Molly)**

- MURRAY, Douglas Charles LCdr (Ret'd)**
- MYERS, Maxine AW DND employee**
- NIFORT, Elizabeth (Liz) AW DND employee**
- NORMAN, Brian Allan**
- TURNER, Thomas W.**
- WAY, Gordon**
- WELCH, Douglas 'Pedro'**

RETURN TO THE DELTA

*What called them home before us
Gone before their time,
All young, all men, all gifts of God
Not yet in their prime.*

*They took the call to service
As many have before,
To soar like eagles day and night
From near and distant shore.*

*We mourn their missing friendship
Ne're more to speak with them,
Mere memories are all we have
Until we meet again.*

*The Delta beckons all of us
In time, once more we'll form,
Going home to all our comrades
And with them, once more be born.*

LETTERS FROM HOME

This summer, the skies over Ottawa and Gatineau once again reverberated with the avenging thunder of a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. It has been nearly 70 years since the sight of a "Fort" cruising the wide sweep of the Ottawa Valley was common enough to draw little attention. From 7–14 July 2014, the B-17 known as Sentimental Journey paid an extended visit to our ramp to help us celebrate the Boeing B-17 in the service of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Nicknamed the Flying Fortress for its bristling defensive armament, the six "Forts" of the RCAF, with their guns removed, could more aptly been called Flying Mail Trucks. Crewed by some of Canada's most decorated and experienced war heroes, these tired war horses plied the Atlantic, bringing hope to troops, and reassurance for their families. **By Dave O'Malley**

We live in a world connected by electronic means of communication. It is indeed a blessing. But it is also a loss. Direct and visual connection with correspondents using electronic means such as Skype also erase the many benefits of the old-fashioned method—the handwritten letter. Gone or at least on the verge of extinction are simple things like elegant penmanship, careful forethought, poetic expression, hidden meaning, code, the ability to reassure family with words, the lipstick-kissed love letter held in a pilot's inside pocket, the lock of hair, the small photo, the tear-stained ink.

Back in the middle uncertain years of the Second World War, the hope of an early end to the war and to be "home by Christmas" had long since left the heart of the fighting man in Europe, North Africa, and the Near and Far East. Parents, who last saw their uniformed sons and daughters boarding a train for an unknown future, lived out their lives in anguish, worry and stress back home. The handwritten letter, the perfumed note card, a scarf knit with love by Gramma, the box of favoured Baby Ruth candy from Mum—all carried with them a powerful message of security and hope.

During the Second World War, the fighting man, the rear echelon service battalion soldier, the ground crew airman, or field hospital nurse in a distant and strange land was desperate to hear from home, and to send letters back there assuring parents that they were safe and out of harm's way. They took solace knowing that Dad had the crops almost in, that little brother Hugh was playing hockey with the hometown team, that Mum had learned to drive and that Sis had a good job at the factory making parachute harnesses. Knowing that life at home was still there, largely unchanged; that it would be there when they returned, was the one fact unblemished by the stress and horror of the war they were part of. Mail would be one of the great weapons of the fight, one of the unsung strategies that kept the Allied fighting forces from going insane. The RCAF knew and understood this better than most.

In December 1943, after three years of bloody, dusty battle in North Africa, Canadian Army soldiers were slogging it out

toe to toe with the Germans, bogged down in the small coastal town of Ortona in a vicious street fight that became known as "Little Stalingrad". RCAF pilots in Bomber Command were dying in droves every week, raked by night fighters and shredded by flak, yet were willing to climb back into that crew hatch one more time. Canadian sailors ran the U-boat gauntlet for the fourth straight year, freezing, forever wet and miserable. *Letters from home*—you can easily imagine the importance of them.

In early December, the RCAF stood up 168 Heavy Transport (HT) Squadron at RCAF Station Rockcliffe here in Canada's capital. 168 Squadron had one task—get the mail to Canadians fighting in Europe and the Mediterranean, and get it there fast. Prior to 168 Squadron's inception, most mail went by sea. It was not uncommon for a mother to get a telegram that her son was killed in battle, only to get a letter from him in the mail three weeks later, mailed months before. Soldiers needed the boost in morale offered by mail from home and the RCAF decided to build a force that could get it there fast. The CO of 168 (HT) Squadron was a highly experienced Canadian by the name of Wing Commander Robert Bruce Middleton. When the war broke out, Middleton conducted ferry and transport missions, before being selected to head 168.

The RCAF purchased six used Boeing B-17E and B-17F Flying Fortresses from the United States Army Air Force and ferried them to Rockcliffe—five over three weeks in December and the sixth in February of 1944. The Rockcliffe "Forts" were the only B-17s ever in the direct employ of the RCAF and they were given the standard RCAF four-digit serial numbers common in the Second World War—a block of numbers from 9202 to 9207. Though the RCAF had never operated Flying Fortresses before, Canadians were no strangers to four-engine bomber operation. Canucks in Bomber Command were crewing Handley Page Halifaxes, Avro Lancasters and Short Stirlings, as well as B-24 Liberators and Sunderland flying boats with Coastal Command, and were flying in all B-17 crew positions, attached to Fortress units of the Royal Air Force's (RAF) Bomber and Coastal Commands.

When the first of these former training Fortresses arrived at Rockcliffe in the first week of December 1943, they were somewhat clapped out and still carried their defensive weapons, American markings and serial numbers. They underwent immediate changes that saw the removal of the features that earned them the name Flying Fortress—their machine guns. Flying across the Atlantic Ocean to places like Morocco, England, Cairo and Italy meant that the chance of being attacked over open water by a German marauder was negligible, and now, with North Africa secured by the Allies, the only enemy aircraft with the range to find them were also four-engined patrol bombers like the FW200 Kondor. Subtracting the weight of the machine guns, their turrets and the gunners meant more mail or additional fuel could be carried, thus increasing the effectiveness of each mission.



The first Mailcan Fortress flight, as they became known, was scheduled for the week after the arrival of the first B-17 (9202). The goal was to get as much mail as possible to the front before Christmas, and bring an equal amount of letters to worried families back home.

For the weeks leading up to the arrival of the B-17s and the first flight, letters and packages for troops overseas were channelled by Royal Mail Canada to Ottawa. Trains arriving from Montréal and Toronto puffed and screeched along the Rideau Canal and clanked to a stop at Union Station, across from the Chateau Laurier Hotel. Mail car doors rattled open while railway employees tossed white bags labelled "Canada P.O." onto heavy wooden trolleys. These were pushed across the street to Postal Station A (since demolished and turned into a shopping centre), sorted for destinations and transported by RCAF truck the 8 kilometres to RCAF Station Rockcliffe.



Photograph, taken out on the snowy ramp, depicted no less than 14 airmen unloading a truck and bucket-brigading the mailbags into the starboard waist gunner's window at the rear of the fuselage. The first B-17 to be ready to fly the mail to Canadian servicemen overseas was 9202, but at the last minute it acquired a snag and went unserviceable. Flying Fortress 9204 was then selected as the alternate for the inaugural flight.

Though this was not a combat operation, this was no place for junior or inexperienced crews. The mail was important, and so, highly experienced aircrews with combat and transport experience, lucky to survive tours in Bomber Command, were selected to crew the "Forts". The first flight, departing Rockcliffe on 15 December, was flown by Wing Commander Middleton himself. Later, 9204 was joined by the five other Flying Fortresses, some of which were stripped of paint and modified with faired aluminium noses which opened downward to access forward cargo space, as well as other improvements inside and out.

The first flight was not without problems. As Middleton approached Ireland, fuel feeding problems forced the B-17 to land at RAF St. Angelo near Enniskillen in Northern Ireland. Pressing hard to get the mail to troops before Christmas, and being new with Fortress maintenance, mechanics had failed to connect the auxiliary tanks to the main system. Despite the problems, 9204 carried 5,500 lbs of mail and two passengers to Europe.

From the first flight onward, 168 Heavy Transport Squadron B-17s settled into a steady service back and forth across the Atlantic, bringing the mail to our warriors in Europe and North Africa. Fortresses and Liberators would carry the mail back and forth across the Atlantic, while seven DC-3 Dakotas (a detachment of 168 Squadron was based at Biggin Hill) would distribute the mail across European destinations. In the first month of operations alone, 168 Squadron Fortresses and Liberators carried 111,600 lbs of mail. In late January of 1944, the service was extended from Prestwick to Gibraltar, Algiers, Foggia, Bari, Naples and Cairo. As 1945 rolled around, mail service was six times a week. Another weekly flight was added in April 1945, making it a daily service. Refuelling stops on the northern route were Reykjavik and Goose Bay, and on the southern route, Lagens in the Azores or Bermuda. Every nook and cranny of the aging aircraft was stuffed with mailbags. When the war was over, they continued to fly mail and relief supplies to war-torn Europe.

But despite the lack of an enemy air force to threaten the Fortresses, these mail flights proved a deadly serious business. Three of the six B-17s were lost in tragic accidents that killed their highly experienced crews, and two others were heavily damaged. Of the six "Forts" held by the RCAF, only two survived to be disposed of by War Assets.

The near loss of a crew and Fortress happened almost immediately. Upon receipt of Fortress 9205 in the middle of

December 1943, the official RCAF assessment was that the aircraft was “very dilapidated, all the parts being badly worn.”

Regardless, maintenance crews struggled to make it mission-ready. On 23 January 1944, Fortress 9205 was flying from Prestwick, Scotland to Gibraltar when it was involved in a mid-air collision with an RAF Wellington in fog over the Bay of Biscay. The collision left the Fortress with extensive damage to the nose, wings and tail and two engines were forced to be shut down and their props feathered. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Horace Hillcoat, turned back to Prestwick, and made a safe landing on the remaining two engines (one without a supercharger), but the crew was forced to jettison the load of mail.

A piece in the Winnipeg Tribune, dated 14 March 1944, reported the dramatic incident aboard Hillcoat’s Fortress:

“The crew of a Canadian Flying Fortress mail plane lived through an aerial nightmare when it collided in a Biscay Fog with a heavyweight Wellington. With only one engine ticking, the Fortress brought its crew back to base. In an amazing aerial exploit, the crew of an RCAF Flying Fortress recently nursed their crippled aircraft back to safe landing in the United Kingdom with only one motor functioning after a mid-air collision with a Wellington bomber over the Bay of Biscay.

RCAF headquarters said today all that remained of the Wellington after the crash was bits of wings and ailerons later found embedded in the body of the Fortress. On the day of the crash only two aircraft were known to be operating over the bay – the Fortress flying mail to Canadian forces in the Mediterranean and the coastal command Wellington (JA268) on patrol. Both were flying on instruments and taking advantage of cloud cover. They met at 5,000 feet. There was a flash of flame, a grinding jar as the Fortress seemed perceptibly to stop in mid-air. F/O. H.B. Hillcoat of Moose Jaw, Sask., and his crew tensed for a crash into the sea.

Through the cloud, lighted by fire from one of their engines, they saw the shadow of an aircraft hurtling down to the water. A second later the Fortress was spinning down after it. The crew jettisoned everything movable, including mail, as the pilot wrestled with his controls. Then, at 1,200 feet, the stricken aircraft levelled off and staggered ahead, barely under control. The outer port engine alone was developing anything like normal power. Fighting stubborn controls, Hillcoat set course for Britain. The ‘Fort’ limped through the murk. Finally, Hillcoat set her down in a semi-blind landing. The navigator, F/O. F.B. La Brish, of Regina, ran around to the nose, within which he had been sitting at the moment of the collision. He looked up at the hole where the metal ring of the gun port had been. The ring had been hurled by the impact past La Brish’s head and was embedded in the partition behind where he had sat. That, he concluded, was what had ripped off his helmet

and earphones.”

The Ottawa Journal on the same day described the impact and recovery of the Fortress as “one of those million-to-one-chance affairs... one of the most amazing aerial exploits of the war.”

Hillcoat’s citation for his award of an Air Force Cross states: “This officer was captain of a Fortress which was proceeding one night recently from Great Britain to Gibraltar, when about 190 miles from base, under very dark conditions in cloud, his aircraft had a violent head-on collision with an unidentified aircraft on 23 January 1944. Despite the fact that two engines were out of commission, all four propellers bent and the aircraft badly damaged, he managed to right it, after falling approximately 2,000 feet. When they were still unable to hold altitude, he directed his second pilot and crewmen to jettison the cargo and all other loose equipment. By strenuous effort and skilful flying, he was able to set course for land. Although flying with a crew previously unknown to him, he guided their efforts with such confidence that every member performed his function in a most exemplary manner. The flight back occupied approximately two hours of instrument flying, during which the aircraft was vibrating terrifically and apparently on the verge of breaking up. By careful use of radio and other aids, an aerodrome was found and a successful landing was made with no further damage to his aircraft. This officer, when faced with an almost unprecedented emergency in the air, did his job and directed his crew in an extremely laudable manner.”

