

# WARRIOR

Spring 2018



**SEA KING - END OF AN ERA...**



Even Santa wanted to fly a Sea King!

***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**

We've got mail..... Pg 16

Sea Kings and Shipborne Aviation..... Pg 21

500 Club Winners ..... Pg 28

**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 300 dpi 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.

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or  
SAM Foundation  
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**Deadlines for receiving submissions are:**

Spring 1 March  
Summer 1 July  
Winter 15 October

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*Front cover photo: December 24, 2012 HMCS REGINA HMCS Regina's CH-124 Sea King helicopter prepares to land on the ship while off of Fujayrah, United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Sea during Operation ARTEMIS on December 24, 2012. Operation ARTEMIS is the Canadian Forces (CF) participation in maritime security and counter-terrorism operations in the Arabian Sea region as part of multinational Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, one of the three task forces operated by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). CMF is a 27 nation naval partnership, which exists to promote security, stability and prosperity across approximately 2.5 million square miles of international waters in the Middle East, which encompass some of the world's most important shipping lanes. The presence of HMCS REGINA in the Arabian Sea region also gives Canada the flexibility and capability to respond quickly to emerging crises in the region.*

*Photo: Corporal Rick Ayer, Formation Imaging Services, Halifax, Nova Scotia © 2012 DND-MDN Canada*



## FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

By Christine Hines

In the last issue of the Warrior you read the amazing story of LT (P) Barry Troy, the Banshee pilot lost after a training accident in 1958 off the coast of Florida. The discovery of some of his flying gear last fall after Hurricane Irma disturbed the sand dunes was nothing short of miraculous. In the months since the discovery, the story took on a life of its own.

The Shearwater connection had been startling enough, but more was to come. Lt (P) Troy was a

New Brunswicker (as am I), had attended St. Francis Xavier University (I graduated in the Class of 1992), and Lt (P) Troy's brother Edward had been our Bishop in Saint John, New Brunswick, and had Confirmed me many years ago; these were extraordinary coincidences.



During the fall of 2017 and early winter of this year, plans were made to ensure the artifacts were handed over to Canada, and a date chosen that was 60 years plus a day to the anniversary of Lt(P) Troy's loss. I was privileged to have been included in the Canadian

delegation that went to Florida in late February in order to participate in the artifact repatriation ceremony held at Mayport Naval Air Station on February 26, 2018. In a ceremony held in an open air facility overlooking the beach, the proceedings opened with a fly past of two Sea Hawk helicopters, and was well attended by members of the Troy Family, the United States Navy, the Consul General for Canada in Miami, Susan Harper, delegates from both Director of RCAF History and Heritage and RCN History offices, RCAF Public Affairs staff, and both the RCAF and RCN attachés from Washington DC. I was pleased to also find in attendance a 12 Wing member, who was on an exchange posting in Mayport, and his family.

When I first saw the objects, they were still boxed, with the evidence tape still on the containers, as had been applied by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Department. After careful removal, I was asked to place the smaller items in a display on a prepared table, with photographs of Lt (P) Troy. The flying uniform pieces were startling to see, as one item after another came out of the box, covered in sand, barnacles and shell matter. The extraction of the items from the sand dune was quite difficult, especially the remains of the parachute. The "excavation" was handled with great care and concern by both Jacksonville Park Ranger Zach Johnson and Officer Nolan Kea of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Department. Ranger Johnson is a retired member of the USN, and knew exactly what he was looking at as the items peeked out from the sand. He also knew how important the discovery of these items would be to this Canadian Naval Aviator's family.

Following the lovely ceremony, the items were carefully shipped back to the Shearwater Aviation Museum, where they arrived in good order on March 2, 2018. We have been doing some basic cleaning and stabilization of the items

before they go to Ottawa later this spring for a viewing, and will return to SAM for eventual exhibit. In our Centennial year at Shearwater, I am pleased that we'll have a chance to show these objects, as a testament to the dangers of the job, and a remembrance of those lost in defence of Canada, at home and abroad.

Elsewhere in this issue of the Warrior you'll see information on Shearwater 100 events being held at 12 Wing from August 1-3, 2018. I hope you'll be able to join us this summer so that we can celebrate this milestone together.

Best regards, *Christine*



***Mae West had to be cut to save it.***



***Lt Troy's  
Parachute Bag***



### Presidents report

As I write this a snowstorm is raging outside, but we know that this is the season of renewal and growth. Renewal and growth also apply to SAM and SAMF.

Memberships should have been renewed by now. It's also time to recruit new members, both from your family and the wider community. Our longtime and stalwart supporters are dying off and need to be replaced.

SAMF Board of Directors work for you the members. Plan on attending the Annual General Meeting in September and remember you can nominate anyone to the board of directors as long as they are paid up members of the Foundation.

Note: For instance, a person can be a member of the Fundraising Committee without being a member of the Foundation. For those who want to help but don't want to join organizations.

Growth for SAM means Sea Kings and their support equipment is coming to the Museum. That also means large amounts of money is required. Donations to the Building Fund are urgently needed but full support of the Fundraising Committee's activities are not only fun but also necessary.

Renewal is also required in this position, I have been honoured and challenged filling the position of your President, for what sometimes seemed like forever and at other times just a short season. But, all things must come to an end and I will not be re-offering for the 2018-2019 season.

John Knudsen  
President, SAMF

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### ....From the Editor

First off, many thanks to those that wrote or called inquiring about my health. Like so many of us, I am just getting older and it isn't always pleasant. Lately I have been plagued with an extremely bad cough/cold. My doctor has the VON coming in 3 times weekly for a bit. Even my walking is off the rails. However, when I'm not at the office, I do complete my work at home where my computer is set up just like at the office.

A notice was just sent out to those that were tardy with their membership. If your name was left on our list in error, please excuse me - the buck stops here. There was a sentence saying to just ignore the note if your name was there and it shouldn't have been. I'll try and do better.

We are told this is the Sea King - end of an era. You will see photos of Sea Kings that you have seen before and articles you have read before in this edition. It's been a great ride. Hope the Cyclone can do as well.

Things here at the Museum and Foundation could be better. They still need a building but if the Museum hasn't been getting any funding to pay for a loan, why bother. There is no funding for them to pay their staff either. The Curator has the only secure job. So who knows what will happen in the very very near future.

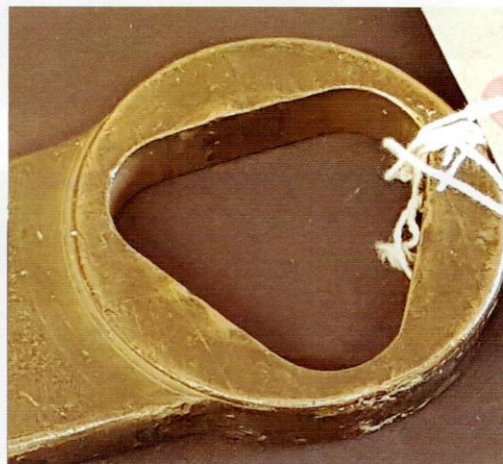
Now for you. I am very grateful that you have been doing your utmost to keep your membership and other Donations going strong. I could always depend on you.

Even though you may not live near us, we have several fund raising opportunities happening this year and I only hope and pray you will get involved with them.

Please look after yourselves and where possible, your friends in Naval Air.

Kay

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Can you identify this?

What is it used for?

## HMS Seaborn / RNAS Dartmouth A Convoluted Lineage Of Names

*Ernest Cable / Leo Pettipas*

With war clouds on the horizon in 1939, the British Admiralty realized that the industrial capacity in the United Kingdom would be hard pressed to meet the wartime expansion needs of the Royal Navy (RN). If the RN was to continue to "Rule the Waves", additional ships, aircraft and personnel would be required from North America. Additional aircrew destined for the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) would have to be trained by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) in Canada and by the United States Navy. Consequently, the Admiralty planned to establish several Strategic Reserve Pools in Canada and the United States to administer the acquisition of warships and aircraft as provided by the American Lend-Lease policy and the Canadian Mutual Aid agreement. Additionally, the Reserve Pools would coordinate the flow of Royal Navy personnel to and from training establishments in North America. In Canada a shore-based Strategic Reserve Pool was established at Halifax, which was initially commissioned as *HMS Seaborn*. As the war progressed, Halifax became the western terminus for trans-Atlantic convoys carrying war materials to the UK; requiring the RN to establish an air facility ashore to service FAA aircraft embarked in RN ships during port visits to Halifax.

*HMS Seaborn* had a convoluted lineage of names because the Royal Navy followed a tradition of double-naming shore establishments and air stations by commissioning them as ships with the commissioned names not bearing any relation to their geographic names. The identity of *HMS Seaborn* was further confused by the fact that it was known by four different commissioned names during its five-year existence.

### The First HMS Seaborn

In 1939, Northumberland Ferries Ltd of Charlottetown PEI acquired an American yacht, which was immediately drafted into wartime naval service and berthed in Halifax harbour. On 7 December 1939, the converted yacht was commissioned *HMS Seaborn* and served as the flagship for the Rear Admiral commanding the Royal Navy's Third Battle Squadron based in Halifax. In addition to his Third Battle Squadron duties, the Rear Admiral administered the Strategic Reserve Pool in Halifax. The Third Battle Squadron urgently required an airfield ashore to service Swordfish and Walrus aircraft embarked in its ships as well as for aircraft disembarked from other British warships during port visits to Halifax. However, it wasn't until 14 September 1940 that the Admiralty, with the consent of the Canadian government, established Royal Naval Air Section (RNAS) Dartmouth, as a lodger unit at RCAF Station Dartmouth.

Organizationally, RNAS Dartmouth was a tender (sub-unit) to its parent ship, *HMS Seaborn*, but was frequently misrepresented by being referred to by the name of its parent ship, *HMS Seaborn*. Understandably, two separate units seemingly named *HMS Seaborn* created confusion both in Canada and abroad.

Although RNAS Dartmouth was a tender to *HMS Seaborn*, it was responsible to the Admiralty as far as aircraft facilities were concerned. By arrangement between the Admiralty and the Canadian government, contracts were let for construction of the required buildings with the RCAF supervising the contracts on behalf of the Admiralty. The main RNAS buildings consisted of three hangars, a workshop building, an engine test bed, barracks and messes for the men and Chiefs and Petty Officers, and a wardroom for the officers. The RCAF supplied the furniture and mess equipment and the Admiralty provided all aircraft support and technical equipment. The RCAF controlled all flying from their control tower and shared other smaller sections common to their needs such as safety equipment.

The RNAS personnel referred to their hangars as Nos. 1, 2 and 3, but on the RCAF site plan they are identified as 108, 109 and 110 hangars. No. 108 hangar was located on the site of the former "D" hangar; and as of 2008, the site of the new 423 Squadron hangar. No. 110 hangar was situated south of 108, while 109 hangar was located east of 108 hangar centrally situated at the north end of the inner ramp. As of 2008, the new 12 AMS hangar is built on the site of the former 109 hangar.

The RNAS Officers' mess and quarters were located on the site of the current Warrior Block; the NCOs' quarters were located on the east side of Puncher Ave. at the corner of Boundary Road, while the NCOs' mess was across the street on the west side of Puncher Ave. The Victualing Stores building was adjacent to the mess. The RNAS Administration Building was located on the south side of Boundary Road between Puncher and Warrior Avenues.

In August 1940, LCdr. Dennis Foley, a Canadian engineer/pilot serving in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm was appointed to the staff of Rear Admiral Third Battle Squadron but upon arrival was immediately assigned to be the first Officer-in-Charge of RNAS Dartmouth. LCdr. Foley arrived at the Naval Air Section site with a staff of three: a Royal Air Force (RAF) Sergeant fitter (aero-engine mechanic), a RAF Leading Aircraftman rigger (airframe mechanic) and a naval stores man. They found that most of the buildings had been started but none was near completion. The area where the buildings were being built was remote from the rest of the RCAF station with no roads into the new construction area. With the exception of the taxiways, which had been gravelled, the site was a quagmire. For the first few months the RCAF

provided temporary quarters and office space at the marine site (lower base on the shore of Eastern Passage) and eventually Foley's small staff moved into their workshop, the first building to be completed.

In May 1941, the number of personnel started to increase and built up to a basic complement of approximately 50 personnel; about half were RAF aircraft trades (the RN was still short of Fleet Air Arm personnel) with the other half naval trades: regulators, writers and stores men. Eventually, as many as 200 to 300 people were stationed at RNAS Dartmouth. These additional personnel were transients awaiting rail transportation inland for training, or awaiting sea transportation back to England following training. These transients were billeted in a long two-story building at the foot of Morris Street in Halifax and ferried back and forth across the harbour to RNAS Dartmouth. The transients were kept busy by building roads around the RNAS site and landscaping areas around their buildings; they won many awards for their gardens (mostly gladiolas) which attracted many admirers.

The transient ratings wore the traditional British naval uniform with bell-bottom trousers and the regulation sailors' black cap. Fleet Air Arm trainees could be identified by the white band on their caps in place of the usual cap tally, and the letters "FAA" were worn on the left sleeve just above the cuff. Following successful training their wings were worn just above the "FAA" badge. The officers wore the letter "A" (for Air Branch) in the executive curl of their gold rank braid both on their sleeves and shoulder epaulets. The officers after graduation wore their wings on their left sleeve just above the rank braid.

The first crates of disassembled Swordfish aircraft arrived by sea in June 1941; not all of the shipment arrived, as some of the convoy ships had been sunk by U-boats en route from England. Since much of the aircraft maintenance equipment had not yet arrived there were problems handling the oversized heavy crates and assembling the aircraft. However, with much improvising the first Swordfish, V4312, was test flown on 4 August 1941. Eventually, a Swordfish could be uncreated and assembled in half a day; however, rigging the controls took considerably longer because of the wing-fold and spreading mechanisms. By early 1942, operations were in full swing and 25 Swordfish could be assembled in 30 days. By the end of the war over 200 Swordfish were shipped in crates from England, assembled and test-flown at RNAS Dartmouth.

#### **HMS Saker II**

On 1 October 1941, the Rear Admiral hauled down his Flag and the Third Battle Squadron departed for the UK. The Admiral's former flagship, the yacht *HMS*

*Seaborn*, was decommissioned, renamed *HMCS Sambro* and assigned the role of depot ship for Royal Canadian Navy destroyers and auxiliaries.

With the departure of the Third Battle Squadron for the UK the Admiralty reorganized its North American facilities. On 1 October 1941, the Admiralty commissioned the Strategic Reserve Pool in Washington D.C., as *HMS Saker*, to administer the Royal Navy activities in the United States. The Admiralty followed the practice of naming tenders after their parent units by adding a Roman numeral to the parent unit's name. Therefore, the Strategic Reserve Pool in New York was commissioned as *HMS Saker I*. With the decommissioning of *HMS Seaborn* RNAS Dartmouth was left without a parent unit. In keeping with the North American reorganization, the Admiralty, on 1 October 1941, commissioned RNAS Dartmouth as *Saker II*, a tender to *HMS Saker* but an independent air facility for FAA aircraft embarked in RN ships visiting Halifax.

#### **HMS Canada**

The tenuous command relationship of having Royal Navy activities in Canada administered from *HMS Saker* in Washington D.C. was remedied on 1 August 1942 when *HMS Saker II* was decommissioned and *HMS Canada* was established in Halifax to administer the Canadian Strategic Reserve Pool. RNAS Dartmouth was made a tender to *HMS Canada*. On 1 March 1943, the Admiralty established No.1 Naval Air Gunner School (NAGS) as a lodger unit at RCAF Station Yarmouth to train FAA Air Telegraphists and Air Gunners. Although, No. 1 NAGS and FAA squadrons that supported the school were tenders to *HMS Canada*, No. 1 NAGS was part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which was administered by the RCAF. (The Royal Navy had commissioned several warships *HMS Canada* dating as far back as 1765; the most recent *HMS Canada* was a battleship that fought in the First World War).

#### **HMS Seaborn Reincarnated**

On 7 December 1943, RNAS Dartmouth was commissioned *HMS Seaborn* as an independent command, but *HMS Canada* retained accounting responsibilities for the new *HMS Seaborn*. On 1 July 1944, the Admiralty issued an order amalgamating *HMS Canada* and *HMS Seaborn* (RNAS Dartmouth) under the single name of *HMS Seaborn*, thus streamlining the responsibilities of the two Royal Navy facilities in the Halifax area. The accounting responsibilities (pay and personnel) for the Royal Navy in Canada were assumed by *HMS Seaborn* and the name *HMS Canada* ceased to exist. The newly amalgamated *HMS Seaborn* was under the direct administrative control of the Commander-in-



Chief, Canadian Northwest Atlantic, Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, RCN, who was the only Canadian to command an Allied theatre of war during the Second World War.

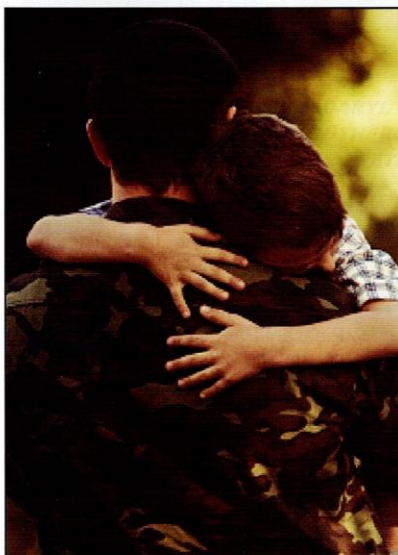
After the end of the war *HMS Seaborn* was paid off on 29 January 1946. The Admiralty donated the 22 Swordfish and three Walrus aircraft still on strength at *HMS Seaborn* to the Royal Canadian Navy. These aircraft helped to form the nucleus of the embryonic Royal Canadian Naval Air Arm, which had just been approved by the Canadian Cabinet on 19 December 1945 and became part of the next chapter in Shearwater's colourful history.



**109 Hangar At Top Of Shearwater  
Inner Ramp Late 1950s**



**Seaborn Ramp**



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### Meet your volunteer "Mick" Michael Stephenson

These are Mick's words:

*"After 32 years of chasing trackers and sea kings around the world, I was enjoying a typical retirement of golf and old guys hockey when in November 2004, John Webber invited me to join a crew that intended to refurbish a firefly aircraft to flying condition.*

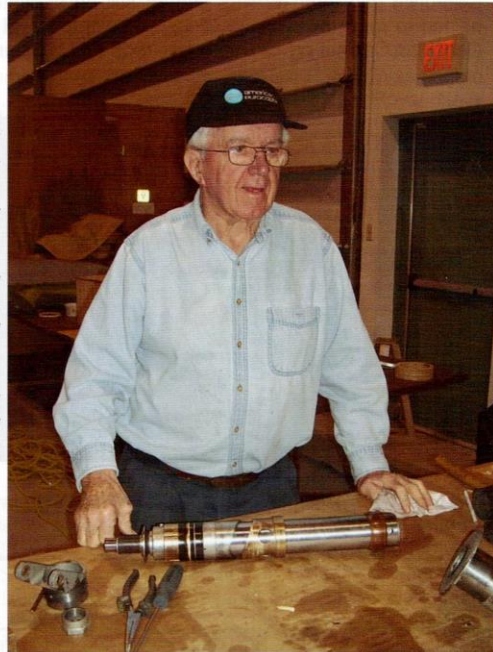
*To flying condition was the hook and it was firmly set in my jaw. I invited my friend Wayne Petitpas to join me and on 5 January 2005 we proceeded to c hangar to see the challenge. Some thirteen years later the firefly is secure in the museum. It never did fly but that is another story.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed every minute that I spent on the firefly and the many friends that I enjoy at the museum. Wayne P, Bud A, John W, John K, Don Logan, Simon & Albert, Nelson and Monseur Tree.*

*These days I spend more time in the library than I do at my tool box. At my age the initiative to work hard has waned considerably but the smell of hydraulic fluid keeps drawing me back."*

There is however much more to Mick than stated above, he exudes quiet competence and willingness to help where ever needed, his depth of technical knowledge is

used by many, ie other volunteers, the library and the editor of the Warrior.



He is also a joy to work with, regardless of how difficult or menial the job is. *John Knudsen, President SAMF*

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#### BONAVENTURE ANCHOR

A soldier from the 14 Construction Engineering Squadron attaches a piece of steel for a new cradle on the Bonaventure anchor in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. After years of deterioration, the anchor, a memorial tribute to Canadian military members who lost their lives at sea, is being repaired and upgraded. The aircraft carrier HMCS Bonaventure, often called the Bonnie, was decommissioned in 1970. Eric Wynne/COURTESY OF THE CHRONICLE HERALD.



**LUTZ STREITEL, DARYL ROZON, BRIAN EADY, DEREK CARRIER, TONY HALIDAY,  
BILL BOLES, BRUCE SUTHERLAND, MURRAY MCRADU, P KAERSVANG, KEITH FERGUSON,  
PETER THACKRAY, AND MIKE RODGERS**

## 1968

*from Peter Thackray*

The attached article is my way of honouring four guys that died 50 years ago this February.

The year 1968

For many of you reading this article you won't remember the year but maybe will recall some of the history from those days.

This is the year that the Canadian Navy died.

It had many other significant events, some of which I will list for you.....Martin Luther King was assassinated, Senator Robert Kennedy was assassinated, Pierre Elliot Trudeau became Prime Minister of Canada, the Boeing 747 made its maiden flight and Dr Christian Barnard

performed the first heart transplant.