The navigator on the flight was Flying Officer Frederick La Brish of Regina, Saskatchewan. His Air Force Cross citation for his professionalism during the incident states, in part: “The navigator’s compartment was badly damaged but Flying Officer La Brish quickly gained his full senses and immediately moved aft to the wireless compartment, where he carried on his duties in a very cool and efficient manner, despite having to work on the floor under extremely awkward conditions. That the aircraft successfully completed the return trip in its badly damaged condition is in great part due to this officer’s expert knowledge and coolness under most trying circumstances.”

The Wireless Operator was Flying Officer Cecil Dickson and his citation states, in part: “In spite of the fact that the aerials and loop were missing, he successfully maintained contact with shore installations, and his co-operation with the navigator under extremely trying conditions contributed to a great extent in the safe return of the aircraft to base.”

Also on the flight were Flying Officer Eli Maximillian “Ross” Rosenbaum (30 years) and crewman Corporal A. DeMarco. Rosenbaum’s obituary in 2001 stated: “Eli and the entire crew were awarded the Air Force Cross on May 5, 1944. Eli always joked about having received a medal for saving his own life... From then on, Eli considered his life to be a gift, and he lived his life as though it were indeed a gift to be savored daily, laughing, joking, hugging, always singing and

whistling - just happy to be alive.”

Fortress 9205 was then fitted with a temporary fabric nose and upon return to Ottawa, was fitted with the fold-down metal nose cone. But 9205 was a hard luck bird. The following November it made a wheels up landing at Rockcliffe, was repaired and then again in April of 1945 suffered category C damage in the Azores. Luckily, 9205 made it through the war without any more damage, and, after delivering relief supplies to Warsaw, Poland, left 186 Squadron to become a Search and Rescue aircraft. In 1964, 9205 was sold to the Argentinian civil registry as LC-RTP. Horace Hillcoat, Fred La Brish and Cecil Dickson did not fare so well, as we shall see.

There are few photographs available of Fortress 9207, the last of the six, which arrived at Rockcliffe at the start of February 1944. Perhaps it is because she lasted only three months. Just 12 weeks later, on 2 April 1944, 9207 was taking off from Prestwick, Scotland, bound for Canada. Witnesses saw the Fortress lift off and then climb out with increasing steepness until it stalled and, still under full power, spin out of control and crash into the ground. The “Fort” was completely destroyed by the impact and ensuing fire and the five Canadians on board were killed instantly. The post crash investigation had no definitive cause for the crash but investigators suggest that its cargo of mail had shifted in the steep climb, moving the centre of gravity aft. One just has to view the video of the same thing happening to a Boeing 747 at Afghanistan’s Bagram Airfield to see the devastating effects of a load shifting on take-off. 9207 did not have the mail restraint modifications later installed on the other Fortresses.

Five months later, on 17 September, 9204 suffered Category A damage at Rockcliffe. The Fortress had just landed after a long flight from Prestwick. As the Fortress was taxiing along the Rockcliffe flight line, the undercarriage collapsed, seriously damaging both outer Pratt and Whitney engines and slightly damaging the inner pair. Category A damage is described as “destroyed, declared missing or damaged beyond economical repair.” The damage was serious enough to take the Fortress out of the lineup for good. It was struck off charge on 11 October and parted out. No injuries or fatalities were reported.

Tragedy struck again on 15 December 1944. Boeing B-17 9203, one of the hardest working “Forts” in the fleet, disappeared while on a transatlantic flight from French Morocco to Canada via the Azores. The highly experienced crew, including pilot Horace Hillcoat, and three RCAF pilot passengers never arrived in the Azores. Only a few Royal Mail Canada mailbags were spotted floating on the surface during the search. 168 Heavy Transport Squadron had now lost half of its Fortress Fleet, just one year into operations.

Losing another “Fort” was bad enough, but it was the human loss that truly devastated the squadron. Five of its

airmen and three of its passenger charges disappeared into the Eastern Atlantic swell. These were no ordinary pilots and aircrew. Between the two pilots, there were two Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFCs), one Air Force Cross (AFC), Air Force Medal (AFM) and a Dutch Flying Cross. The navigator had an AFM as well. Among the passengers, Flight Lieutenant William Pullar was also a DFC recipient.

Hillcoat’s co-pilot on the doomed flight, Flight Lieutenant Alfred John Rutledge of Simcoe, Ontario, was even more experienced and his loss dramatically underscored the dangers of the long over-water flights and the unfairness of war. Rutledge was a distinguished and highly decorated veteran. An article in his hometown newspaper, the Simcoe Reformer, reported that Rutledge had completed 103 bombing missions over Nazi-occupied Europe, 3 full tours of flying operations and 719 hours of combat flying.

Rutledge was awarded a rare (for a Canadian) Dutch Flying Cross for his operations over that country. His citation reads: “Over a period of twelve months this officer completed six sorties of a special nature over Holland. He fully appreciated the very great hazards involved, but by the display of the highest degree of resolution, skill and leadership he set a most inspiring example to his contemporaries, and made a very fine contribution to the air effort in Holland.” When asked about his success after his return to Canada with two DFCs and a Dutch Flying Cross, Rutledge told the Reformer reporter that he was “Just darn lucky”.

At the end of the Second World War, only three Fortresses (9202, 9205 and 9206) had survived. Sadly, that number was cut to just two a few months later, when B-17 9202, the first of the B-17 acquisitions of the RCAF, was lost on a mission of mercy. The aircraft was the same one that had fulfilled the first mission of mercy. 9202 left Ottawa on 31 October 1945 with 39 cases of much needed penicillin. It arrived at Prestwick the following morning, fuelling and then flying on to RAF Manston. Two days later on 4 November, 9202 left Manston bound for Warsaw via Berlin. Around noon the big Fortress, flying low in cloud, struck trees at the top of a high point near Halle, Germany known as Eggeberg Hill. The five Canadians on board were killed instantly as the “Fort” struck the ground, disintegrating and bursting into flame. All were buried in Muenster, Germany.

The five-man crew consisted of Flight Lieutenant Donald Forest Caldwell of Ottawa (32 years – pilot), Flight Lieutenant Edward Harling of Calgary (28 years – co-pilot), Sergeant Edwin Phillips of Montréal (24 years – engineer and loader), Flight Lieutenant Norbert Roche of Montréal (radio operator) and Squadron Leader Alfred Ernest Webster, DFC of Yorkton, Saskatchewan (36 years – navigator).

When the navigator, Squadron Leader Alfred Webster, was awarded a DFC, his citation read: “[his] work as a navigator has been outstanding and only equaled by his courage. On

one occasion when his aircraft was attacked by enemy fighters and the wireless operator badly wounded, he coolly and effectively administered first aid. Although handicapped by a damaged chart table, chair and instruments he navigated the aircraft safely back to base. He again displayed exceptional coolness and imperturbability, when his aircraft struck the trailing aerial of another which smashed the front turret and tore his clothes. Owing to his determination and resourcefulness, Flight Lieutenant Webster has several times been able to navigate his badly damaged aircraft back to base.”

Engineer and loader Sergeant Edwin Erwin Phillips of Montréal had an interesting back story. Phillips was one of a small group of black Canadians in the RCAF. The Veterans Affairs Canada website included a short profile on Phillips, which reads: “Edwin Erwin Phillips was born in Montréal and worked as a printer’s apprentice before volunteering for service with the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942 during the Second World War. Only 21 years old when he enlisted, he would go on to work as a mechanic with the No. 168 Heavy Transport Squadron and rise to the rank of sergeant. As part of his duties, Phillips would sometimes accompany transatlantic cargo flights.”

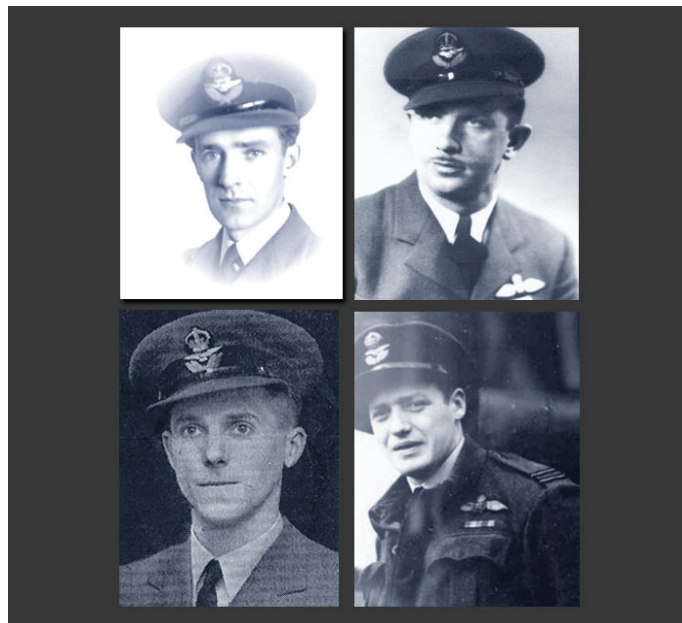
The loss of Phillips and his fellow crew members was a devastating blow to the tight-knit squadron. Though their aircraft rarely flew together and were always in distant locations overseas, the men prided themselves with their accomplishments and the quality of their crews. The remaining Fortresses (9205 and 9206) were both struck from the RCAF lists a year later and sold to the civil registry in Argentina. They were both reported scrapped in 1964. Whilst 168 was operating the Flying Fortresses, it also operated eight Convair-built Consolidated Liberators for Mailcan flights. These aircraft proved incredibly reliable and had a higher capacity for freight. “Libs” accounted for the lion’s share of lifting, accounting for nearly 400 of the Atlantic crossings, all without loss of life. In all, 168 transport aircraft flew 636 times across the ocean. Of these flights, 240 were made by the small fleet of six Flying Fortresses. In Europe, 168 Squadron pilots used DC-3s to do short distance delivery of the mail. With all types of aircraft, Middleton’s 168 Squadron flew 26,417 flying hours and carried 2,245,269 pounds of mail, which included 9,125,000 letters from home and from the front. In addition, the squadron also carried 2,762,771 lbs of freight and 42,057 passengers.

The total weight of cargo, the number of letters, the tally of crossings, the distances and hours flown, tell only half the story. One cannot quantify the greatest of all the accomplishments achieved by the crews and Fortresses of 168 Squadron, for it is as intangible as a knowing smile, a feeling of warmth, or a tear shed in joy. The mighty Mailcan “Forts” and their war hero crews brought news from home, the fragrance of love letters, the renewed hope for reunion, a strengthening of bonds stretched to the extreme, and the knowledge that the home front was still there, that the

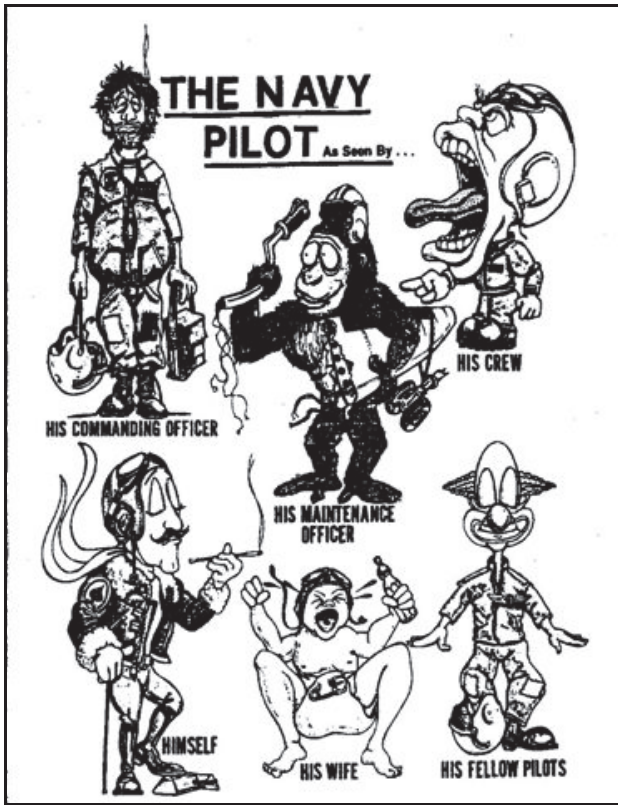
chaos and horror of Europe could be left behind if a man was to survive. I know in my heart that the men who flew the 168 Heavy Transport Squadron Fortresses understood this well and that their accomplishment brought them great joy. Sadly, they risked and, in some cases, forfeited all to bring our boys letters from home.

I can see them now—Hillcoat and Rutledge—sitting relaxed in the front of their Flying Fortress, climbing out of Rabat, Morocco, heading east once again to the Azores, the sun shining in through the glass, the four big Wrights thundering, the blue Atlantic off the African coast 10,000 feet below. They chat, they laugh, they conduct their complex business as professionals. Perhaps they are talking about the progress of the war, the fact that it may soon be over. Perhaps they are talking about friends they have lost. Inside, despite the risks of the flight they are undertaking, they are both no doubt relieved that they are headed home to Canada, that they do not have to fly in combat again. All is good. They are returning to their families.

We leave them there, out over the Atlantic where, for ever more, they are young and beautiful and heading home.



When Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress 9203 was lost over the Atlantic, Canada lost some of its most decorated and experienced flying heroes. I tried to find images of all eight men who were lost, but managed to find photos of only these four men. Clockwise from upper left: Flight Lieutenant Frederick La Brish, AFC; Flight Lieutenant Horace Hillcoat, AFC, AFM; Flight Lieutenant William Pullar, DFC and Flight Lieutenant John Rutledge, DFC and Bar, Flying Cross (Netherlands). Photos via Veterans Affairs (From the Editor - Due to length of article and space in WARRIOR, the above is an abridged copy of a wonderful article. See the full article, with photos, on the Foundation web site www.samfoundation.ca or on Vintage Wings. Many thanks to Dave O'Malley for giving us permission to print the story, in part.)



D. Piers, N. Unsworth, A. Williams, N. Winchester



Pete Hamilton, David Matheson, Barry Montgomery, Curt Millar, U/K Norm Ethridge, Jav Stevenson, Joe Gallant



Barry Montgomery, Norm Ethridge, Ken Waterman and Keith Sterling

WE GET LETTERS, EMAIL, NOTES & VISITORS

ROD HUTCHESON writes:

Greetings Kay---as usual your summer edition was a winner and the continuing very high quality of the print, layout and of course the content make it a pleasure to read. In this issue I particularly enjoyed the well-researched articles "Sea Fury Field of Dreams", describing the demise of a number of old five-bladed friends from my 870/871 days, and Allan Browne's excellent article on the life and times of the yacht "Pickle". The latter raised memories of my early association with the Pickle and the realization that I must have rubbed shoulders with Allan during her initial restoration. It has also triggered some comments that may help to complete her history that Allan has so painstakingly researched. I have taken the liberty of attaching them to this email in case you feel that they may be of some interest to your readership in a future edition of Warrior.

Keep up the great work. I know that Bill is up there reading each edition cover-to-cover with a big smile!

Cheers, Rod Hutcheson.

CAPT (L) J.G.R. HUTCHESON, RCN (RET'D) writes:

Comments on Allan Browne's article "Pickle" in the summer 2014 edition of "Warrior".

By way of background, in 1955 I was serving as the Air Electrical Officer of the Carrier Air Group in the Maggie. Having had some experience in messing about in boats on both coasts and racing Newport/Bermuda in the Wanderer IX in 1952 (more about the Wanderer in a moment), I was persuaded, by whom I can't recall, to get involved with the Pickle then undergoing a stem-to-gudgeon renovation in the old SNAM hangar down by the water in Shearwater. This got me into the clutches of Charlie Church who put me to work in my spare time on such dogsbody jobs as scraping, sanding and painting. Although I do not have a before picture, the photo accompanying this note shows Pickle in the hangar nearing the end of her restoration after a lot of hard work. I ended up joining her commissioning crew and participating in her first ocean race-----and therein lies the reason for these comments.

Contrary to the statement in Allan Browne's excellent article, wherein he indicates that Pickle's first international race as a Canadian yacht was Newport-to-Bermuda in 1956, her first race was, in fact, the biennial Marblehead-to-Halifax in July, 1955. By June of that year we had her looking like a new yacht and ready for

sea. In anticipation, we had already entered her in the Marblehead race which left us little time to get race-ready. Our skipper was Commander "Trigger" Wadds, a gunnery officer of some notoriety in naval circles. Typical of his capers was the provision of duty-free liquor for the boat, to which we were entitled when out of Canadian waters. He had ordered that a supply be brought to the Pickle from the Maggie's stores before we sailed and I was instructed to be at the boat to receive the precious cargo. As the truckload of liquor arrived so did Trigger and I was summarily dismissed. I estimate that not more than ten percent of it was stowed in the Pickle and only Trigger knew what happened to the rest.

Our run down the east coast to Marblehead was done in typical summer weather for that area---cold and foggy, but at least it was not as stormy as my previous voyage in the Wanderer IX. I remember little of the race back to Halifax other than losing a mainstay during a squall. A boatswain's chair was rigged on the main halyard and, as the lightest member of the crew, I was hoisted to the masthead to make repairs. This put me about seventy-five feet above the deck and describing a wide arc out over the open ocean each time the boat rolled. I must have spent 90% of the time hanging on for dear life and 10% on the repairs. I do not recall how we placed in the race but I don't think we did too badly for a crew that had not previously sailed together and in a boat that we had never raced.

I attach two other photos that may be of interest. One shows Pickle under sail and the second is of her skipper and crew before we left for Marblehead. I have added to the latter the names that I can recall and a question mark on



three that, after almost 60 years, I can no longer name. Perhaps Allan will be able to fit names to those three and also add to his master list those not already on it, myself included.

A word concerning Wanderer IX. Although Allan includes her in his list of the RCN's sail training boats, I do not believe that she ever had such a role or in fact any connection with the RCN per se. In 1952 when ten of us leased her from the estate of the late D.R. Turnbull, in order to sail her in that year's Newport/Bermuda race, it was a private arrangement at our own expense in which the RCN played no official part other than granting us leave for the period of the race and permitting us duty free liquor once at sea. We sailed under the burgee of the newly-formed RCN Sailing Association who donated the cup for the winner, on corrected time, of the return Bermuda/Halifax race which we won. The whole idea was somewhat ill-conceived for she was a 31-year-old boat no longer in condition for ocean racing in the North Atlantic crewed, with one invaluable exception in the person of Joe Prosser, by amateurs. This adventure, and it was indeed an adventure, I described at some length in a letter to my parents immediately after its conclusion. Fifty-three years later, and some fifteen years after my mother's death, this letter was discovered in her old writing desk. It has subsequently been published in the "Argonauta", the newsletter of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, and "Salty Dips" Vol. 9 under the title "A Young Man's Introduction to Ocean Racing". If someone out there has reliable information related to any other involvement of Wanderer IX with the RCN, or her ultimate demise, I would be very interested in hearing it.



Pickle under renovation.

THE FOLLOWING CAME FROM TWO DROP IN VISITORS:

#1 I was asked why I used articles from other places rather than just about Shearwater.

Editor's reply It was time for us to open up. WARRIOR was no longer just a newsletter. Most articles are Naval

Air in one form or another no matter where they are from. If this gentleman wants to see more Shearwater articles in WARRIOR, perhaps he'd best start writing some.

#2 The reader thought an article wasn't finished and wanted to know why. He said he was on the particular Squadron that was written about and didn't see anything of his memories of people he knew that were serving on that squadron written there. I asked him to put his concerns in writing for WARRIOR but he declined. He doesn't like confrontation.

Editor's reply: If you don't write it down, then nothing will come of it.

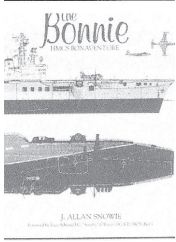
From the Editor: I believe this is the place to reprint (in part) Bill Farrell's 'Editor's Grunts' from the Fall of 2004. Please read all the way through.

Editor's Grunts We soldier (sailor?) on with precious little guidance from you readers. This leads us to suspect that you are all dead - but then - if you were really dead, you wouldn't be renewing your memberships and sending in special donations. There's gotta be another explanation for your silence and the only one we can come up with is that you are satisfied with the tripe we send you - yea, more than satisfied. We, Kay and I, have come to believe that you are so impressed by the magnificence of our publication that you must be asking yourselves "How can you improve upon perfection?" and, accordingly, you refrain from offering suggestions. I'm not kidding: our egos have swelled to cosmic dimensions.

So we sail on with messdeck anecdotes, old photos and the like, but ***we will, more and more, have articles designed to appeal to a broader audience. If this Foundation is to survive the passing of us old farts, it must recruit new members. Until our servants on Parliament Hill come to their senses and fund the rebuilding of naval and maritime aviation, we will have no pool of serving and retired warriors to recruit from. Therefore, the urgent need to reach out to all Canadians with an interest in things military and things historical. If you don't like the word urgent, go read the Delta List.***

So stand by for more tales of heroic acts in air and sea battles in addition to messdeck yarns of "the good old days."

(From this Editor. That was written ten years ago and the same things apply. If you want something different in WARRIOR, get on with it. Most importantly, we at the SAMF need new members. If you aren't one, you sure as hell should be one. Perhaps you could try and recruit new members for



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Guidelines for designing your “Wall of Honour” Tile.

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

The options are:

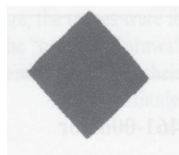
- Option A:** One half tile 12" X 12" x 17" and triangular in shape with up to 5 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 60 letters and spaces. The longest row can accommodate up to 20 letters and spaces. The remaining 4 rows will decrease in length as the border/edge of the tile dictates. It should be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

Option A



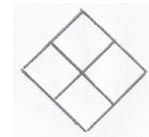
\$300

Option B & C



\$600

Option D



\$600

Wall Tiles may be purchased through monthly installments.

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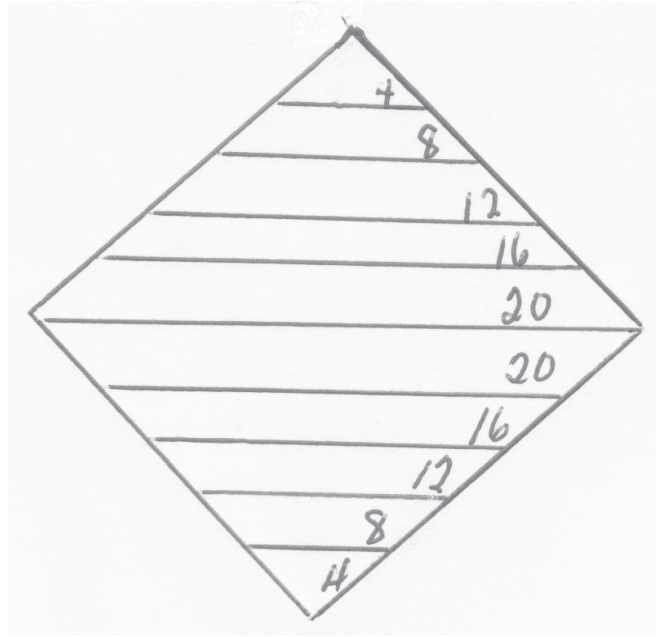
Full Tiles - \$200 day of purchase - \$ 100 per month for the following four months.

Continued next page

(Wall Tiles (continued))

ENGRAVING REQUEST

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



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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 the 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 a **reduced rate of Income Tax**. So don't wait for Spring - DO IT NOW!

Requests made by Will: In your Will, you may leave a lump sum bequest or a bequest of a specified percentage of the remainder 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 to 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 this ____ 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 \$ _____

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us. There are 1200 serving members on Base - oops 12 Wing - and only two of them are members.)

IAN LOGAN WRITES: Re John 'Deke' Logan.

I am John's son and POA. I just returned from visiting him in Victoria. He passed on the latest issue of "Warrior", as the feature was Don Sheppard, an old friend of his and the family, and, indeed, Dad was mentioned/quoted a couple of times in this edition. From that I discerned that you were missed in my change of address notices for him late in 2013. He is in the same senior's residence in Victoria (Berwick House) and it did make its way to him, but he has moved to the "care unit". The care unit has a different street/ mailing address. His correct address is 121, 4062 Shelbourne St., Victoria, BC, V8N 3E6. Trust you can amend your records. Thank you. Ian Logan.

From the Editor: For you folks who know Deke Logan, I hope you get the chance to send him a note or drop in and see him. Kay



DALE SMITH writes:

This is the Knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honor presented to my brother Wyman by the French government. He has also been one of sixteen Canadians chosen to visit the three Canadian war graves in Italy in November. Not bad for a 93 year old.

Des Steel writes: I see nothing abusive in the terms oilers or greasers. Quite the contrary. In the navy we have always had nicknames for all sorts of things and people. We knew the RN as the "Andrew". Middies, snotties, crushers. Store bashers, jack dusty, slops, pussers, bunting tossers. Jimmies, etc etc. I'm sure most of us, whether RCN or RN, in my case both, could go on adding to the list for quite some time.

Leo Pettipas replies: Kay: Further to Des's comment --

in a future edition of the newsletter, how about a "glossary" of Canadian Naval Air slang (local inventions as well as those borrowed from other navies and commonly used)? They crop up quite often in our messages, and I'm sure lots of the navairgeners would be able to contribute. Here are a few, in addition to those listed by Des: cabs, fishheads, Eastern Passage pirates, Slackers (Stad), helos, crabfats, pongos, chokey, bombers (ASW a/c), greasies/oilies, dumbos (crane), Turkeys, T-birds, Banjos, Stringbags, nasal radiators. In fact, there are probably more than could be accommodated in a single article, so there would have to be some selection as to what finally goes in. Just a thought.

(From the Editor - how about it guys? Any names to add to the above?)

Chris Thain Sec./Treasurer, Friends of the Naval Museum writes:

I happened to come across the spring issue of Warrior and I was interested in the article on the Link Trainer donated by Michael Baron as I, as a volunteer with the Naval Museum of Manitoba, was involved with the crating of the trainer for shipment from Winnipeg to Shearwater.