On a personal note, two other events occurred fifty years ago..... Judy Colter from Dartmouth, and I were married and four VS880 members died in a crash of CS2F 1543, attempting to land at CFB Downsview.

In the fullness of time, much came to light about CS2F 1543 after that crash that killed three of my classmates and a crewman on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 1968. Their names were SLT Murray McRadu from Saskatoon, SLT P Kaersvang from Ingersol, S/LT Bill Boles from Dartmouth and AB M Schofield from Islington.

The story of this tragedy begins just two days before the accident on Wednesday Jan 31 1968 .....the day that the Navy and Canadian Naval Aviation died. That event.....the death of Canadian Naval Aviation was well covered by Brian Worth In the 2016 spring issue of THE WARRIOR. On the day after Shearwater buried the casket

of Naval Aviation, Thursday February 1, 1968 in the grounds of the Shearwater Wardroom, S/Lt Mike Rodgers, myself along with AB Schofield did a late afternoon cross country flight in CS2F 1543 to Moncton and CFB Gagetown. At Gagetown Mike and I went to the Officers Mess for dinner. While there the steward came to ask if one of us would come out of the Mess to talk with AB Schofield. Schofield advised us that ground crew at Gagetown had mistakenly fuelled our A/C CS2F 1543 with the wrong fuel.

The following day was a Friday and like many Fridays that followed, VS 880 pilots were required to complete cross country flights in order to maintain their civil flying qualifications. While this was a bit of a challenge for the married guys, the single guys had no problem with taking off for a weekend. On this particular week-end there were three aircraft on their way west. I believe it was one to Montreal, one to Toronto and the third to Windsor and then onto North Bay. All three of us were on the ground at CFB St Hubert, to fuel up. After fueling up two of us took off for Toronto and Windsor. When the aircraft I was flying landed in Windsor, where I disembarked, we went to the tower to get a MET briefing. As we climbed the stairs to the tower, someone from the tower coming down the stairs, seeing our Naval flight suits, said I see that one of your aircraft went in at Downsview this evening. We not realizing what he meant, said yes we had some buddies going there tonight. He came back with "No I meant it crashed!" Shocked hardly captured our reaction.

Because Mike Rodgers and I had flown the day before the crash with AB Schofield, it was decided we would both go to visit his parents to express our personal sympathies as well as those of the Squadron and the Navy. Schofield as I recall had been coming home to help celebrate his grandmother's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Another coincidence of timing was that Bill Boles' wife Barb was very early in her pregnancy. I am really not sure that Bill was even aware at the time of the crash. Barbara subsequently had a little boy named Bill.

The ensuing accident investigation took time of course. Months later the conclusions of the review board were released. It indicated that the wrong fuel, the day before, played no role in the crash. It concluded that while the aircraft was in the circuit to land they got a fire in the starboard engine warning light. The flight crew, Murray McRadu and

Kaersvang decided to start the fire in the air procedures which included fly the A/C, fuel off, power off etc. and then feather the affected engine. Despite being in the circuit and minutes from being on the deck, it was felt that the decision to begin the fire in the air drill was possibly influenced by the crew having just completed the VU 32 conversion training.....heavy on emergency procedures. As it turns out, when they got to the feather the engine, they feathered the port engine. The immediate unfeathering of this engine, with full power on, resulted in the A/C flipping over on its back and crashing in a vertical dive.

I have fond memories of all three mates and our crewman. I wish I had known them better. When you are 25 or younger you believe you will live forever. For me the passing of three friends and colleagues so early in our careers was a very hard and harsh way to learn about the nature of our jobs and our own mortality. They left us far too soon. Unlike the rest of us, they will always be in their early twenties, at least in our memories of them.

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## 111 WING RCAFA CENTENNIAL OF FLIGHT MEMORIAL

One of the primary roles of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association is promoting Canada's rich air force history. In this regard 111 Wing RCAFA is embarked on a project to commemorate 100 years of aviation history at Shearwater/Dartmouth. A granite memorial tablet honouring all the formations that served Canada's interests from this site will be erected this year. The proposed tablet is 60" x 30" x 2" which will be mounted on 2 legs affixed to a solid granite base and is destined for the 12 Wing Memorial Park.

The memorial project began in 2016 as a result of an interest in a commemorative plaque for a fallen airman who was lost in an aircraft accident from Shearwater. Further investigation of Shearwater losses over the years revealed that information in this vein was not completely documented and did not fully represent the dedication of all those individuals who served this base. With the approaching advent of 100 years of aviation history in 2018 the original investigation blossomed into the significance of recognizing "all" who served over the years. In this regard 111 Wing members approved that concept and directed a memorial committee to proceed with due diligence. Early in 2017 the committee approached the 12 Wing OPI of the planned 12 Wing Memorial Park with the proposal to place a monument recognizing this milestone in the park. We were encouraged to proceed with our plan and subsequently engaged a contractor to fulfill our desire to recognize this significant anniversary.

The inscription on the monument will be in both official languages and will feature both the RCAFA and Shearwater crests. Veterans Affairs Canada has been approached for possible financial assistance, however 111 Wing is fully committed to fund the entire project from their own resources (ie; fund raising, member donations, etc).

111 Wing has a long history of involvement with historical undertakings at Shearwater, most recently participating in the addition of the Hurricane aircraft replica at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. Our RCAFA Charter dates back to April 20 1978 when 111 Wing formed at Shearwater. Originally, 111 Wing meetings were held in the WO's and Sgts Mess thence the Flight Deck Lounge and presently, either SAM facilities or lunch hour at Warrior Block.

Over the years the wing has enjoyed a close relationship with regular force personnel through participation in the Shearwater International Air Show, annual Battle of Britain Parades and various SAM projects. Some of our members are also actively involved with aircraft restoration projects at the museum and others act as tour guides. The wing also is the sole sponsor for 615 Air Cadet Squadron and participates actively in all fund raising and support activities. Wing members are also involved with the Nova Scotia Air Cadet League.

At the present time 111 wing has been assigned office space in the museum and we meet regularly on the second Tuesday of each month. Our Wing Membership Chair is John Bowser (902 443 2226).

Naturally there are significant financial costs involved in a project of this magnitude and donations from the aviation fraternity are welcomed. A trust account has been set up with the RCAFA Trust. A charitable tax receipt is available through "Canadahelps.org" when making donations to the RCAFA Trust assigned to the 111 Wing Centennial of Flight Memorial.

**PER ARDUA AD ASTRA**

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**HEY, LOOK WHO IS  
BACK IN TOWN!!!!**



**Murray Lee, Prop**  
Tel: 902 462-2593  
Mobile: 902 223-8941  
pilotf5104@gmail.com

145 Freshwater Trail  
Dartmouth NS B2W 0G5

## BLACKHORSE

August 18th was shaping up to be an interesting day for the air crew aboard HMCS ST. JOHN'S. The mission of the day was to fly to Grise Fjord, drop off the Ship's XO, Combat Officer and Doc for a community visit and pick up three local dignitaries, two of whom were Rangers, to conduct reconnaissance of the Sydkap Glacier on Ellesmere Island, then return to the ship. The crew, Captain's Hanley, Zydowicz, and Frederick and Sgt Saunders were flying Sea King 433, call sign Blackhorse, embarked for Operation Nanook 2011, the largest of three



annual Canadian Forces Arctic sovereignty operations.

At 0930hrs, Blackhorse took off without a hitch and proceeded to Grise Fjord for the passenger exchange. On the way, the weather, which had been forecast to be VFR with a thin layer at 2000 feet, began to deteriorate. The approach plate into Grise Fjord depicts a curved approach path and the note that it is to be conducted day VMC only, and only attempted by crews familiar with the area. As we approached the town we were down to 200 feet and just at the point of turning back to the ship, when the weather began to scatter out and the town became visible. The small town nestled in a bay, surrounded by mountains, in the shape of a bowl. Not the kind of place to overshoot an approach. The landing was conducted without incident but was obviously an exciting occurrence for the town. After landing, the passenger exchange was conducted with a large number of the town's population of 134 people watching. It was an unusual sight for them to see a Sea King helicopter in the Arctic. There was 3000 pounds of fuel onboard, the clouds were showing every intention of breaking up as forecast and we had verified the layer was thin by climbing above it on the initial transit. So, once finished on the ground, Blackhorse took-off to do

some reconnaissance of the glacier. The Canadian Rangers aboard were eager to investigate the possibility of getting onto the Sydkap glacier safely using their snow machines during the winter season as this was their main transit route to the hunting grounds. An advanced look at the area would provide the Rangers with valuable intelligence of the ice features to pass along to hunters in the area, thereby reducing safety risks in the coming winter.

After a 30 mile transit Blackhorse was flying in one of the most scenic canyons that had ever been carved by a glacier. The crew flew up the canyon to the start of the glacier, and began filming possible ground routes to its highest point at 4800 feet elevation. After arriving at the summit, it was decided to do a confined area approach procedure to a sand covered, bare patch that looked just big enough for the helicopter. As we approached the spot each grain of sand grew. The lack of man made structures or trees gave the illusion we were closer to the ground than we were, so the spot was close to a kilometer across and each grain of sand was the size of a brick. Once on the ground, the crew disembarked to take some photos from the top of the glacier. It was a beautiful day with the glacier spreading in all directions as far as the eye could see. It was an absolutely amazing moment for all members of the crew.

Blackhorse then took off towards HMCS ST. JOHN'S with the transit plus 20 minutes worth of extra to delta fuel in the tanks. As we passed Grise Fjord on the way south we could see it was socked in with fog and low cloud. Those conditions seemed to persist further south than on the transit to Grise Fjord so the ship was contacted for local weather. They reported clear and a million so we began to relax a bit and enjoy the scenery for the transit. About ten minutes back from the ship we were contacted with

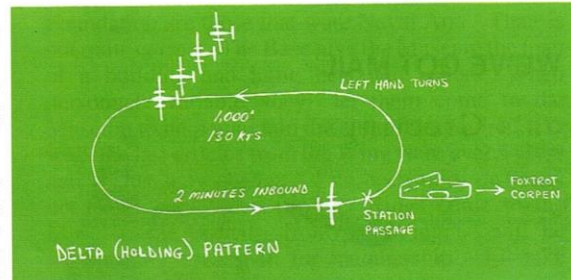


updated weather, they had driven into a fog bank and couldn't find a way out again. Great Oogally Moogally! Once over the ship we began passing the position of ice free, open water in hopes of avoiding an instrument approach, all to no avail.

The ship came back with a report that visibility was now 200 yards and the only option, as they saw it, was an emergency-low-visibility approach to ST. JOHN'S. After discovering a glacier lane full of large icebergs in front of the ship and the possibility that these icebergs could extend hundreds of feet upwards and into the approach path of the aircraft, it was determined that the emergency landing procedure would be extremely difficult to carry out. The lack of visibility and proximity of obstacles would adversely affect the ability of both Blackhorse and ST. JOHN'S to maneuver closer to each other and conduct a safe landing. There are always other options and in this case the best one was to land elsewhere. With the fuel running low, Blackhorse's best option was to land on a nice, sheltered bowl of a beach; on an island close to the ship where visibility and ceiling were unrestricted, except in the patch of fog the ship was in, and wait for ST. JOHN'S to break clear. Once in the 15 foot hover, just prior to touching down in the confined area of the beach, the helicopter scared off a polar bear that was sunning itself on our landing spot. It had been unseen until it broke, ran, and was pointed out by the Rangers in the back. The last thing we wanted was to spend the night on a beach where a polar bear lived. The polar bear immediately sprinted into the water and swam away while Blackhorse landed. Later the ship's captain reported seeing a polar bear swimming by the ship from the direction of the beach. Although the weather around the island was great, there was still a wall of fog nearby that was hiding the ship. Charts of the area were not the most accurate so the Captain was hesitant to come closer to land. The crew was monitoring the ships progress on Tacan and offered the ship an HCA to the beach, 'Two and half miles back, right of the on course, come left 320.' With about 700 pounds of fuel remaining the crew saw, ST. JOHN'S emerge a mile and a half on the nose from the fog like the 'Maid of the Mist' and no time was wasted taking off for a smooth recovery aboard. Just another day North of 60.

by Capt. Norm Hanley

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### IN THE DELTA

**BOND, James**

**BOSS, G**

**BOUFFIOUX, John**

**COCHRANE, Reginald**

**CUMMINS, Jake**

**DAVIS, Edward (Ted)**

**GALPIN, Llewellyn Thomas 'Sonny'**

**GREGOIRE, Kirk**

**HOWARD, Eugene 'Gene'**

**HUGHES, Robin**

**KUBLEK, Charlie**

**LAUDER, Douglas "Bruce"**

**LOGAN, John Wellington 'Deke' 'Jack'**

**NIELSEN, Eric**

**OSCAR, Julien**

**PEASEY, Geoge Leslie**

**PEPPER, Richard 'Dick' 'Torch'**

**SALESKI, George**

**SCHULTZ, Gordon Frank**

**THOMPSON, John**

## WE'VE GOT MAIL

### Season's Greetings



### Another beautiful card from Japan!

**HARUO ARAI (RAdm Ret'd Navy)** writes: Best Wishes to you and yours for a healthy, Merry Christmas and happy 2018.

**JOHN MAIN** sends I look forward to another year of great Warrior editions. Keep up the good work. Yours Aye

From "**RED**" **ATKINS**: Enclosed my dues and a little more for you to put to osome worthy cause - as you see fit!

Hope all is well with you and that the winter is not being too hard on you. Look after yourself dear friend and all the best. With fond regards as always... Red

**LORNE MCDONALD** writes: I spoke to Patti today after you had left. Sorry to have missed you. It was great to hear you are still able to help out at the Foundation even if it's only half a day sometimes.

Best regards to all the wonderful people that keep the Foundation and Museum functioning.  
Cheers - Lorne & Judy McDonald.

(From the Editor/SAMF Scy) I'm hanging in here for an old

broad. Yes sometimes it is only half a day at the office but believe me I put in many, many hours on WARRIOR at home and other work. I love AW and am not going to rush out of here if I can help it.)

From **WAYNE HALLADAY**: Hope all is well at Shearwater. We don't see many of the old guys except for the Paquette's, Ray Cowper and Ed Smith.

Take care  
Wayne and Roberta

PS Roberta just reminded me to wish you and the gang a Merry Christmas and be well in 2018.

**HANK BANNISTER** writes: Seasons Greetings to you all. Keep up the great work with WARRIOR. **Henry Lyle**

(Thank you Lyle - our team at SAMF are the best. Happy New Year to

you and yours.)

**BILL MORAN** writes: Morning Kay.

I was pleasantly surprised to find my photo on page 14. It was probably taken around 1948, 69 years ago. Time marches on, I am now 89 years of age in fairly good health and still spending my winters in South Pasadena Florida.

In the article by John Page on page 24 he included a short paragraph on Bill Monroe torque stall into the sea. I think I had written to the magazine a short paragraph on how I witnessed this accident. At the time I was a member of the Sea fury squadron and was in a gun sponson midship on the port side watching the landings when Monroe plane came directly at where I was standing. I ran back towards the ship and his plane just missed hitting the edge of the sponson. I then returned to the outer edge and was relieved when Monroe finally popped up and was eventually picked up by a boat from the destroyer. All's well that end well.

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From Kay: And now for one of my favourite notes each year, from Ted Gibbon.

From **TED GIBBON**: I'm a little adrift in sending my annual contribution resulting from my inability to pick a winning team in the Grey Cup. Once again, the favoured West was disappointed by a thoroughly inept team from the



Eastern Conference. As usual, I forward the \$100 and Barry Montgomery gets the receipt.

This year, I experienced a measure of satisfaction in the result - Montgomery had to cheer for a TORONTO Team and he experienced discomfort throughout the game and for several days following.

I note that the Foundation is falling on hard times. This little bit won't make much of a difference but I'm obliged to keep betting on the West, so you can lock in my annual contribution in the budget. Warm regards. Ted

*(Hang in there with the West kiddo. The Foundation is holding their own financially but it's another story for the Museum.)*

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From **EDDY MYERS** I have to be honest with myself when I consider the future of SAMF.

I'm reluctant to be pessimistic, but in light of the demise of Canadian Naval Aviation beginning in the early 1970's with the paying off of Bonaventure plus the subsequent take-over of Naval helicopter operations by the RCAF, coupled with the ever increasing number of Naval Aviators listed as having joined the Delta, I consider that SAMF has a bleak, if not unlikely future. Even the articles in Warrior have fewer Naval Aviation content and themes and rely increasingly on exploits of the Light Blue

In light of the foregoing and the fact that I tried unsuccessfully, before Xmas 2017, to renew my membership within a total donation of \$100.00 as in the past. I was mystified when, after several months, I failed to note the corresponding withdrawal from my Credit Account although I had provided my Credit Card information to effect the transaction.

Notwithstanding that I am honouring my intention to donate/renew for 2018, it shall be my last as I fail to see any encouraging signs of a promising future.  
Sorry

*A reply from the Secretary - Kay Collacutt*

Hi there: I am mystified that your membership was not put thru or how it ended up.

I read your note and just sat there and cried... I have heard - just the other day - that I didn't put enough up to date items in WARRIOR. Our President and the Curator went to a BComd's Branch Head Mtg and apparently it was brought up there. I can tell you there is not one member of Shearwater who has joined the Foundation. The only ones who support the

Foundation are those that were Naval Air. That is not quite correct. The Base give the Museum the loan of a building and light, heat and water. When personnel available, they let them come to the Museum to help maintain the aircraft if required. As well, the last articles from the Wing were over 5 years ago. That may change - I've been told, on many occasions, that when the Sea Kings come to the Museum the crowds, from the Wing, will be forthcoming to SAMF for membership - I'll take photos of that.

As for content. You must be aware that I am not a writer. I look up articles or put in what is sent to me by whomever. I don't have much choice. I can tell you the articles that do come in are few and far between.

We do agree on one thing - although I have sworn to do everything I can for Shearwater as I am happiest there, I too see nothing but a bleak future at this time. I hate to see it go down the tube and the loss of memories of that fabulous time of Naval Air makes me sick.

However I thank you very much for all your donations and articles. You can thank our Government for the change in colour from dark blue to light blue. I understand the Base - 12 Wing is under the Command and Control of the Navy in Halifax. I'd have thought that would mean they would wear Navy Blue and especially if they were working on a Naval Air Base and landing on ships. What would I know.

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***PLEASE CONTINUE TO HELP US WITH  
OUR FUND RAISING VENTURES.***

## COAST Guard holds memorial service for crew of CG 1363

Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

Along with a current picture, taken 53 years after the event, of the wreckage at Strawberry Rock in Trinidad California of CG 1363, an HH-52 Seaguard is a USCG announcement as follows:

**MCKINLEYVILLE, Calif.** ----- The Coast Guard held a memorial service to honor the crew and passengers of the CG-1363, an HH-52 Seaguard helicopter that crashed in a severe storm there during a rescue operation Dec. 22, 1964.

Lt. Cmdr. Donald Prince, from New Jersey, Royal Canadian Navy Sub-Lt. Allen Leonard Alltree and Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class James A. Nininger, Jr., from Virginia, a Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco-based helicopter crew, and Bud Hansen, a citizen volunteer, were honored during the ceremony.

On Dec. 22, 1964, the helicopter crew was dispatched to Humboldt Bay, where roads were closed from flood damage, to assist with evacuations. At 2:48 p.m., the helicopter arrived in the Humboldt Bay area where Hansen, a local resident, volunteered to join the crew to help spot flood survivors and to help orient the crew to local landmarks. The helicopter crew, along with Hansen, began evacuating people from roof tops and flood areas, ultimately saving 10 lives.

At 6:03 p.m., the weather conditions worsened and the Arcata Airport Flight Service Station (FSS) received a call from the helicopter, which was trying to land with three rescued people aboard in low visibility and high winds. Approximately eight minutes before the radio call the airport had lost power, disabling to radio navigation beacon that was necessary to navigate to the airport.

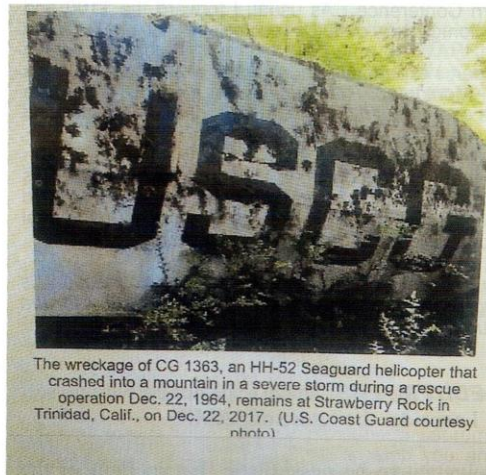
The FSS instruments indicated the helicopter was northwest of the airport. The controller continued to radio the pilot steering directions to help him land.

The pilot reported that he was at 1,000 feet and asked if that altitude would clear all obstacles along his path to the airport. The FSS controller replied to 1000feet might be inadequate due to high terrain just east of his bearing. A citizen living 12 miles north of the airport along the coast reported seeing a helicopter about one mile off shore and heading south. FSS attempted to relay the report to the pilot but could not regain communications. Repeated calls to the helicopter were met with silence.

Three days after losing contact with the crew of CG-1363. A Navy helicopter from the U.S.S. Bennington located the crash and directed ground search parties to the site. The helicopter had crashed on a slope at 1,130 feet of elevation nine miles north of the Arcata Airport near a landmark known as Strawberry Rock. Located with the wreckage were seven dead; the three crewmen, Hansen, two women and an infant girl.