In the article you mention that Michael Shortridge and Claude Rivard arranged for the transportation of the trainer to Shearwater. That is correct, but what is missing is credit for obtaining the trainer in the first place. It was Ron Skelton, a volunteer with the Naval Museum of Manitoba and a good friend of Michael Barron, who had been aware of the existence of the Ling Trainer for many years. It was Ron Skelton who convinced Mr. Barron that there was a better place for it than collecting dust in a garage. Without Mr. Skelton's persuasion there would not have been a Link Trainer to transport to Shearwater.

Just thought I would mention it. Acquiring the trainer was by far the most important step in its move from a garage in Winnipeg to the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Allan Browne LSAR1 writes: Oh yes, the newspaper account the next day of that epic football game between Shearwater Flyers and Dartmouth Arrows did indeed query why Rolly West threw a pass on the very last play of a game which was already won.

Alas, Rolly did not throw that fateful pass. It was I. Now, some 60 years after the fact truth will out and Rolly shall stand vindicated in this grievous event.

The background to this story is of a regular game of the Atlantic Football league in October 1952. Dartmouth was a

new entrant to the game and the league that year. With out experience they were not expected to do well let alone beat a Navy team. Flyers on the other hand were vying with arch rival Stadacona for first place.

Arrows games were played at the baseball field where Holiday Inn is now located. They had lights and this game was played in the evening under lights. The first lights game in Atlantic Canada was an exhibition game to honour Mike Milovich who had been our coach and died in an Avenger crash at Terence Bay.

It was a given that Shearwater would win this game and in fact on Sept. 23, 1952 we had moved up the ladder to second place after Stadacona and this game was for first place.

To set the stage, it remained only to complete the final play and win the game 17 to 14. It was only necessary to take the snap from center Graham Currie and place one's knee upon the turf, clock runs down game over.

Coach Jack Dean decided at the last moment to make a few substitutions and Mike O'Connor , Mike Miljus and Rolly came out. Ted Hucker came on to replace O'Connor at right end and I was in to replace Rolly at quarterback for this oh so brief instant that would end the game in a victory.

As we reported in, Ted Hucker said to me to keep an eye on him as he was going to be a 'sleeper'. He did, he just walked along the sideline and laid prone at the line of scrimmage, unnoticed by everyone but me. In my mind's eye an opportunity for a more spectacular finish was presented. Last second heroics perhaps, and I took it.

Mike Miljus recalls standing on the sideline in the dying moments when what to his utter astonishment should he see but me, not kneeling but fading back to pass and witnessing a perfect spiral (his words) flung about 40 yards downfield towards Ted Hucker now on the run from his 'sleeper' position on the sideline and completely open.

Alas it was not to be as the ball came down out of the night sky - short - right into the open arms of a Dartmouth defender who in dumbstruck amazement gathered it home and virtually strolled, untouched and not even pursued into our end zone for a final touchdown. Game over, clock stopped, last play and Dartmouth wins 20 to 17.

Stunned is the only word for our team, their team and the entire stricken crowd, mostly Shearwater fans. It was not intended for the game to end this way. We had not only lost that game but also first place which was more galling and a bitter pill to Mike Miljus, in particular. Mike recounts entering the dressing room in a state of emotion and flinging his helmet against the wall where it split apart. No

small feat. Some temper and that was mild. Other comments were made, none too complimentary as you may imagine.

Danny McCowell our captain stood over me and was livid and could hardly speak he was so angry. His fists were clenched at his side as he ranted and not without cause. The word apoplexy comes to mind when I think back. Bruce Walker was more calm and he just came by to say he wanted to see me – outside. Rolly remained level headed and calm as well and stated to Mike Miljus that we would win the next time and to forget it. There were other threats which my mind mercifully blanks out. I am told I did a 'Houdini' act as soon as I changed to civvies.

Without a friend in the world, far from home and lonesome (poor me!) I remember taking off for downtown sneaking from tree to bush till I came to the Chinese restaurant across from Bubba O'Hearn's sport shop on Commercial near Ochterloney. There I sat myself in a booth where I could keep an eye on the door waiting for the lynch mob to arrive. First I saw Bruce peering in the window and as he turned to tell the 'gang' (my former teammates), I scooted through the kitchen and out the back door and headed for home on Green Street, not too far away. The problem here is that a group of us all lived in the same home and were known as Nellie's Boys, our landlady. That included Danny, Bruce, Rolly, Knatchbell and Laughlin. I was not safe. But tempers had cooled by then. I was not compelled to walk a plank and keel-hauling was mercifully long past but I was definitely a candidate.

In the face of all the bitter enmity Rolly remained calm as always, which is why he was such a great team leader and superb quarterback. I do not think he had read the newspaper account as yet.

Some things are never forgotten and it was about 1979 when leaving the ferry in Sydney BC I spotted Hoss Anderson directing traffic flow. Lowering the window I hollered – "hi Hoss" and after a double take he replied – "young Brown – thrown any passes lately???" . This ignominy after 26 years had passed. Hoss was to regale the Banshee Chapter members with this tale and even brought out the newspaper clipping from his scrapbook to confirm that Rolly wore the can in this debacle and was able to attest that indeed it was really Browne. Games may come and go but this game lives on forever in my memory, obviously. Sharing this story at this time is to attest that Rolly as a true gentleman, has never indicated in any way, shape or form that he held any rancor towards me.

Finally, it must be noted that on December 4, 1952 Shearwater Flyers led by Rolly West and passer Bill Gourley went on to win their first championship in five years and the Purdy Cup with the trouncing of Stadacona 65 to 6.

Sweet revenge. Not that I was vindicated, but I was really glad to put 1952 behind me.

Bruce and I went on to become wingers and on Operation Mariner while in New York City we used him as bait to attract the girls, he did. Danny was to be best man at my wedding in 1953 and married our bridesmaid. Mike O'Connor and I were to start an automatic car wash business but he went upper deck into engineering while Mike Miljus and I have had a pleasant reuniting at a recent reunion in Ottawa and remain in touch. He is now a retired Niagara Falls policeman. Rolly everybody knows of course and he must be commended for his efforts in the establishment of a sports section of our museum and his long standing contributions on behalf of Naval Air.

Contributors: Rolly West Mike Miljus

Ron Reiersen writes: Hi Kay. I'm taking your advice and paying my SAMF membership early. I'm one of the people that goes away for the winter to get away from cold Saskatchewan. At my age I do have a tendency to forget some of the important things in life, like paying my SAMF Membership

I really enjoy the WARRIOR magazine and read it from cover to cover. It's nice to read the articles and comments from the guys I used to know years and years ago.

Best of luck in getting all that you need for the Museum - it's a great place to visit and it brings back lots of old memories.

Lorraine Hogg says - I received my copy of WARRIOR and as usual, I was not disappointed. Some of the articles were about things that happened before my time, but, nevertheless interesting.

Being born into a Navy family, most of the items bring back very fond memories of the years I spent being involved in Shearwater. A one time, the building the Museum is in now, was the Rec Centre. Many happy times there. Later it became Canex. I worked in that Canex Store. And now it is the Museum! A very nice place to visit.

Thanks for all the good articles - I enjoy everyone of them.

From **Raymond Hotham**. Kay, Christine and Staff. Just a quick note to let you know that George's funeral service included a memorial service by the Officers, Padre and members of the Royal Canadian Naval Association including a Color Party immediately before the regular

service by Rev Summers. A fitting tribute for a Naval Air Veteran. Brother George would have been so very proud. Truly ... his heart belonged to Shearwater and Naval Air.

J. Edward Troy writes: Dear Sirs: I enclosed my membership.

I do so in remembrance of my brother Lt. W.T. Barry Troy who lost his life on 25 February 1958 while flying a Banshee off the Bonaventure.

It is important to me that Canadian Naval Aviators not be forgotten. Sincerely...J.E. Troy

From Manulife Financial.

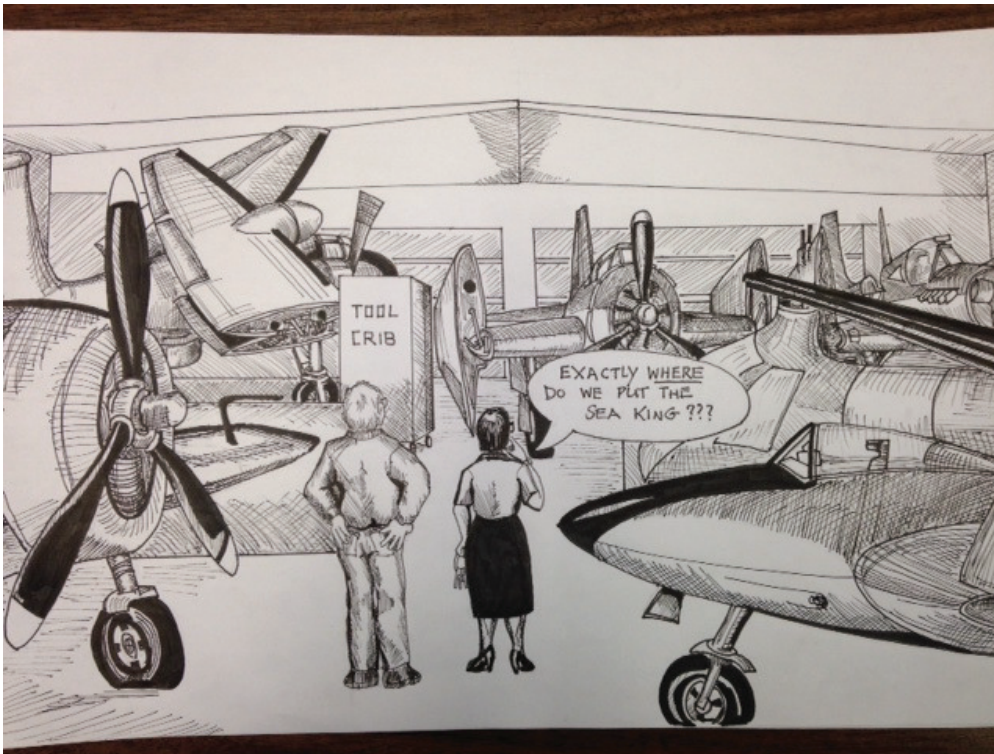
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(From the Editor: Congratulations to Manulife for such a wonderful program. It certainly has helped SAMF in a significant manner due to (name withheld). Perhaps you, our readers, might look into your financial companies to see if they have such a program.)



WE NEED SPACE!

From the Editor.

This issue has been made up, in part, of memories of your days in Naval Air - there was no life like it, was there. So let us know what you thought of your Naval Air experiences. Please, pick up your pen and drop us a line. Just do it! We aren't getting any younger (darn it all) and surely you don't want your memories of Shearwater and Naval Air to go out with you.

As for articles from today's serving members, we had a few sent in a few years ago but nothing since. They could write about their daily experiences. If what they are doing today is secret, perhaps they could write something about their previous experiences.

You have read time and again that the Museum still needs space - and it surely does. The WComd mentioned the following at our last AGM meeting in early September 2014: "DHH has been asked to fund a building expansion for the Museum. Although they basically agree, there will not be any funding for this expansion any time soon."

So there you have it. The **Foundation** has been building up a fund for the new building. I don't want to sound morbid guys, but we (a fair number of us) are coming close to the wire. You know we need your help desperately - so, you know what you have to do - please give. This can be done different ways - get your families to join the Foundation; upgrade your membership level; add a Codicil to your Will

making the Foundation a beneficiary to it; purchase a Wall Tile and ask that funding for it be used for a new building expansion, participate in our fund raising ventures (50 50 draw, dinner/auction etc).. If it wasn't for you the last new hangar in the Museum would never have come into being. Just do the best you can please

Before I forget, many thanks to all the volunteers who have help me and the Foundation during the past several years - Margaret Ferguson, Carol Shadbolt, Patti Gemmell, Lisa Bullen, Christine Hines, Jim Elliott and Mrs Elliott, Ron Beard, Jamie Archibald, Dave and Rose Arsenault of RODEW Web Services who we truly can't thank enough . In addition, Halcraft Printers have been very good to us also. Thanks to Halcraft's Mike, Diane and staff. If I've forgotten anyone, consider it old age and I beg forgiveness.

As for this time of year, you know I think of you all and wish you and yours the most Joyous Christmas you've ever had. If you are alone these days (and it gets lonely - I know), still celebrate this precious time of year. I guarantee you won't feel alone. Keep well.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Kay



Names please? Where are they performing and for what?

Milk Run

by Chris McKenna

The Captain of a Navy ship at sea is perhaps the closest thing to an absolute dictator left on Earth. While this is certainly true of most ships, it is not quite the whole truth aboard an aircraft carrier. The Captain rules the ship absolutely, but he leaves the Air Boss to run the flight deck. As a Naval Aviator, I saw the Air Boss as larger than life. He was the voice of authority crackling in my headset, a tyrant with a hair trigger who lashed out at anyone foolhardy enough to disregard him. He used strong language and demanded immediate compliance. He was a man with immense responsibility and an ego to match. And he was addressed by everyone aboard, including the Captain, simply as "Boss."