In 1998, members of the Coast Guard Sector Humboldt Bay Chief Petty Officer's Association organized an effort to establish a memorial on the grounds of Sector Humboldt Bay.

The memorial was erected to honor the CG 1363 crew, the crew of the CG-6541 that crashed in 1994 and the crew of the CG-6549 that crashed in 1997.



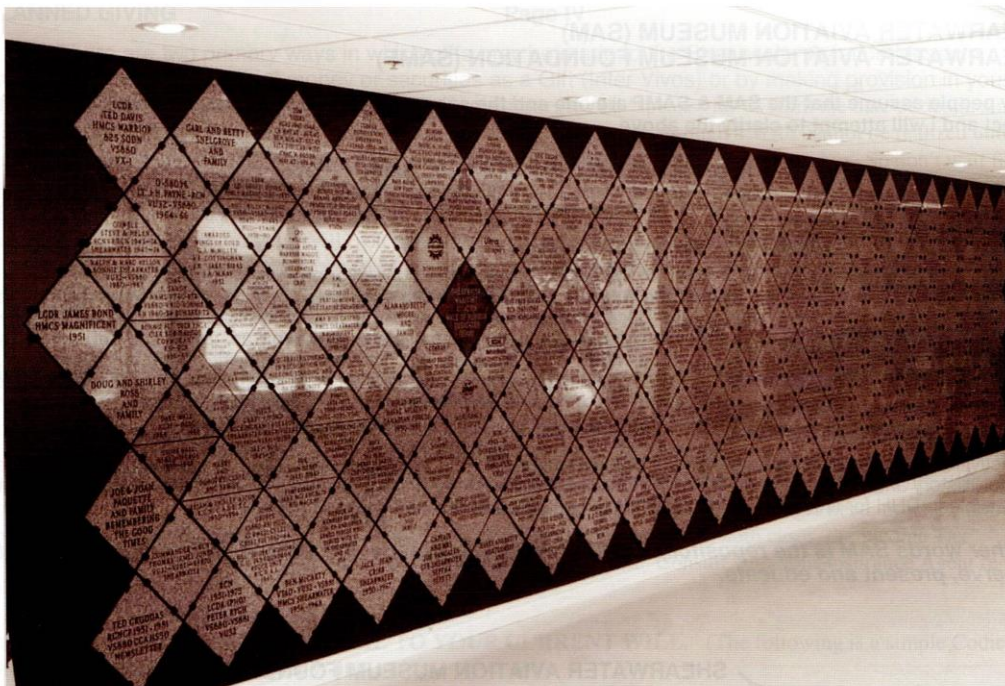
The wreckage of CG 1363, an HH-52 Seaguard helicopter that crashed into a mountain in a severe storm during a rescue operation Dec. 22, 1964, remains at Strawberry Rock in Trinidad, Calif., on Dec. 22, 2017. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)



**Humboldt Bay Memorial**

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**Rest In Peace**



## CHIPS FLYING

It is almost time for the commencement of the Wall of Honour tile making season. Chips will be flying in Lunenburg within the month (April/May) as the weather warms up to a suitable temperature for cutting the letters and symbols on the granite.

The Tile Program is the one way of donating to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation (SAMF) and of getting permanent recognition of you or your loved one's contribution to the incredible world of Maritime Aviation.

It is a testament to our existence within a very exclusive team dedicated to protecting the seas and coastlines from real and imagined dangers. In war, peace, peace keeping and natural disaster, Maritime Aviation has been there, and been there first. People who were there, and those who helped in support of these activities should have a form of remembrance. They do. It is with a tile on the Wall of Honour.

Remember the Traditional Naval Toast for Wednesday:

"To ourselves (as no one is likely to concern themselves with our welfare)."

See the centerfold in this and all Warrior editions for instructions on how to format a tile; and contact the SAMF secretary (Kay Collacutt) at Toll Free: 1-888-497-7779 or (902)-461-0062.

Thank you, and smooth sailing. *Jim Elliot*

### Sea Kings and Shipborne Aviation



**Sea King Overflies Helicopter Destroyers (DND Photo)**

Following the integration of the three armed forces in 1968, Canada's air assets were spread across disparate Canadian Forces commands. When Air Command formed in 1975, it consolidated command and control of all the air resources of the former Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and absorbed the air assets of naval and army aviation, including a large number of helicopters. Interestingly, the former naval Sea King helicopter proved to be unique because unlike any of Air Command's other aircraft it operated from the decks of the navy's destroyers. In the 1960s, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) led the navies of the world in solving the seemingly insurmountable challenges of marrying a large helicopter with a small destroyer. This achievement vaulted the RCN and Canada to the forefront of shipborne helicopter aviation and has had a universal impact on naval tactical development. The RCN developed a reputation of excellence in shipborne aviation; often flying in weather and sea conditions that most other navies considered too severe. Air Command and, by extension, the RCAF (Air Command renamed RCAF in 2011) inherited the RCN's superlative legacy and continued to pursue excellence by expanding the roles and missions of shipborne aviation to adapt to the changing nature of proliferating regional conflicts. As a consequence numerous modifications were made to the obsolete Sea King to extend its meaningful contributions until the arrival of its long awaited replacement, the CH-148 Cyclone.

The concept of operating helicopters from destroyers led to revolutionary advances in naval warfare, especially in the role of Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW). The RCN, foreseeing the huge advantages of operating helicopters at sea, pioneered the concept of flying relatively large helicopters from the flight decks of small destroyers. After the RCN and Canadian industry solved the difficult challenges of landing and taking-off from rolling decks in rough weather, most navies around the world adopted the concept of operating helicopters from small warships. The

rapid proliferation of helicopters operating from warships other than aircraft carriers gave rise to shipborne aviation, the most ubiquitous form of naval aviation in all but the largest navies. Shipborne aviation presented challenges quite different from carrier borne aviation where aircraft carriers had much larger, more stable flight decks and a wider range of maintenance facilities. Destroyers capable of hosting helicopters for shipborne operations were designated "Helicopter Destroyers" or DDH's.

### Arctic Helicopters

The RCN acquired its first helicopters in 1951 to investigate the usefulness of the rotary wing aircraft of the period for naval operations. The RCN acquired three HTL (Bell 47) helicopters in August 1951 to form No. 1 Naval Helicopter Flight; the HTL's were used for shore-based search and rescue, aerial photography, torpedo recovery, transport and training helicopter pilots. In 1954, the HTL's became the first helicopters to embark on *HMCS Labrador*, the first Canadian ship to incorporate a landing platform and hangar for helicopter operations during initial construction. Her embarked HTL's searched for navigable channels through the Arctic ice and more than halved the time required to survey coast lines bordering Arctic passages. In 1954, three larger twin-rotor Piasecki HUP-3 helicopters were purchased to augment *Labrador's* HTLs and provided a capability to sling up to 400 kg of heavy equipment ashore for the icebreaker's survey parties.

### ASW Helicopters

The success of helicopters in support of *Labrador's* Arctic surveys gave rise to the concept of using helicopters in ASW. The idea was not new, as the United States Coast Guard had considered basing helicopters on merchant ships during the Second World War. Their role at the time would have been to drive submarines down to reduce their effectiveness, or to hold them down until a warship arrived. By the early 1950s the concept of the anti-submarine helicopter changed profoundly with the latest developments of the dipping sonar, the ability to lower a sonar transducer by cable into the depths of the sea. The ability to detect a submarine with helicopter sonar and attack with homing torpedoes launched by another aircraft or ship promised to revolutionize ASW. To further investigate the concept, the RCN purchased a small fleet of Sikorsky HO4S-3 (S-55) helicopters from the United States and equipped them with dipping sonar. In 1955, the RCN formed Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 50 (HS 50) to pioneer the use of helicopters in ASW; the first HS 50 helicopters embarked in the aircraft carrier *HMCS Magnificent* in 1956.

### The Beginning of Shipborne Aviation

The prospect of a mix of helicopters equipped with dipping sonar and destroyers in the anti-submarine screen around a convoy or naval task group portended a quantum leap in the RCN's ASW capability if the relatively large Sikorsky HO4S-3 helicopter could be incorporated into its

small *St. Laurent* class Destroyer Escorts (DDEs). The feasibility of landing on a small ship was investigated by constructing a small landing pad over the quarterdeck of a Second World War era frigate, *HMCS Buckingham*, in the summer of 1956. The first HO4S landed aboard in September in the sheltered waters of Halifax's Bedford Basin. This much had been done during the Korean War when U.S. Army helicopters had conducted emergency evacuations from Canadian destroyers by landing on the aft deckhouse. The RCN also had recent experience operating Bell HTL and Piasecki HUP-3 helicopters from *HMCS Labrador*; however, the motion of a 6,500-ton icebreaker in quiet Arctic waters was hardly a harbinger of the challenges of landing a heavy helicopter on a 2,500-ton destroyer in the heaving North Atlantic.

Although the *Buckingham* trials proved it was possible to routinely land a large helicopter on a small ship, the HO4S's undercarriage was not sufficiently robust to prove the concept in "heavy weather". The next step was to determine the feasibility of operating a helicopter from the RCN's latest *St. Laurent* class destroyer escort; at the time considered the "Cadillac" among ASW destroyers in the Western world. In the latter part of 1956, *Buckingham's* landing platform was transferred to the new *St. Laurent* class destroyer, *HMCS Ottawa*, and a heavier Sikorsky H-34 (S-58) helicopter with an undercarriage rugged enough to handle the lateral stresses of landing on a rolling deck was borrowed from the RCAF. The *Ottawa* trials confirmed that a large helicopter could operate from a small ship in heavy seas. However, severe corrosion from exposure to strong cold winds and sea spray proved the need for a hangar for maintenance and protection against the weather. Also, a device was required to guide the helicopter down to the deck while landing, then capturing and firmly securing the helicopter to prevent it from sliding off a rolling and pitching deck in rough seas. The trial also proved that a helicopter even more robust than the H-34 was required.

In 1958, the case for operating helicopters from destroyers gained new impetus with the development of the Canadian designed Variable Depth Sonar (VDS) that could be towed at selectable depths from the stern of a destroyer. The VDS provided a vast improvement over the traditional hull-mounted sonars by permitting a destroyer to lower the VDS transducer to the best detection depth to search for submarines. The best sonar search depth varied with local ocean temperature and pressure gradients as well as ambient noise created by surface shipping and wave action. The ability to tow the VDS transducer down in deep sound channels where submarines operate enabled destroyers to detect targets at ranges in excess of 20,000 meters, a five-fold increase over hull-mounted sonars of the day. Furthermore, its performance was less affected by changes in temperature and pressure and rough seas than any other sonar. Two VDS equipped destroyers could now search an area that previously required six ships with hull-

mounted sonars. The RCN quickly incorporated the VDS system into its *St. Laurent* class destroyer modernization program.

Being able to locate submarines at longer ranges presented the problem of delivering an attack beyond the range of existing ships' anti-submarine weapons. The *St. Laurent* class's primary weapon, the "Limbo" anti-submarine mortar bombs, had a range of 1,000 yards. The Limbo's limited range required destroyers to enter well within the lethal range of a submarine's torpedoes to deliver an attack. The introduction of the already obsolescent Mark 43 homing torpedo extended the destroyers' attack range to 4,500 yards. Subsequent introduction of the 30-knot Mark 44 homing torpedo improved a destroyer's attack range to 6,000 yards; but this was still only one third the VDS detection range against a submarine.

The ability of the shipborne helicopter to search with its sonar beyond the fringes of a surface ship's sonar range provided a dramatic increase to the size of the area searched. But more importantly, a shipborne helicopter provided a means to attack targets beyond the range of a destroyer's torpedoes. By 1958 the HO4S-3 helicopters, equipped with dipping sonars, flying from the aircraft carrier *HMCS Bonaventure*, constituted an autonomous search capability, independent from the carrier. The potential to operate autonomously provided additional impetus to the RCN's efforts to incorporate sonar-equipped helicopters into small destroyer operations. Other navies experimenting with shipborne helicopters thought of the helicopter merely as a weapons carrier for attacking targets acquired by a ship's sonar. However, in 1959, the RCN decided that large shipborne helicopters, with their own sonars and weapons, would be most effective by providing its mother destroyer a collaborative but independent stand-off search and attack capability.

#### The *St. Laurent* DDH

In early 1959, the RCN decided to completely rebuild the original seven *St. Laurent* class destroyer escorts to carry a heavy helicopter and to be fitted with VDS. It also decided to build a helicopter capability into the last two Restigouche class destroyers, better known as the Annapolis class, as well as most new ships destined for the RCN's fleet. The *St. Laurent* reconstruction required stripping the destroyer aft of the bridge, including the "Y-mount" aft gun turret and one of the two Limbo mortar launchers. This provided space on the main deck to build accommodation for air detachment personnel and aircraft maintenance facilities, and to construct a hangar and flight deck above the new main deck spaces.

Although, most navies claimed it couldn't be done the RCN solved the biggest impediment to shipborne aviation; how to land a helicopter on the rolling pitching flight deck of a small destroyer. The RCN, in collaboration

with Canadian industry, designed and pioneered the "Helicopter Hauldown and Rapid Securing Device" (HHRSD), better known as the "Beartrap". The Beartrap enabled a helicopter to land on a destroyer's small flight deck in all but the worst weather conditions then to secure the aircraft to the deck to prevent it from rolling off. The Beartrap machinery and power assemblies were located below the flight deck and controlled by the ship's Landing Safety Officer (LSO), situated in a Perspex enclosed Howdah that afforded an unobstructed view of the flight deck and Beartrap. Prior to landing on a pitching rolling destroyer the Sea King hovered above the Beartrap, a four-foot (1.3 meter) hollow-square device rising about one foot (30 cm) above the flight deck. The helicopter crew then lowered a small messenger cable through an extendable probe in the hull of the helicopter near its centre of gravity. The messenger cable was connected to the Beartrap's heavier "haul-down-cable" to retrieve the Beartrap cable and lock it into the Sea King's probe. When the pilot and LSO were ready to land, the LSO winched in the haul-down-cable to guide the Sea King's probe into the centre of the Beartrap. The LSO then fired the Beartrap's jaws, which clamped on the aircraft's probe, securing the helicopter firmly to the flight deck. Once secured in the Beartrap, the aircraft was straightened to align with the flight deck's fore and aft axis and the rotor blades and tail pylon were folded along side the fuselage. The Beartrap was then traversed forward along a track in the flight deck to pull the Sea King into the ship's hangar where it was protected from the elements. The ability to rapidly secure the helicopter on the deck immediately after landing minimized the time the destroyer was restricted to a steady course into wind, thereby, allowing the ship to quickly resume manoeuvring to reduce vulnerability to attack. The Beartrap, or versions of it, have been adopted by navies around the world, including those of the United States, Australia and Japan. The Beartrap is considered Canada's gift to shipborne aviation. The DDE's converted to carry helicopters were re-designated DDH's.

It took time to find the money and finalize the design to rebuild the St. Laurent's; therefore, it wasn't until 1962 that the first ship, *HMCS Assiniboine*, started conversion to a DDH. In the meantime the RCN searched for a suitable new helicopter. The obsolescent HO4S-1 was designed in 1948 and first saw service with the U.S. Navy in 1950; the updated HO4S-3 version was also flown from U.S. Navy aircraft carriers; but it was clearly not capable of withstanding the rigours of operating from much smaller destroyers. In 1962, the RCN found the ideal aircraft capable of independent operations from a destroyer and selected the Sikorsky CHSS-2 Sea King, which combined the "hunter-killer" role in a single airframe. The Sea King was selected for its size, range and all-weather day-night capability to conduct anti-submarine missions. Its two turbine engines provided a good safety margin for extended mid-ocean operations where returning to shore was not an option; also, its hull design increased

survivability in the event of a water landing. The Sea King's primary sensor was its dipping sonar, which could be lowered from a 15-meter hover to ocean depths of 150 meters to search for submarines. The Sea King carried two homing torpedoes to attack submarines detected by either its own sonar or on information from ships or other aircraft. The first of 41 Sea Kings arrived at Shearwater almost 55 years ago on 1 August 1963.

With embarked Sea Kings conducting sonar searches beyond the range of shipborne sonars, DDHs could search larger areas more quickly. Sea Kings also provided the only means to attack submarines, which were beyond the range of ships' torpedoes. With the advent of nuclear powered submarines in the late 1950s the Sea King played an even more crucial role as destroyers were incapable of keeping pace with the nuclear submarine's superior speed, manoeuvrability and deep diving capability. More critically, the nuclear submarine's ability to operate in deep ocean sound channels enabled its exceptional sonar to detect targets at ranges that greatly exceeded the VDS. The DDH was in the unenviable position of being susceptible to attack before the submarine could be detected. This tactical disadvantage thrust the Sea King into the role of the DDH's primary weapon system. The Sea King's ability to extend the DDH's tactical reach reduced the nuclear submarine's advantage in sonar and weapons range.

#### The Iroquois DDH

In the early 1970's, the Canadian Navy introduced four larger (5,100 tons) and more capable Iroquois class helicopter destroyers, also known as Tribal or 280 class destroyers. Not only did the Iroquois class ASW destroyers have state-of-the-art command and control systems, sonars and weapons but they also were designed with a larger hangar to accommodate two Sea Kings (re-designated CH-124 after integration in 1968). Similar to previous DDH's, the Iroquois class flight decks featured a HHRSD or Beartrap that enabled the two helicopters to be launched and recovered sequentially. As with the older St. Laurent and Annapolis classes, the Sea Kings extended the ships' tactical reach beyond the range of the DDH's sonar and weapons or operate independently from the destroyer.

#### AOR Helicopters

When DDH's put to sea as part of a naval Task Group, the Task Group usually included a Protecteur class Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ship not only to replenish the ships at sea, but also to provide a second line aircraft maintenance capability. To perform their aircraft support function, the Protecteur class AOR's were built with a flight deck and a hangar that could accommodate three Sea Kings and the air detachment included up to 20 technicians to maintain the aircraft embarked in the AOR. Sea Kings embarked in the AOR could be tasked operationally when not undergoing second line maintenance in preparation for rotation with other

helicopters requiring maintenance embarked in accompanying DDH's. The Protecteur class AOR flight decks were not equipped with a HHRSD; therefore, free-deck landings and takeoffs were the standard procedure.

#### The Halifax Frigates

In 1992, the Canadian Navy introduced the first of its new helicopter-capable 5,000-ton Halifax class frigates (FFH), which were considered to be among the finest frigates in the world. The general-purpose frigates were equipped with the latest ASW sensor and weapon systems including a hangar, flight deck and a HHRSD to support a single Sea King. The frigates replaced their predecessors' VDS sonar with the new Canadian-designed Towed Array Sonar System (CANTASS) which consisted of arrays of hydrophones imbedded in a long cable towed hundreds of meters behind the frigate. The CANTASS hydrophones listened passively for the sounds generated by a submarine (propellers, turbines, etc.) and were capable of detecting submerged submarines at ranges well in excess of the VDS. To be compatible with CANTASS, six Sea Kings were modified to process the submarine sounds detected by sonobuoys, which passively detected the same submarine generated sounds as CANTASS. The modified Sea Kings provided the frigates an integral capability to prosecute CANTASS submarine contacts well beyond the range of the frigate's weapon systems. Using CANTASS bearings as a search datum the Sea Kings dropped sonobuoys to pinpoint the submarine's position and ultimately deliver an attack. The modified Sea Kings were also intended to explore the systems and tactics intended for the Sea King's successor, the long awaited Sikorsky CH-148 Cyclone.

#### Role Expanded

Since the Sea King's arrival in August 1963 it was primarily an ASW aircraft, but since the first Arabian Gulf War in 1990-91 the roles and missions of the aircraft have greatly expanded. New equipment and sensors hastily added for the surface interdiction role in the Gulf War were adopted as standard equipment and new tactics and procedures were developed to exploit their capabilities. To reflect the expansion in roles, in January 1995, 423 and 443 Squadrons were re-designated from Helicopter Anti-submarine to Maritime Helicopter Squadrons. The mid-ocean ASW missions were expanded to include littoral operations to support the maritime dimension of NATO and UN operations in regional conflicts as well as anti-piracy patrols, counter drug surveillance, and humanitarian relief. From 9/11, 2001 until today, Sea Kings have been continually deployed on national or international named operations, the most recent operations being OP REASSURANCE in central and Eastern Europe and OP ARTEMIS in the Arabian Sea.

Ernest Cable  
Shearwater Aviation Museum Historian

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## FUNDRAISING EVENTS!!!!