I flew the CH-46 Sea Knight, a tandem rotor helicopter typically deployed on supply ships within the battle group. It was our job to deliver "beans and bullets"

to the fleet. While not actually stationed on the carrier itself, we "hit" it at least every other day, restocking everything needed to keep a small "city at sea" running. It was exciting, challenging flying, requiring great precision and skill, and I loved it. I was in my early twenties and in command of a four-man crew and a multimillion dollar aircraft. But always there, just below the surface, was the aura of the Air Boss. It would lead me to one of the biggest blunders I have ever made in my flying career. But for a matter of a few feet, excellent training, and some dumb luck, it could well have claimed the lives of my crew.

It was a day like most others for a Sea Knight pilot. We launched before dawn on a vertrep mission, the vertical replenishment of ships at sea that was our specialty. In a synchronized aerial ballet, we flew manoeuvres called side-flairs and button-hooks, moving tons of cargo, attached externally to a heavy gauge steel hook beneath the helicopter. Whether it was ammunition, food, machinery, or mail - referred to as "pony" - the ships in the Battle Group depended on us for sustenance. Vertrep allowed the Battle Group to disperse over more than a hundred miles of ocean, and still receive the daily supplies necessary to operate.

By noon we had completed the vertrep, and only had a load of internal cargo left for the carrier. At ten miles out, I keyed

the microphone and called the Air Boss for clearance into his domain.

"Boss, Knightrider zero-six, ten miles out for landing."

"Negative Knightrider, recoveries in progress. Take starboard delta," he mono toned, referring to the holding pattern designated for helicopters.

Sometimes I thought he put us there just to show his disdain, as there often seemed to be no reason for it. But today he actually was recovering jets, and we took our interval in the delta pattern with the carrier's Sea King helicopter already orbiting. I watched as the jets made their approaches and either "trapped" - caught one of the four arresting cables on the flight deck, or "boltered" - missed the wires and went around. As many times as I saw it, I never lost my fascination for carrier operations, and my admiration for those guys. With all the jets aboard, I anxiously awaited our landing clearance. We hadn't eaten since around 3am, and wanted to get back to our ship for chow. But the voice of authority had other plans.

"Knightrider, I've got another cycle fifteen minutes out. I'm going to recover them first before I bring you aboard," he said matter-of-factly.

"I haven't got the fuel for that Boss," I shot back.

"Then you'll have to bingo," he replied, without a hint of sympathy in his voice.

"That cocky so and so," I thought I could land, offload, and be airborne again in less than five minutes, and he knew it. But he was the Air Boss and his word was law, so I shut my mouth and turned for home. But then I remembered those big orange bags on the cabin floor behind me - the ones with "U. S. Mail" stencilled on them - and realized that they represented my landing clearance. As any sailor knows, "mail-call" ranks just below "liberty-call" in a mariner's heart. Not even the Air Boss could resist the powerful lure of his mail. I keyed the mike, and played my trump card.

"Be advised Boss, we have pony aboard."

I knew that everyone in the tower was staring at him right then, silently willing him to reverse himself. And if he didn't, word would spread like wild fire to each of the six thousand sailors on that ship that he had denied them a mail-call. He couldn't say no.

"Ok Knightrider, you're clear to land, spot three," he spat, specifying the area all the way forward on the angled deck.

He was obviously annoyed, but what did I care? In minutes we would be out of his airspace and on our way back home

for chow. I flew a slow, shallow approach, careful not to let my rotor wash disrupt the activity on the flight deck. As soon as I touched down, my aircrewmembers lowered the aft deck and began pushing pallets down the rollers to the waiting forklifts. It was like clockwork. Only minutes after receiving his grudging clearance, we were empty and buttoned up.

"Boss, Knightrider zero six is ready to lift, spot three," I transmitted.

"Hold on Knightrider," he ordered. "I just got a call from supply. They want you to move a load of milk back to home plate for dispersal. How many gallons can we load max?"

It was a question I had never gotten before. I knew we could lift about seven thousand pounds with our current fuel load, but I hadn't a clue how many gallons of milk that equated to. I looked over at Dave, my copilot, and wondered if he had any more insight on the nature of milk than I did.

"Got any idea what a gallon of milk weighs?" I asked.

He just looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, and turned his palms upward in what is commonly referred to as the Ensign's salute.

"Come on Knightrider, I need a number. I've got Tacair inbound," the voice of authority growled.

I could feel my palms starting to sweat as the forklifts came off the elevators with pallets of milk.

"Come on Knightrider!" he snarled.

I pulled the calculator out of my helmet bag and input 7000. Now I just needed to know what to divide it by. The supply officer usually did all this for us. But here on the carrier I was on my own, and for some reason it was important to me to impress the Air Boss. I was determined to take the biggest load we could.

"Hey Knightrider!" he barked. "I need a number and I need it now. How many gallons?"

"I guess milk weighs about the same as fuel, right Dave?"

He rendered another Ensign's salute.

I knew that jet fuel weighed 6.5 pounds per gallon. We used that figure all the time. Even though that voice in my head told me it was a mistake, I convinced myself that a liquid was a liquid, and milk must weigh about the same as jet fuel. I plugged it into my calculator and, just as the Air Boss started to growl again, closed my eyes and gave him his number.

"One zero five zero gallons Boss," I transmitted with far more confidence than I actually felt. It was meager comfort that I had actually left a twenty-seven-gallon "cushion," just in case milk was a little heavier than fuel. How much heavier could it be?

"Ok Knightrider. Here it comes. Be ready to go as soon as we button you up," he ordered. "I have Tacair inbound."

The forklifts dropped the pallets on the ramp, and our aircrewmembers pushed them up the rollers and secured them to the deck. In minutes the cabin was filled with enough milk for the entire Battle Group, the ramp was closed, and I was ready to lift.

"Boss, Sabre Seven, five miles out for the break."

"Cleared for the left break Saber Seven. Caution for a Helo lifting spot three. Break, Knightrider you are cleared for immediate takeoff."

That was it. My welcome, as tepid as it was, was officially worn out now that the fighters were on station.

I had hoped to do a thorough power check while hovering in the ground effect cushion of the flight-deck before transitioning over the deck edge.

Ground effect, or the extra lift derived from operating close to the ground, can be a blessing or a curse. Given a long hover run, a pilot could accelerate in ground effect until reaching flying speed, thereby lifting far more weight than would be possible from a standard climbing transition. The carrier however, presented the opposite situation. From our position forward on the angle, I would take off into a ground effect hover, and then transition over the deck edge ninety feet above the water, to an immediate and complete loss of ground effect. It would require tremendous power at max weight . . . every ounce the aircraft had. The little voice inside my head kept telling me about it as I slowly raised the collective to hover, but the big voice in my headset kept drowning him out.

"Come on Knightrider, I need my deck!" he bellowed.

I stabilized in a ten-foot hover and glanced down at the torque gauges to evaluate the power required. Back on my ship, I would have taken thirty or forty seconds in the hover to evaluate a takeoff this critical. But this wasn't my home deck. It was the Air Bosses deck, and he wanted it back.

"I want that damn Helo off my deck Knightrider, and I mean now!" he screamed. So without ever getting a stabilized torque reading, and against all my better judgment, I eased the stick forward and the aircraft lumbered across the deck

edge.

As soon as I saw blue water through the chin bubble, I knew we were in trouble. The aircraft immediately settled, and I instinctively countered by raising the collective to add power. But instead of checking the sink rate, the helicopter only settled faster. The steady whirring noise of the rotor blades changed to a distinct "whump, whump, whump," and the familiar peripheral blur slowed to the point where I could clearly see each individual rotor blade. A quick glance at the gauges confirmed that both engines were working normally. I was simply demanding more power than they could produce, and the rotor speed was decaying under the strain.

I should have predicted what would happen next. With a perceptible jolt, both electrical generators "kicked" off. Powered by the rotor system itself, they had been designed to "shed" at 88% of optimum rotor speed. Thankfully it was daylight, so lighting wasn't an issue, but the jolt I felt was the loss of the flight control stability system. The helicopter was still controllable, but it was far more work without the stab system. Things were starting to go very badly.

As the rotor speed continued to audibly and visibly decay, I realized the only chance we had was to somehow get back into ground effect. If I continued to "wallow" like this, the helicopter would eventually "run out of turns" and crash, or simply settle into the ocean and sink. Neither of those appealed to me, so I determined to try a maneuver the "Old Salts" called "scooping it out."

Any pilot will understand when I say it is counterintuitive, when faced with an undesirable sink rate, to decrease either power or pitch. But "scooping it out" required both. In order to dive back into ground effect, I lowered the nose and the windscreen filled with the sight of blue water and white foam. To preserve some of the rapidly deteriorating rotor speed, I lowered the collective and descended. The ocean rose fast. Remembering my crewmen, I managed to blurt out "Brace for impact!" over the intercom. Dave immediately sensed what I was attempting, and began a running commentary of altitudes and rotor speeds.

"Fifteen feet, 84% "

I needed forward airspeed and knew I had to trade some more altitude to get it, so I eased the stick forward a little more.

"Five feet, 85% "

I stopped descending and stabilized in the ground effect run.

"Three feet, 85%."

"Ok," I thought. "We're not settling anymore, and the rotor

speed has at least stopped decaying." But I couldn't seem to coax any acceleration out of it, and this close to the water, even a rogue wave could bring us down. That's when I decided that I really hated milk.

"Three feet, 86 %."

With just the pitiful speed I had brought from the dive, and no sign of any acceleration, I began to despair. What else could I do? I thought about asking Dave, but didn't think I could bear another Ensign's salute. Then I remembered those Old Salts in the ready room again. "Remember, this aircraft has no tail rotor. If you ever need just a little something extra, try a fifteen-degree right yaw. The increase in drag is negligible, but it feeds undisturbed air to your aft rotors."

Well, what did I have to lose at this point? I gently pushed on the right pedal and the helicopter yawed. Again, it seemed counterintuitive. If I was trying to accelerate, shouldn't I streamline the aircraft? But I was out of options.

"Two feet, 85%."

I began running through the ditching procedures in my mind. But then I noticed that the waves were gliding by slightly faster than they had been only seconds before. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, we were accelerating.

"Three feet, 88%."

I glanced down at the airspeed indicator and my heart leaped; it had moved off the peg and was passing through forty knots. The next thing I felt was that beautiful shudder every helicopter pilot knows as translational lift - the point where the aircraft is flying more like an airplane than hovering like a helicopter.

"Five feet, 92%."

Then I felt another jolt, and knew the generators had come back on the line, bringing the stab system with them. We were a fully functioning aircraft again. I accelerated through our normal climb speed, remembering those Old Salts once again. "Speed is life."

"Ten feet, 100%."

At ninety knots and all our turns back, I finally felt confident enough to climb. Passing through one hundred feet, and over a mile from the carrier, the voice of authority spoke.

"It's great to see you flying again Knightrider. We were all holding our breath up here. I hope I didn't talk you into doing something ugly."

Well what do you know. The guy was human after all. Who knew?

Turning for home, I passed the controls to Dave, and sat back. For the first time, I took a deep breath and noticed that my hands were shaking. I had made a rookie mistake, and very nearly paid for it with four lives and a helicopter. I had allowed myself to be intimidated by the Air Boss, and sacrificed my judgment as a result.

I did some checking the next day, and found that the weight of a gallon of milk is 8.7 pounds, a far cry from the 6.5 I had estimated. So even with my little "pad," we took off from that carrier more than 2,100 pounds overweight. And that doesn't even consider the weight of the pallets and packaging. All in all, I was very lucky to get away with it.

That was almost twenty years ago, and I guess I'm the Old Salt now. I've accumulated thousands of flight hours and more than a few gray hairs since then, but I try never to forget the lessons I learned that day. Besides a life-long loathing for milk, I came away from that episode with two rules.

First, never allow external pressures to force a rush to judgment on any matter of safety. There's simply too much at stake. If I ever feel rushed, I make a conscious effort to step back, slow down, and think the matter through.

And second, I never, ever ignore that voice in my head when he tells me something just isn't right. I've learned over the years that he is frequently the only one in the conversation making any sense.

Oh yeah, and when the guy at the supermarket asks me if I want my milk in a bag, I always ask him if he would mind double bagging it for me - just in case.



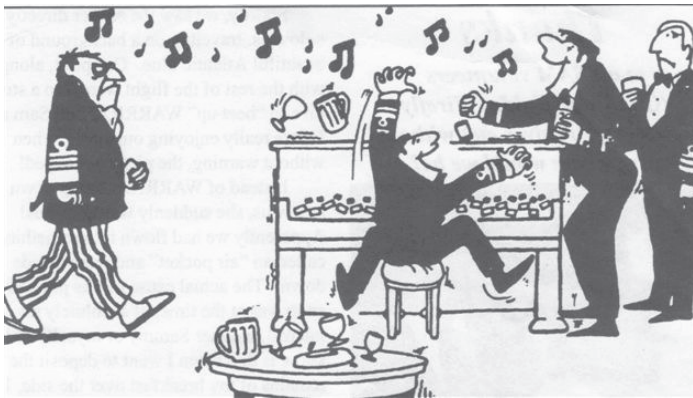
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1952 SHEARWATER FLYERS

Recognize Anyone?