**Well, it certainly has been an eventful year so far! With the final flight of the Sea King and the planning for the 12 Wing 100th Anniversary, the Shearwater Aviation Museum will be a busy spot this year.**

**We at the Shearwater Aviation Museum are busily getting ready for many upcoming events this spring and summer.**

**The Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation (SAMF) will be holding their Annual SAMF Dinner Auction on the 16th of June, 2018 at the WO's & Sgts Mess. Tickets are \$75 per person. For more information contact the SAMF office at 902-461-0062 or 902-720-1083 ask for Kay or Patti.**

**On July 10th the SAM Foundation will be hosting its annual Golf tournament at Hartlen Point Golf Course. For more information contact the museum at 902-720-1083 ask for Patti.**

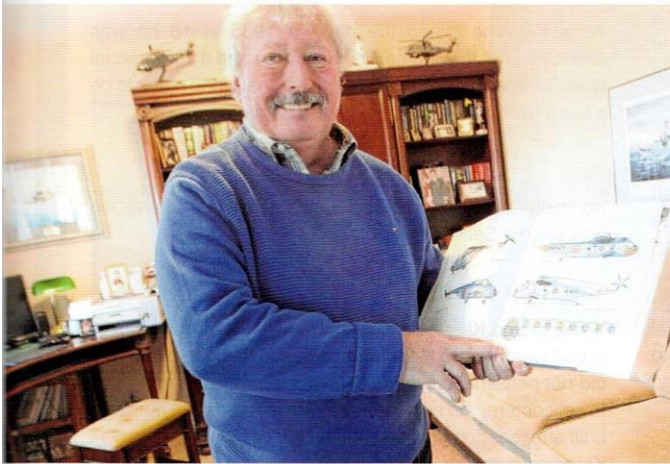
**The SAMF will also be running our 500 club in the Fall of 2018. Tickets will go on sale 1 June 2018 at a cost of \$100 per ticket. The draws will be made weekly and monthly with special draws taking place throughout the year. Contact Patti at 902-720-1083 or Kay at 902-461-0062 for ticket information.**

**We will also be running our yearly 50/50 draw for the Foundation. Tickets are available now and the draw will take place on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019. You can contact the SAMF office for details at 902-461-0062.**

**All proceeds from our Fundraising go towards preserving your Maritime Aviation History.**

**Thank you.**

## RETIRED SEA KING PILOTS REMINISCE



**Larry McWha**

Who's got better stories than old Sea King pilots?

Even when their helicopters functioned perfectly, these guys were doing things like landing on small ships in 10-metre seas, heavy rain and high winds. In the pitch dark.

And, of course, there were the all-too-frequent days when the Sea Kings, going into retirement Friday on the East Coast after more than five decades of service, didn't function perfectly.

"We had smoke in the cabin one day, we were flying at about a thousand feet and we started losing altitude," said Albert Bohemier, who retired as a captain after more than 1,200 hours in command of a Sea King. "The other pilot, instead of flying, was trying to help me because we thought we were on fire. We were both pulling circuit-breakers, trying to figure out where the smoke was coming from, and the crewman in the back tapped me on the shoulder and I looked at the altimeter, and it was winding down at great

speed. We were losing altitude pretty fast and probably would have impacted within 30 seconds, so I just pulled on the collective and went back up. I learned from that, that one of us always has to be watching the dials."

Not without incident

Larry McWha's logbook dates back to his maiden flight.

Larry McWha flew Sea Kings from 1967 until 1994, logging more than 4,500 hours, and still has his log book in which he recorded details of each flight.

During his first flight as crew commander, "there was an incident" on a daytime training trip.

"We were about 30 miles out and all of sudden we could smell fuel, and the guys in the back said we were leaking fuel from the overhead, coming in very quickly," said the former colonel. "We couldn't tell which engine compartment it was coming from, so we immediately high-tailed it back to Shearwater and we got back and shut it down. What had happened was one of the main fuel lines had ruptured. In fact, it was the same type of failure which occurred years later near Saint John, New Brunswick and the aircraft caught fire in flight and was lost."

McWha said the incident didn't affect his confidence in the aircraft, though he admitted he might have felt differently had the helicopter ignited.

Bohemier made more than 300 night landings on ships and expects to shed a few tears on Friday. He credits his years in the military with giving him the skills and the toughness to later become a success in business.

"One night after I had landed and it was raining with fog and drizzle and there were 20- or 30-foot seas, the ship



was heaving and it had taken a while to get it down, I remember thinking 'In the last five minutes I've earned my month's pay.' It was a very challenging, exciting life, flying a Sea King. The Sea King had its problems but it was a great aircraft," said Bohemier, who decided he wanted to become a pilot while plowing fields on the family farm in Manitoba.

"The heat from the tractor radiator would create an updraft and the seagulls know when you turn the ground, there are grubs. So they hover in this updraft, right above my head and wait until they saw a grub, and then they would dive down, grab it and come back up. Sometimes there were two or three of them, and I used to sit in the tractor and look at their wings and think, 'I want to fly so bad, I want to be a pilot, to be in the air and glide and turn and go up and down.'"

GALLERY: The highs and lows of the retiring Sea Kings

Everyone has their issues.

In his workshop Larry McWha has a hat with a patch from the HS 50, a new helicopter squadron formed on July 4, 1955 at Shearwater. The squadron began to provide anti-submarine capability for the aircraft carrier, HMCS Magnificent. (ERIC WYNNE / Staff)

Bohemier said the Sea Kings did great work in their search and rescue and anti-submarine roles, but that some of the criticism of them was fair.

"Well, there were always electronic issues with the Sea King. As an airframe, it was a good airframe, some of the avionics, well . . . if you bought a computer 10 years ago and tried to work with it today, it would drive you insane. The Sea King had old avionics," he said. "When you were looking for submarines, you were supposed to hover at 40 feet but the sea underneath you, as you can imagine, is moving up and down. Well, the helicopter thinks it should stay at 40 feet, so as the wave comes up the helicopter thinks it's too low, so it goes up. Then when the wave goes down, it thinks it's too high and if you have a 10-ton helicopter going up and down, it overshoots, so a couple of

times in high seas, we went quite low. We never got wet."

When McWha joined the navy in 1965 at 18 he was already a pilot, having earned his wings and a commercial licence through the air cadets. He originally had plans to be a bush pilot but decided it was too dangerous.

Ironically, after finishing first in his qualifying course, he was soon a Sea King pilot.

"Prior to Sea Kings, helicopters didn't fly much at night or in bad weather. So the tendency was to take the pilots who did not perform well in their wings training and send them to helicopters," he said Thursday in the retirement home he built after coming home from the Gulf War. "When the Sea Kings came along, that changed."

McWha said he never considered the Sea King unsafe. Extremely unreliable, yes, unsafe, no.

"About the only thing you could rely on was that something would go wrong, or something would break," he said.

Bohemier, who looks military fit at the age of 67, sells crash simulators worldwide. While he was a Sea King pilot, he told his wife that if he died in a crash she should remember that he died happy, doing what he loved.

"It's part of my fabric, I guess. It's like a tattoo."

Retired pilot Larry McWha remembers his days in the cockpit of Sea King helicopters during his years in the Royal Canadian Navy. McWha will be in Halifax to watch as three Sea Kings fly for the last time as the 50-plus-year-old helicopters are retired. (ERIC WYNNE / Staff Courtesy Chronicle Herald)

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Prince William landing the Waterbird in PEI

## WINNERS, TO DATE, FOR THE 500 CLUB

DECEMBER	\$ 200.00	GARY DOIRON
6TH	\$ 200.00	BRUCE SUTHERLAND
13TH	\$ 200.00	MIKE OWENS
DEC. 20TH	\$ 1,500.00	DAVID DARWIN

JANUARY	\$ 200.00	TODD GRAHAM
10TH	\$ 200.00	BOB SHORE
17TH	\$ 200.00	FRANK DOWDALL
23RD	\$ 200.00	PETER STALEY
31ST	\$ 500.00	SHARON WEBBER

FEBRUARY	\$ 200.00	DON SMITH
7TH	\$ 1,000.00	LES EAST
14TH	\$ 200.00	PAUL MCCABE
21ST	\$ 200.00	GAIL ASHLEY
28TH	\$ 500.00	MICK STEPHENSON

MARCH	\$ 200.00	GORD GRAY
7TH		
14TH	\$ 200.00	SHIRLEY MACDONALD
21ST	\$ 200.00	PATTI GEMMELL
28TH	\$ 500.00	JOHN KNUDSEN

APRIL	\$ 1,000.00	
4TH		

WINNER OF THE 50 50 DRAW

VAUGHAN RAESIDE \$1000

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## When Was History in the Making

*Capt Daniel "BOOYA" Baouya*

When one thinks of history, thoughts of black and white photos, distant wars in forgotten battle fields, and ancient civilizations in some 'Indiana Jones' type setting might come to mind. Clearly, most of us might agree on what constitutes a major historical moment, for those are obvious. Anyone who lived through a milestone time period or event would surely have known that they were either witnessing or 'making history', but what about the other 'firsts' or perhaps the less obvious 'lasts'. Who decides what will be reported or recorded? How will we remember?

Confederation: the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway; the telephone; the list of moments in time and inventions that have changed our lives is long. In fact, it's endless because as time goes on, new events occur, and we continue to evolve (hopefully) along with our ever changing environment. Having said that, if we don't pause, take a moment to look back, and document our experiences, valuable stories will be lost. I think now to 12 Wings new 'lessons learned' program and the value of such efforts: If we don't pass on what we've learned, we risk having to 'reinvent the wheel' and worse, repeating dangerous mistakes.

Major historical events get recorded and passed on; I'd like to focus to the less obvious events, the ones that often go unnoticed. When was the last time you used a rotary phone? Can you remember your pre-internet life? We might have an easier time remembering the end of an era by thinking about the start of another. In other words, you might not remember the last time you HAD to use your bicycle as a method of transportation as a kid but if you thought about the day you passed your first road test and earned your driver's license, that might spark your memory. My question to you is what happened to that good old trusty rotary phone you used so many times to call your family, a loved one, or to make prank phone calls with your friends? What happened to the phonebook? Did you sell that old bike for gas money? Your trusty BMX? Your first ticket to partial freedom? Gas money? How could you!

I don't know what the requirements are for an event to 'go down in history', or for a trusty tool or piece of equipment to go into a hall of fame, but if I had to pick one that has served me well (and several generations of MH aircrews before me), the CH-124 Sea King is a shoe in. As for 'a moment in time' that I think should get passed on, here's my submission:

We were on HMCS REGINA, on Op ARTEMIS (ROTO 1), Canada's contribution to Maritime Security in the Arabian Sea and surrounding regions. We were the second ship to deploy on this mission, following HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN, and HMCS TORONTO filling in after us. Another tail number (428) on the deck of another hull (334), another mission somewhere in the world; business as usual for members of the CF. Our 19 member HELAIRDET was from 443 MH Sqn in Victoria and we flew most every day 'doing

the business'. The techs worked their butts off to keep the old bird flying and the aircrew conducted the operations, mostly surface surveillance missions. One of our Det patches read "Ready for W hatever" reflecting the slight ambiguity to our mission prior to embarking, but it was later made clear; we were forward deployed, and deterring crime on the high seas via active presence. I doubt that anyone of us thought we were making history and whether we did or not, I guess is up to 'father time'.

We flew well over 550 hours in what was the most advanced Sea King to ever deploy: We were night vision capable; we had an augmented surface plot capability, and a tactical common data link allowing us to transfer imagery back to the ship in flight and even stream live video. With our self-defense suite, forward looking infrared and other sensors, who would have thought the Sea King would evolve to be so capable? 50 years of loyal service and she continues to do ASW, ASuW, utility work, all the while landing on our ships in sea states that make us look crazy cool in the eyes of our allies.