A LITTLE BIT OF CANADA

(A little bit of Heaven)

Sure a little bit of Hades rose from out the sea one day,
 And it settled down near Imperoil not very far away
 And when the Navy saw it, sure it looked so bleak and bare
 They said "Suppose we grab it, we can send the fly boys there".

They sprinkled it with pot holes, as the sailors came and flew
 And here and there a hangar to obstruct the Tower's view
 Now the Government supports us, as our twitch we all suppress
 Sure it never will be Heaven, it's just RCNAS.

Now they said at SNAM, the old Avenger is a lovely kite'
 So go and keep 'em flying lads all day and half the night.
 We stayed at SNAM, a week, a month, a year and half a day
 We tried to keep 'em flying but they spin the other way.

Still when we go out to Luna Park to case the Junior Prom
 Then stagger down to old Pop's Grill to have a yarn with Mom
 It's then we miss the old Avenger though it makes a fuss,
 Sure it's so much more reliable then any old Bell's Bus.

They're building us a Living Block, although its still not there
 But we're slowly making progress and the future it looks fair.

The WRENS have come to join us and they make our dull lives bright,
 They charm us in the daytime, but where do they go at night?

Now we'll have a brand new Carrier, two years from now they say,
 We believe them cause we want to, we're go gullible that way.
 Till then, dear friends, Shearwater will be our fixed address,
 Sure it never will be Heaven, it's just RCNAS.

A Miracle at Sea

From Bryan Hayter

In September of 1953 an almost unknown and incredible event took place on the high seas. This is the story.

I was aboard HMCS Magnificent, the RCN's Majestic class British light fleet carrier when she sailed from Halifax to join a fleet of NATO ships and aircraft on what was heralded as the greatest maritime maneuvers in history, Exercise Mariner. Over a 19 day period 300 ships, 1000 aircraft and half a million men from nine NATO countries took part in coordinated operations in the North Atlantic, North Sea and English Channel. The primary object of this massive undertaking was to test the efficiency of the participating naval forces under simulated conditions of war. What I am about to relate to you is the story of a miracle and it is told not only through my personal recollections but also through my good friend Stuart Soward's book *Hands to Flying Stations Volume 1* and the recollections of Magnificent's Captain, Vice Admiral H.S. Rayner.

For Magnificent the exercise began on September 16, 1953 when she sailed as the senior ship of a task force to provide anti-submarine and air defense for a 10 ship logistic force convoy. Flying intensity was of high order with our squadron Avengers flying around the clock on anti-submarine patrols maintaining four on station. Our fighter aircraft, the Hawker Sea Fury's were conducting dawn to dusk air patrols in defense of the fleet. An additional asset to the air surveillance of the fleet was provided by a flight of airborne early warning Avengers called Guppies.

After the first phase of Mariner was completed the convoy group assumed the role of a logistic support force. Replenishment was carried out and Magnificent and her escorts were now integrated in a fast carrier force with two American Essex class carriers, Bennington and Wasp. The fleet was now transiting one of the most treacherous and unpredictable ocean areas involving the combination of the Labrador and Greenland currents and the Gulf Stream. The ensuing merging of these different over-running currents was not only subject to changing air masses overhead but the entire region was notorious for its unpredictable weather patterns.

On September 23 a series of events unfolded around the 3 carrier task force which swiftly deteriorated into an extremely dangerous situation. It was feared that a catastrophe was about to take place and of such proportions that it would result in the worst peace time disaster in history. Let me share more of this unbelievable story through the eyes of Vice Admiral H.S. Rayner in a newspaper article 11 years after the event. I quote "Probably the most hair-raising incident in the peace time history of the RCN has been recounted for the first time by

Vice admiral H.S. Rayner who retires this month as Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Rayner told a reporter that the September 23 incident, when Canadian and American carrier borne planes were almost lost en masse sticks out in his mind as vividly as his battle actions as a destroyer commander during WW 2. At the time Rayner was commanding the aircraft carrier Magnificent which was in company with US carriers Bennington and Wasp, the US battleship Iowa and a host of other Canadian, American and NATO ships on Exercise Mariner in the mid Atlantic. The nearest landing field was an unmanned strip on the southern tip of Greenland 450 miles from the fleet. Admiral Rayner tells the story this way. "Weather information on that particular afternoon was unusually meagre. At 1330, 52 aircraft were launched in good weather to carry out an exercise some distance from the fleet. Without warning a blanket of fog rolled in. The aircraft were recalled at 1440 but only ten managed to land. Repeated attempts were made to talk down more planes using radar and radio but the pilots couldn't get low enough to see the decks. We could hear the unseen approaches through the solid wall of fog. The Iowa and cruisers were ordered well astern of the carriers to eliminate the hazards of masts and high structures for the aviators. The three carriers were in line abreast. We were entirely dependent on radar because the ships had lost site of one another in the fog. The planes formed up high above the position of the unseen fleet below. At 1620 it was estimated the planes had enough fuel for another two hours. Plans were made for a mass ditching of aircraft. Boats were manned with picked crews, ropes were rigged to hang down over the sides, life rafts were readied for slipping and the sick bay was prepared. Then came a call from a US submarine, Redfin, 10 miles to the west. She said the ceiling near her was 100 feet with two miles visibility. The carriers could not reach the area before dark but the aircraft could so we decided to head for Redfin where the pilots could ditch in a group near the submarine. Just as darkness approached there was a miracle! That is the only words for it. The fog ahead began to thin and lift a bit. We began to make out other ships. The planes were recalled and came down one by one on whatever carrier was convenient. At 1820 it was dark and 10 planes were still in the air even though their estimated fuel time had passed. But they all got down. Within minutes after the last plane landed the fog shut down again. An isolated patch of warm water on the way to Redfin had opened up the fog at exactly the "critical moment" and so the article ended.

As I was flying one of the last 10 aircraft my perspective was much different. After our 1330 launch we formed up in two groups of four with a Guppy Avenger leading and were vectored by the ship in the direction of the 'enemy' submarine Redfin. Not long after turning on course we were instructed to begin an orbit in loose formation until further notice. What was happening? When the minutes grew into hours a real sense of alarm crept over me and my crew. Where were we going to go? About this time the Guppy was ordered to attempt a landing using its great

radar to track in. They couldn't get low enough to see the ship. Before long they were called in again and again to no avail. There was utter silence in the cockpit. It slowly began to dawn on us that we might have to ditch our aircraft and by the look of our dwindling fuel supply and gathering darkness it would be sooner rather than later. I began going over the ditching procedures. My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the ship calling the Guppy in again. We held our breath. Minutes later a triumphant cry broke the silence. They had made it aboard! We had a chance.

With that initial success the ship began to clear us in two by two and when it came to our turn I closed up on my leader as near as I dared. He signaled a descent and before long we entered the dense cloud and fog. Visibility deteriorated drastically. When my radio altimeter registered 150 feet and I could barely make out the water I despaired..

Suddenly a light flashed by, then another and another. What were they? We found out later that they were flares thrown into the water by the ships crew. Our leader followed them until we came upon wake and then the stern of Magnificent and we came up along her starboard side and into the upwind leg of the landing circuit. When the leader turned down wind I counted to 12 and did the same. It was completely dark and as we came abreast of the ship downwind we could barely make out her silhouette. When we turned onto the approach I settled down to watch the LSO's signals like never before for we didn't feel we had enough fuel for an overshoot. As we approached the ships round down with a roger signal the tension eased. The LSO gave a cut and we landed on with a welcome thud. As I was clearing the deck, I noticed an US Skyraider. I thought any old port in a storm I guess. When I climbed out of the cockpit my legs gave way and I slid off the wing into the arms of a group of cheering deckhands. One thoughtful lad thrust a cup of navy rum into my trembling hands and as I slowly drank it down I felt the tension of all those hours in the air begin to ebb. The remaining aircraft came aboard safely. We had all made it. HALLELUJAH!. And the fog closed down again

There was great rejoicing and thanksgiving in the ship and indeed, in the entire fleet that night. Aboard Maggie we attended Chapel to give thanks for the safe return of all of our aircraft and for the blessed miracle that let it happen. We also welcomed our fellow pilot from Bennington and he was overjoyed to share in the libations that the wardroom bar served. The USN does not serve alcohol aboard their ships.

The following morning I made my way to the flight deck to clear my head from the celebration of the night before and to have a look at the visiting aircraft. It was covered with graffiti! As I began to chuckle at the scene, the Captain appeared. He was not chuckling. He ordered the crew to erase the graffiti but did acquiesce to leaving a small red

maple leaf with Maggie below it on the fuselage as a memento of that terrifying night when an American pilot found safe haven aboard a Canadian carrier

When Mariner was completed and the ship back in Halifax my time in 881 Squadron came to a close. I went on to take a helicopter course and spent the next two years helping to form up and then serve in the RCN's first anti-submarine helicopter squadron.

When my seven year short service commission ended a group of great friends threw a farewell party for us. As I looked into their dear faces I was reminded of the life and times that we had spent with this unique and happy band of warriors with whom I was so proud to have served and of the miracle we had been given. It was a life that was so aptly described by an unknown American naval pilot when he said, ***"It gave us moments of fear and loneliness, kinship and challenge, joy and sorrow, pride, tragedy and triumph. It became a part of us then and is a part of us now. It will be with us until the end of our days, the carrier experience."***

And now, the story from the Lower Deck side of the ship.

A sense of danger...
by Allan Browne

Have you ever been to sea Billy?

If the answer is yes you may well relate to this non-fiction tale of a miracle at sea.

If the answer is negative then please read on, you may well be disbelieving but come to believe in miracles ultimately.

I was aboard HMCS Magnificent, Canada's only aircraft carrier at the time. It was the fall of 1953. We were part of the most massive seagoing operation of a combined Allied force. In fact the largest in history.

"Exercise Mariner" was the designation. Ships involved included Canada, USA and England with a total of nine NATO countries involved. Beginning on the East Coast of the United States and transiting the North Atlantic to the European coast a distance of some 5000 miles was to be sailed.

Forming the fleet there were literally hundreds of ships 1,000 airplanes and 5,000 men involved. Any number of aircraft could be flying at any given time, patrolling, tracking submarines, protecting the convoy, taking off,

landing on. This went on day and night and the carriers were very busy places.

In this particular instance we were far to the north executing a swing away from the North American continent towards Europe. Our position was some 500 miles south of Greenland and Iceland. The sea was particularly lumpy but not too high at the time. It was cold, clear and cloudless. By 10:00 hrs. we had recovered all our fighters of VF 871 Squadro, of which Sea Fury 138 with pilot Dave Tate flying was mine. They were all struck below deck into the hangar bays. I was an aircraft 'Rigger' or mechanic on airframes and all of twenty- one years old.

Thus the stage was set for launching our antisubmarine squadron of TBM Avengers. These were limited long-range aircraft and carried a two man crew with pilot and observer.

Our Avenger squadron was airborne by 13:30hrs. As a group it comprised 10 aircraft carrying 20 men in total. The usual flying time was of course governed by fuel which could be conserved by various methods and each pilot was well-trained in stretching it out to maximize air time. It was never known when such a situation would appear. Typically a flight was up for two to three hours.

Following the onset of a dense all enveloping fog the aircraft were immediately recalled to their respective ships. The fog came out of nowhere. Only 10 of the 52 aloft managed a safe landing leaving 42 planes with nowhere to go. Not a single Canadian plane made it back in time and they were all trapped in the clear sunny skies above the fog. What must be running through their minds?

The closest shore base was in Greenland over 450 north miles from our position. It was unreachable by our aircraft due to fuel insufficiency. It was unmanned. Nor did it have any direction finding equipment systems hence a poor choice in any event.

Time passed ever so slowly with nothing to do. On the deck we could hear the muted engines above the fog, their forlorn drone was listened to from the deck. We wondered.

By now it was 16:20 hrs and fear for fuel was becoming critical. They had been flying for over two hours +50 min. It appeared ditching was the only option, absent a shore station or any of the carriers within the group. Calm panic ensued amongst the crew as orders were given to prepare for recovery from the sea of any survivors. It brought a lump to the throat as we worked quietly, speaking in hushed voices. Such life boats and rafts as we had aboard were readied for deployment overboard with knives at the ready to cut the remaining lashings.

Each boat was to be manned with minimal crew to save room for the airmen that we recovered. Hopefully still alive but it was highly doubtful given the circumstances and the

utter cold of those northern waters. Even the Admiral's gig was put overboard and it had an engine.

In a calm sense of despair the flight deck crew assembled along the outboard passage way of the Island awaiting orders to deploy the boats and rafts. Talk was by now all in whispers. The ominous thought of losing all those men in a single disaster was just not something the mind could grasp.



Avenger in fog.

. Fog cramped our joints and our butts were not healthfully seated on the cold, hard steel deck. A dirty, damp and even wet wind flowed through the spaces as the ship steamed about the ocean seeking a clear area. Danger of imminent collision prevailed and with zero visibility all reliance for safety was with radio and the electronics gear such as our radar systems and sonar.

Time was passing and fuel was becoming even more critical with each minute they flew, round and round the unseen ships looking in vain for an opening through which they could descend.

At some point a US submarine which was on the surface radioed from 10 miles away to our West, behind us, saying she had a clear area with a ceiling of 100 feet and apparent two-mile visibility.

Making the turn and heading for the sub's position it was not tenable for the carrier to make it in time to recover the aircraft.

However the aircraft were in clear air up above the fleet at ten thousand feet and were directed to the submarine for ditching.

It was considered that a ditching situation was conceivably better in a clearing near a spotter craft which could direct the survivor recovery. Perhaps not the best but perhaps again the only option available. Just as darkness began to close in, and it came early when that far north, a miracle occurred! There are no other words.

For the bow of the ship suddenly became visible. We all stood up stiffly looking ahead to a hole developing in that ominous fog. Now the chattering was becoming hopeful and had a ring to it as everyone spoke at once, like a Legion at closing time.

My impression in fantasy has always been that the hand of God or an Angel or some more powerful power reached down with a giant knife to neatly carve a huge halo shaped hole and into that hole as we sailed on we could now see our entire ship, Our Magnificent 'Maggie' sailing across under a now moonlit sky and abreast of us was the USS Wasp and USS Bennington the other carriers who had aircraft in the group above.

As a unit all three turned into the wind and picked up speed.

In the distance, hovering, was that dense fog bank and we were steaming directly toward it again at 25 plus knots.

Orders came to throw overboard every flare and any gear that would float thereby leaving a trail astern that was visible to the pilots and leading to the Rounddown on the stern of the ship.

As the ship steamed there came one plane out of the fog astern and as we watched, now in silence, it was followed in short order with the rest of our flight of Avengers. Flying the Delta pattern they proceeded along the starboard side before turning to a downwind leg prior to entering final.

The clearing held, one by one by one the aircraft came aboard. There were no wave-offs, all planes caught number one, two or three wire. Number one was seldom caught as it was so close to the stern and considered dangerous. No barrier prangs occurred which would have caused chaos, but it was always possible, accidents do happen on the flight deck – often.

It was completely dark by 18:20 hrs. when our last aircraft came aboard while a mighty cheer went up from all the 1,200 men aboard HMCS Magnificent. Everyone was cleared to the flight deck to witness the landings from the 'sponsons' along either side. A call to 'gawking stations' is the term.

Safely on the flight deck, some aircrew on exiting their aircraft kissed the deck others were too weak to walk and some swore never to fly again. But they did.

As this celebration of life continued we heard a strange sound close aboard and there coming lower and lower was the last plane of the US group who decided to land even though it was not his ship. This was an American Skyraider fighter plane whose home ship was the USS Bennington. He landed on having caught number one wire and braked to a stop only yards from our parked aircraft.

When instructed to taxi his engine just sputtered and quit. He was out of fuel!

Any port in a storm is a term that applies here. Within minutes of the last landing in absolute darkness the ships in line abreast began to disappear and our bow became indistinct, then the stern, and finally the Island, our center of operations. We sailed once more into the fog and the world was shut off.

My recollection is that we steamed for Ireland and spent the next three days in impenetrable fog.

All our squadron aircraft had been given up for lost, and when refueled next morning were found to be taking full loads of gas. Every tank was empty and they had been flying on fumes when they landed aboard the ship.

Not a man was lost, nor an aircraft.

Had this been a miracle or just another atmospheric improbability? I shall never know, but I know what I think. Meteorologists have an answer, or do they?

End of story



USN SKYRAIDER ABOARD MAGNIFICENT 1953

One Path of Life - The Thereafter

It was a cold and drizzly day in early March, 1966 when I stood waiting for a bus at the railway station on the Halifax waterfront. "Ocean Terminal" was an appropriate name I thought. What made matters worse was that I also had a toothache and was about to leave home for good! Standing there, my mind drifted back home and considered the restlessness that caused me to stop in at the local recruiting centre to join the Royal Canadian Navy. I had more-or-less finished with school and my parents were more-or-less finished with me at that time.

A few months earlier, a friend and I went to the recruiting office and took the required entrance tests, interviews and medical examination. Still together at this point, we got mixed in with people both coming and going, so to speak. At the time, the forces were just switching from three-year hitches to five-year contracts, so we came face-to-face with a bunch of uniformed, one badge (good conduct) AB's on their way out. It sure wasn't very encouraging to have a guy walk up to you while sitting outside the examination room saying, "You'll be sorry"! Now, I was standing here alone as my buddy was either rejected or decided not to proceed any further.

I can still hear the chatter on the electronic address systems of navy ships anchored out in St. Margaret's Bay while I was a young boy growing up near there. It all seemed pretty exciting when the launches would come ashore at the local wharf while we were snorkeling about. We'd have to stop diving off the wharf when they would come in on the rising tide. The sailors would ask me to run to the store and get them some so called "fizzy pop" while they waited for whomever it was to come aboard or go ashore. I'd also see them out there at night sending signals back-and-forth between each other and I'd try to "flash" them back from my bedroom window with my dad's flashlight, thinking they'd see me and reply. Shucks, it was a good thing they didn't because Morse code was far and away outside my actual vocabulary back then.

So, needless to say, when my mom and dad were beginning to tire of me and my teenage ways, I wanted to strike out for the "great beyond", the navy seemed like a logical thing to do. Back then, it was sort of considered to be a way to redeem oneself! After all, I grew up near the water and was proud to be able to row all over the bay and zip in and out with the neighbor's old make-and-break, one cylinder, made-over fishing boat. What lay outside that bay intrigued me. At that time, those destroyers would sail right up to Mason's Point, turn about and cruise back out to sea. It was a sight to behold on a clear and calm day.

I was now starting to seriously wonder why I was waiting for a bus at a railway station. Then, along came a guy

from the little town of Oxford, N.S. seemingly waiting for the same thing. He proved to be a little brighter than me and had it all figured out...what we were really waiting for was the train...a troop train of sorts. Young men around our age (17-25) coming from all over Canada to board that bus for Cornwallis. This was where we would be for the next sixteen or seventeen weeks while we learned to be sailors. Needless to say, the more people that came, the more nervous I felt. Well, the train arrived and off we went in the military bus headed for the Annapolis



Valley and "boot camp".

Upon arrival, they took us to what was called "joining block A". Two floors with bunks lined up on each side upstairs and downstairs with huge washrooms and "heads", along with a regulating office of sorts and what they called a smoker or a large room where you could go for a cigarette or two (if so inclined). It seemed almost everyone smoked in those days... between classes, during breaks or whatever. I remember the introduction as clearly as it was yesterday. After getting my bed allocated, I went up to the smoker to try the pop machine. I dropped a twenty-five cent piece in and suddenly heard the bellowing voice of a navy Petty Officer (P.O.2) holler out to me, "get away from that pop machine and fall in outside, on the road, on the double." He scared the "bejezzus" out of me! This was the beginning of what has likely been the most grueling part of my life. Man, this just wasn't something I was accustomed to, especially when I was only recently sitting in a high school classroom drifting paper airplanes towards the teacher's little flat top desk behind her back as she wrote the next lesson on the green "black board".

Standing at attention on the road, I looked around and what I saw was a cross-section of young men from all

over Canada, dressed for the sixties, long hair, beards, moustaches, paisley shirts and just about any attire you can imagine. The P.O. lined us up and began our very first roll-call. It was a far cry from the eventual, constant "dress-and-number- routine" to follow.

That first night in barracks was obviously a very restless and broken sleep. They got us up around 6 A.M and told us we all had to shave and not a whisker was to remain. This was followed by a lesson on how to clean the sink and a march (sort of) to the galley and the barber shop where they really did a number on us! To the man, recruit style haircuts with a change that was a sight to behold. This is when I began to realize that once you take away the long hair (and mine was down to my shoulders at the time) and beards and other trappings, everyone looks a lot more alike than I had imagined. The change was phenomenal to say the least. We were now all on a sort of equal playing field. After that, they marched us up to the stores building where we walked down past a long counter lined with uniformed men, some with measuring tapes and others with various ways to gauge everything from head size to shoe length and width. With outstretched arms, I walked along the line and upon reaching the other end, had two white caps, one or two blue caps, cap tallies, two pairs of boots, one pair of shoes, sandals, sneakers, three different tunics, underwear (shorts and shirts), a mother (sewing kit), rubber boots, gun shirts (or white fronts), a rain slicker, great coat, gloves, socks, and so on. From there, they took us to what was called kit marking where we stamped all of our kit items with our names and received very explicit instructions in how to clean, iron and fold every single piece of uniform issue, plus how to wear the caps properly, fold the silks, wear the lanyard; the required positions of all the badges and so on. This whole process took a week or so, as I recall. After the first phase, we were shifted next door to joining block "B" which allowed the next group to follow in behind. There were approximately 75 seamen in each division. The group coming in joined with us and we all moved on to the St. Laurent "block" which was to be our home for the next four months or so. These blocks all resembled each other, with two wings and the upper and lower floor in each wing separated by a very large wash room and showers.

The next most traumatic thing I can remember amongst this new beginning was when we were all ordered to take off all of our civilian clothing and put it in a paper bag and write our mother's name and former home address on it and leave it inside the base post office on the floor, against the wall. It was not long after that when we began some very intensive physical training consisting of drill, athletics (P.T.) and classroom study, including doubling (running in unison) day in and day out, everywhere! Most seamen who graduated through Cornwallis don't need to hear again what followed but one could certainly write a book about the kit musters,

the runs up and down the streets, hills, railway tracks and beach along with the endless drill, physical training and discipline. Everything regulated to the minute. After every module, class and event, it was out on the road, falling in, dressing (measuring your position with outstretched arm), numbering and constant marching or doubling everywhere you went. If you put your hands in your pockets, you could be made to sew them up with red floss.

Following about four months at Cornwallis, we were posted to further training in our various occupational groups. In my case, I became a naval airman going off to Shearwater where I undertook four more months of training at the fleet school there. This is where we learned about aircraft safety systems and responsibilities, fire fighting, aircraft handling, air traffic control, survival, small arms, first-aid, technical administration, crash rescue, working on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, airfields and so on. It was all designed to ready us for any assignment that suited our rank in the various facets of being a naval airman. As many know, following integration, this trade was later subdivided and members were specialized into the various categories.

Obviously, serving in the military has advantages and disadvantages. One thing for sure, the training is very, very intense and constant. I could say that it is a thrill and quite exciting for most healthy men or women. And I will. There is definitely no life like it. It puts your mind and your body in the greatest shape it will likely ever be in. Just doing one hitch or term in the military will leave an impression on you that will last a life time.

Many years later, when I was about twenty-six years old, I attended a forestry school in Fredericton New Brunswick. A number of times a particular professor would ask me if I had ever been in the navy and of course I would ask him why? Invariably, he would say, it was something you said or the way you walked. It was strange because, by that time, I had been out for nearly as long as I had been there!

After passing through the Shearwater Fleet School, I was posted to the crash rescue crew on the nearby airfield and undertook more training in firefighting and responding to crashed or disabled aircraft, securing them, removing casualties and making them safe in other ways. There was a lot of that using some pretty sophisticated rescue gear for the time. There were also medi-evacs, N.B.C.D. warfare training and so on. This was followed with a draft assignment aboard the H.M.C.S. Bonaventure, where I worked the flight deck during the launch, recovery and ranging of Trackers and Helicopters, including Sea kings and Sikorskys. I also served for a time as an assistant to the base Commander and had a final posting to C.F.B. Stadacona and C.F.S. Mill Cove. ...a lot of things crammed into a few short years.

I left the navy just before the Bonaventure was decommissioned and took a couple of temporary jobs including as a brakeman on the railway (dangerous but much easier than moving aircraft around the flight deck of an aircraft carrier) and also spent a summer pushing mail around the main post office in Halifax and fought forest fires with D.N.R.. It seems the best thing about working on the railway was that the pay was quite good and you went home at the end of your shift, rather than sleeping on-board. There was an instant reward about it when you stepped off a moving freight train (easy when you know how) to protect the crossing while shunting cars and making up trains. People would wave to you and it would give you a sense of pride (if they only knew what went on before that). It was kind of interesting directing locomotives and entire trains around while hanging on with the other hand while you backed them to various branches of the "tree" to coupling a few cars and bringing them back to the main line.

I was offered and accepted a position as an oceanography technician at the Bedford Institute working under a research scientist. This was a great experience and it took me many places including a summer-long project in northern Germany on the Island of Sylt with a stint on Sable Island and another project studying ice bergs off the coast of northern Labrador. This is where I seemed to regain my sea-legs a bit and sailed out on some new vessels large and small including the Dawson, John A. MacDonald, Louis St. Laurent and a German ship out of Bremerhaven, Germany. Although I was an "air type" and not a true seaman (fish head) in the Navy, I still had some seamanship training and experience which seemed to make life a bit easier on those assignments. Funny thing about it, some, including the "Bonnie", really made me queasy while others did not. It was from the Bedford Institute that I got a real desire to start using my head a little more than I had been. The staff and setting there were extraordinary and that gave me some experience I shall never forget. It was a truly great place to work.

While on the Bonnie, down south somewhere, I had applied to take forestry training in Fredericton and came up a little short on a couple of subjects which I later picked up credit for after leaving the Navy. While at B.I.O. years later, I gave it a new try and was immediately accepted off a standby list of two. Since this was a childhood dream of mine, I made about the fastest packing effort ever undertaken and landed there Monday morning to join the current class of around 70 men. This was a tough program for sure and I had to work very hard to initially get on track and up to speed. Eventually, I sailed along within the top ten or so. While there, I worked my summers doing almost everything imaginable in the woods from fighting forest fires, cutting survey lines, planting trees to chasing offenders. After graduation, I was recruited by the Department Of Fisheries and Oceans as a warden and worked along the

coast of Nova Scotia. Within a short time, I was promoted to a Fishery Officer and completed the six-month officer training program and subsequently posted to the international surveillance team, boarding and inspecting coastal and offshore fishing vessels. No aircraft carrier this time, but I did get to spend some time on Navy ships (D.D.H.), Coast Guard Vessels and the fisheries patrol vessel, Chebucto. I was treated very well during my service time with D.F.O. and believed that they liked having an ex-navy/oceanography kind of guy aboard. As hard as I tried, I could not completely shake that weakness or tendency that I had for getting very sea-sick at times and transferred into the National Parks Service carrying all of my time with me. For the next 29 years, I served in a number of national parks firstly as a resource officer, then a park warden and subsequently as an environmental specialist/scientist. I was promoted several times, mostly through reclassifications. The years have gone by faster than a "junk of foam" on the Mersey River after a rainstorm!

While I was a warden in the national parks service (Ranger), I can tell you that there was very little that I did not do or wasn't exposed to. The duties ranged from administration to fire control, public safety, law enforcement, environmental assessment, resource management and so on. It would be impossible for me to readily tell you of the literally hundreds of reports I had to write during that career it was surely enough to kill the spirit of the best of men if they allowed it to bother them!

In my opinion, working and living in a national park is likely one of the greatest honors a man can have in a lifetime (besides being in the navy). However, it is a lot like living in a fish bowl. Parks contain their own little society of friends and associates and are only recently evolving to look at the larger picture of life which the military has always known. A park is a very confining place and does not remotely compare with being on an international mission as part of your daily duties. However, I think that it is a rare and cherished opportunity to get very close to nature and to know your work environment in extreme detail. I completed many training programs over the years with the parks service, including several trips to the national training centre in Alberta and others locally. During the final three or four years of my service, I specialized in preparing environmental assessments of capital projects, retiring as an acting environmental assessment scientist in January of this year.

It was all quite a "ride" as Elvis Presley's Manager once said. I certainly am not another Elvis, but it was a long way to go from a family of ten children and waiting for that bus at the railway station during the winter of 1966. I would do it all over again if we could skip all of the bad parts (broken bones and broken hearts). The best thought I can leave with you is that, in this country, you can dream and you can do most anything you want to if

you believe in yourself and try hard. An experience in the Canadian military, if only for one term, can and does provide you with what may be one of the greatest foundations or starts you can have in life. Back a few years ago, I was sitting in a camp deep in the woods with my late dad. He turned and looked at me and said, "you know John...you are the only one of my sons that ever called me sir." He then paused and said, "the Navy made a man out of you." Somehow, that felt good.

I rest my case, J. Gorman

WERE WE WHO WERE IN NAVAL AIR IN THE AIR FORCE????????

BY Leo Pettipas

Have received the SAMF Newsletter (actually a journal) and was thrilled to see a question in it by Jim McCaffery, my worthy correspondent upon occasion. As an unabashed picker of nits, I was thrilled because it has availed me the opportunity to engage in one of my favourite diversions -- name games.

Jim asks, "**Were we who were in Naval Air in the Air Force???????**"

If it please your Honours, I respectfully submit that no, you weren't in "the Air Force (caps)." You were in "an air force" (lower case) officially known as "Naval Aviation."

From my standpoint, "the Air Force" was the RCAF. Naval Aviation did indeed comprise an air force, in every sense of the term. I would describe it as "a naval air force" generally speaking, and within the Canadian context only, "the naval air force."

Similarly, it's incorrect to refer to Canadian Naval Aviation as the Fleet Air Arm. "The Fleet Air Arm" was a creature of the British government. But there is no question that since 1945 Canada has had a fleet air arm, even after Naval Aviation *per se* was abolished in '68. And it would be correct, strictly in the Canadian context, to refer to it as the Canadian fleet air arm. But "the Fleet Air Arm" was not and is not a formal item in the Canadian lexicon.

Ah the joys of being an egghead.
Ad Astra and Yours Aye

AND THEN

Ernie Cable writes..... Leo, my understanding is that the term "fleet air arm" even in the Canadian context and spelled with "small letters" would not be correct.

The founding rationale predates the formation of Naval Aviation in Canada. During the early stages of the Battle of the Atlantic in the Second World War the RCN convoy Escort Groups had less than an enviable record in protecting the convoys traversing the North Atlantic. This was because the RCN was expanding so rapidly that training had to be truncated in order to man the increasing number of corvettes produced by Canadian shipyards.

To help resolve the problem the British Admiralty proposed integrating RCN ships into the more seasoned and successful RN convoy Escort Groups. Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa refused the proposal as it wanted recognition for the massive contribution the RCN was making in ships and men to the Battle of the Atlantic. If RCN ships were integrated into the RN Escort Groups, Canada would be seen as merely a provider of men and ships for the RN and receive little or no recognition for its national contribution and increasing successes, which led to the RCN being recognized as the third largest Navy in the world at the end of the war.

In the same vein, despite the RN's generous support in forming the RCN's air arm, Canadian naval planners wanted Canada's naval air arm to be recognized solely as a Canadian entity and not a mere appendage to the RN's prestigious Fleet Air Arm (FAA). Consequently, the name "Fleet Air Arm" was studiously avoided and the official name of the RCN's air arm was "Royal Canadian Naval Air Arm".

Because the initial cadre of Canadian pilots, observers, fitters and riggers was trained by the FAA and imbued with FAA ethos, these personnel unwittingly referred to themselves as "Fleet Air Arm", which in the Canadian context never existed. Eventually, use of the terms "Fleet Air Arm" and "Naval Air Arm" was discontinued and the term "Naval Aviation" was used to describe the air component within the RCN.

(Ref. Minutes Defence Council meeting, 7 March 1947, NS 1700-913 (4)).

Ready Aye..., Ernie

(Ernie and Leo were never in the Navy but sure know a lot about it. I think they wanted to be Sailors.)

**Remember to renew your
SAMF Memabership**

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THE LAST OPERATIONAL MISSION OF THE AVENGERS

We are all aware that the RCN bought our Avengers from the USN. Many had participated in the carrier wars in the Pacific as part of the US Fleet.

We loved the "Turkey", but, as time went by it became obsolete. The RCN replaced them with the CS2F Tracker which did not require an Observer as part of the crew. Observers were offered training for appointments, Air Ops, Air Traffic Control, and, in some cases, Pilot duties. This was all happening in the period 1956-57.

This was during the period of the `Cold War` and it was not unusual for fishermen to report possible sightings of Russian submarines close to our coast. One such report was received from a fisherman off the coast of Newfoundland's Fogo Island in October 1957. It was decided to prosecute his sightings and "Operation Lime Light", the last operational mission of the Avengers, was born.

Normally, an operation of this nature would have been conducted by the Avengers of 880 or 881. However, both these squadrons were in the process of converting to Trackers and in any case did not have any Observers on strength. The solution was to send a detachment of VU32 Avengers and Pilots (CO "Smokey" Bice) with those Observers still available from the local area along with staff and trainee OMs from the O School as crew. Avengers were based in Gander. A detachment of HS 50 (CO Roger Fink) HO4S "Horse" choppers was deployed to Botwood.

Our crew consisted of Jim Stegen, myself as Observer, and "Tug" Wilson as OM. Although we had never flown together as a crew, we had no problem working together. Jim and I were course-mates on 6JAOBTC and "Tug" gave us a stellar performance.

We flew almost daily. The weather was generally poor. We were operating in barely VFR conditions. On one occasion we had to do a GCA into Gander in less than IFR limits. The whole coast had been blanketed by fog which had not been forecast and we did not have enough gas to get to an open airport on the mainland.

We never did spot any submarines, but became well acquainted with narrow coves and rocks that looked like subs. As October 1957 came to an end the group was disbanded. We went our separate ways and the Avengers went to Crown Disposal.

As a postscript, when we patrolled the area around Fogo Island, the name was not on the tongue of many people. In the last few years the island has become a place for artists to spend some time in almost monastic conditions, crafting their trade, all thanks to a millionaire

who is building a luxury inn and small studios throughout the island. For information on the surge in interest, "Google" Fogo Island.

From Fred Hawrysh



OP LIMELIGHT CREW

*As you undoubtedly know,
the photo shows,*

L to R,

Lt. (P) Jim Stegen,

Lt. (O) Fred Hawrysh,

ABOM "Tug" Wilson.

Hit and Miss

(By Robin L. Hughes)

One evening in April 1953 (see 'THE BOOK' for exact date) Freddie Rice and myself found ourselves "renting" a couple of Avengers for a little night proficiency flying. We were both on non-flying jobs and needed to qualify for the princely sum of 30 bucks a month flying pay.

A warm front was approaching Shearwater and we had a ceiling of 1700 feet and about five miles in whatever (haze?) There were a bunch of aviators going aloft that evening and most had a similar idea to ours, ie, stick close to the alma mater airdrome in case the crud rolled in.

Fred and I elected to do some formation. He was to lead for the first half. In my back seat was a Wren Officer named Merle Jacquest who was Captain's Sec. Merle in her thrashing about had pulled her intercom plug and was incommunicado but her eyeballs were showing the whites! We rolled for take off with a right turn approved off old runway 20 *it might have been 24 which continued down the hill and out the gate if you kept it low) and by the time we were passing the Dartmouth Ferry (no bridge in those days) I was riding on Fred's right wing.

About halfway up Bedford Basin a streak of red passed close in front on a downward path westbound. I looked beyond Fred to see what had just missed us. I punched the R/T button and said to Fred "Did you see that?" No reply. I continued watching a white light (it seemed to be rolling left) which continued it's path and crashed in a bright burst near the hill where the TV tower is located. I then really focussed on Fred and noted to my shock (to put it mildly) that I was flying formation on an Avenger with no cockpit, no pilot ---- nothing. The rest is a tad blurred.



I switched back to AW Ops and pushed out the required three "Maydays" to get their attention, didn't know what to say, so piped up with two more sets and then blurted out the news that I was headed for Bedford in company with a pilotless Avenger in the lead. They were a mite stunned too and asked for a "say again all after Mayday". I firmly

kept my finger on the xmit button and kept a running commentary on the fact that the Turkey had started a gentle turn left and was easing down toward the Prince's Landing bit on the shore of the Basin. The turn began to wind up and the (now) spiral steepened, until there was a great splash safely in the Basin I returned to base and pancaked — even remembered the gear!

Postscript:

A roll call over the R/T produced a missing Fury. The pilot was on his first night trip, had entered cloud, turned left and down to exit cloud base over the Basin. He missed us in the lights of the city behind us. His left wing missed me by millimeters, hit Fred and was then ripped off. The rest you know. I subsequently met the Press and a Court of Enquiry.



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Proclamation

Kootenay Day
October 23, 2014

WHEREAS, the HMCS KOOTENAY, a Destroyer Escort, experienced the worst peacetime accident in the history of the Royal Canadian Navy. On 23 October, 1969, an explosion tipped through the engine's starboard gearbox when Kootenay was approximately 200 miles off the South West Coast of England.

As a result of the fire and deadly toxic smoke, created by the explosion, nine crewmen died and fifty three were seriously injured. Years later, the disaster remains deeply imprinted in the memories of the survivors. In fact, most survivors have been diagnosed with PTSD, for which they are receiving professional counselling.


The RCN, as well as other Navies throughout the world, made significant changes to ensure much higher safety standards, which render naval ships are much safer for today's sailors.

Although, all two hundred and forty crew members lived in the Halifax area in 1969, there are still several survivors of the tragedy and their family members residing in HRM today.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, I, Mayor Mike Savage, on behalf of Halifax Regional Council, do hereby proclaim 23 October, 2014 as "Kootenay Day" in effort to raise awareness of this RCN tragedy of forty five years ago, so it will always be remembered and commemorated by the residents of HRM.

Dated at Halifax, Nova Scotia
this 23rd day of October, 2014




Mike Savage
Mayor

Shearwater Aviation
Museum Foundation
PO Box 5000 Stn Main
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

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Peace on Earth