We know Canada was the first to fly helicopters off non-carrier warships and the Recovery Assist Secure and Traverse (RAST) system was a Canadian invention that revolutionized maritime helicopter operations if not created the whole concept. Historical? I think so, but mention "Sea King" to some civies and you'll get the "isn't that the helicopter that's always crashing?" Comments like that make me think of lyrics of a song by B.I.G. "you're nobody 'til somebody kills you". Those of us who truly know the Sea King, know that it's actually quite reliable and is more aptly called the workhorse of the RCN and the RCAF. I guess it's up to us to educate the public on the truth, or, like the lyrics of that song, perhaps the Sea Kings will get the reputation they deserve once they're retired and replaced. Anyways, back to my story.

It was a Friday, and the aircrew were excited, not because it was Friday, because if you've been to sea before, as a member of a HELAIRDET, you know the days of the week don't matter to us; they're all the same...ok, there's ice cream on Sundays, but that's about it. We were set to do a cross deck, which means landing on a class of ship other than what we have in the RCN. However, this cross deck wasn't to the flight deck of 'just' another ship, this was an American aircraft carrier. It's not every day you get to land on another country's ship and a cross deck to an aircraft carrier is even rarer. Now for a bit of a modern history lesson (or perhaps pop-culture):

If you're aircrew, hell, if you have a pulse and were born before 1990 you should know, all too well, the best Air Force (and perhaps U.S. Navy) recruiting movie of all time. If the title hasn't already come to mind, well, shame on you, I'm talking about Top Gun. For those of us who love flying and maybe a love story with extra cheese, this is your film. Put it on in the mess and you'll even have to fight fish-heads for a seat! I don't know that there's anyone I've flown with that has not either quoted Top Gun or understood a reference I've made to the movie (in the cockpit or elsewhere). Come on, as if you've been to the bar and not said to your friend



"Ok, so the bet is \$20...." Anyway, the opening scene of the movie was set "somewhere in the Arabian Sea" and guess what, that just happened to be where we were operating that Friday and the aircraft carrier we were going to land on was none other than CVN-65, the USS Enterprise, the 'Top Gun' carrier.

The Enterprise has quite a distinguished service history dating long before Top Gun. She was the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. In October 1962, Enterprise was dispatched to its first international crisis where she sailed with other ships to set up quarantine of all military equipment under shipment to communist Cuba. The blockade was put in place on October 24, and the first Soviet ship was stopped the next day. On October 28, Soviet leader Krushchev agreed to dismantle nuclear missiles and bases in Cuba, concluding the Cuban Missile Crisis, the closest the U.S. and USSR have ever come to nuclear war. On November 25, 2011, Big 'E' celebrated its 50th birthday, making the carrier the oldest active duty ship in the U.S. Naval fleet. Hmmm, 'oldest active duty ship', makes me think about our 'oldest active duty helicopter'. Our helicopter was chosen by the RCN for production on 20 December 1961 and 27 November 1963 marked the first operational destroyer landing of a CH-124 Sea King (aboard HMCS ASSINIBOINE).

It was a no fly day for the Top Guns aboard Big 'E'. We didn't see any jets take off or land, but that did give us the freedom to do a couple circuits without the fear of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, not that we would be, we're Top Guns too, obviously! I vaguely remember the brief; the weather, and the plan: launch, head to

USS Enterprise, do a couple circuits and landings, and pick up our CO, (who was dropped off earlier by the other crew), and RTB. It was one of those beautiful afternoons at sea when you knew the sunset was going to be amazing; not a cloud in sight. The crew was Maj Steve Donaldson as MHCC, I as MHC, Capt Jeff Knock as MHCP, and Cpl Andrew Harton our AESOp (A.K.A. R2D2). After taking off from our deck, we headed in the direction of the carrier. Once visual, it was quite a site. At 1,123' long and 250' tall, the Enterprise is quite different from the small boats we were used to checking out; compared to our CPFs, she has twice our length and double our height. They don't call her Big 'E' for nothing.

As we approached, we were cleared to the 'starboard delta', the helicopter pattern for carrier ops. I got Jeff to do the first circuit and take the first landing. Sure I wanted to go



**Angel Scramble, Bonaventure, Mediterranean 1958** *by Don Crowe*

Sometime in late November or early December, I was sitting on the flight deck in the late afternoon Mediterranean sun, the top of my flying suit down and leaning against the Sikorsky main wheel enjoying a short time catching some rays.

I had just returned from the hover station during a launch of S2Fs. After the launch the ship was turning out of the wind to resume its course. It was late enough that I didn't expect to have to fly again as the next launch/recovery of aircraft would be after dark and we were not equipped at that time to operate at night at sea.

\*I call this the "Angel Scramble" but in fact we called the "plane guard helicopter" Pedro. The USN term "Angel" seems to be more accepted generally than Pedro.

Commander Air Jim Hunter must have been watching from flyco and he obviously waited until I got myself settled down before he hit the klaxton and ordered a practice ditching scramble.

***"Scramble the Pedro. Practice emergency aircraft ditching!"***

The detachment deck crew leapt into action pulling the blade tie downs off. The rescue crew and I were suiting up and pulling on our Mae Wests and helmets. I climbed into the cockpit and flashed the engine up, got the rotors turning. I congratulated myself on a speedy start up and engagement, a little prematurely as it turned out. Plugging in my helmet, I called Ops and got the scramble info.

***"Practice aircraft ditching 090 15 miles."***

I got immediate takeoff clearance and launched into the air and made a sweeping turn to 090 on my compass, heading right back over the ship at high speed. I have to point out here that the aircraft compass being gyro stabilized would remain at the heading the aircraft was as the gyro wound down. Now the ship had turned, and I had forgotten to reset the compass. It slowly dawned on me that while I was on a gyro compass heading of 090 I was heading directly into the sun. Late afternoon. Heading into the sun.

Compass reading 090. Something definitely wrong here! I reset the compass and had to make a 180 degree turn to get back onto a heading of 090.

Damn!! I'd made a complete ass of myself and everybody was going to know about it. And that course took me right back across the carrier. I stayed low and pulling full takeoff power I was going as fast as the old sick horse could go.

I wasn't a hundred yards the other side of the ship when I heard from Flyco.

***"Pedro abort exercise and return to the ship."***

***Pilot to report to Flyco"***

I landed on the "aft 22" and shut down. As I climbed out of the aircraft and headed off to the island and my tongue lashing on the carpet, my tail between my legs, nobody in the crew said a thing to me. They didn't have to. I climbed reluctantly but speedily up to Flyco and went in to face the music.

Jim Hunter looked at me with mock despair (maybe not so mock) and said

"Well Crowe, what's your excuse this time?"

I shrugged and said "Compass error sir."

"You mean pilot error, Crowe! Get out of here"

Which I did.

A little later on the cruise when my promotion to Lieutenant came through, Jim announced it in the Wardroom anteroom just before supper one night. He called for attention and said he had a message on a promotion. He said that when this officer's promotion came up for review and recommendation that they had a hard time deciding whether to promote him or cashier him but decided on the lesser of two evils and the DND in its infinite wisdom had decided to promote Sub Lieutenant Don Crowe to Lieutenant.

A close shave. Thanks Jim. What it meant was I had to buy the assembled pilots and ship's officers a round of drinks.

\*This story maybe should be called Pedro Scramble and the explanation deleted.

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*(From the Editor: I'm sure others have made an error in their lifetime - how about a story from you? Those serving at 12 Wing today have probably made a few squeakers themselves - like to hear about them also.)*



### **SHEARWATER 100th Anniversary - Be a Part of History!**

Join us at 12 Wing as we celebrate the centennial of 12 Wing Shearwater, August 1st through 3rd, 2018.

The Shearwater 100 Committee welcomes Shearwater Retirees, Serving Canadian Armed Forces Members and their families to attend, participate, and witness history throughout our various scheduled events; some of which include an historical workshop a Meet and Greet, Parade, Gala Dinner, Golf Tournament, and much more.

The schedule of events will begin on August 1st. Registration will begin at the museum followed by the induction of a CH124 Sea King helicopter into the Shearwater Aviation Museum (SAM), 55 years to the date that it arrived in 1963. There will be a dedication ceremony that will take place at the SAM, to be followed by an historical workshop that will follow the main chapters of Shearwater's 100 years, with a roster of presenters, each with a significant connection to Shearwater. Following the historical workshop, a Meet & Greet will be held at the Sea King Club.

A memorial park dedication parade will be conducted at 12 Wing. On that day it will be the memorial park's grand opening to the public. The memorial park will be dedicated to all of those air personnel who gave of themselves in the service of their country as a part of maritime aviation from 1918. The park will include several monuments dedicated to the members of units at Shearwater and pay homage to our historical past. The dedication parade will take place from 0900 to 1000 and there will be a reception at the Shearwater Aviation Museum following the ceremony.

Also on Thursday, August 2nd will be the Gala Dinner: Starting at 5:00 pm, and will be held at the spectacular, newly constructed, Nova Centre in Downtown Halifax. Ms. Lee Byrd (Granddaughter of Admiral Byrd USN who was the first Station Commander of Shearwater, then United States Naval Air Station Halifax), LGen (Ret'd) Larry Ashley, and Col (Ret'd) John Cody will be the guest speakers (more information to follow). Stadacona Band will be playing and a dance will follow after the dinner and speeches.

The last day of planned events will be on Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Kicking off the celebratory activities will be a Family Day which will be open to all public at no cost. There will be static displays, a BBQ picnic, softball tournament, and a variety of family-oriented games and activities.

The other main event of the Friday schedule will be a Golf Tournament at Hartlen Point., with a scramble start and best ball. Prizes for every team and an excellent meal are included in the tournament fee. For event information and registration details, visit our website at [www.shearwater100.com](http://www.shearwater100.com), or email [Shearwater100th@gmail.com](mailto:Shearwater100th@gmail.com)

### Get some rest will ya!!!

There was a time in Sea King operations when it seemed we had more hours to fly than we knew what to do with. When flying everyday, twice a day was the norm for deployed operations. In those days it also seemed that this "8 hours of uninterrupted rest" thing was more of a suggestion than the rule. These two "realities" of the Sea King operations in the 80s lead to some scary moments. Some of you might have heard rumours about the story unfolding below, so, to set the record straight, here is what really happened to a very tired crew.

It was mid-June 1987. HMCS Athabaskan was at the tail end of MARCOT 87. The Detachment had been flying 2 helos almost non-stop for the previous month and every day for the previous 11 days, mostly at night. Now, I can't remember if there was a moon or not on that fateful night but, in this case, it is really irrelevant! I was the TACCO for crew 2 and we were going out for another Crew Trainer. Turning JP-5 into noise; again! We were all bored and just wanted to go home.

I was just beat. It took everything I had not to fall asleep during the pre-flight brief. But we went anyway. As we proceeded from dip to dip we were flinging AOs trivia at each other just to keep our minds from going numb. But even that slowly petered away about halfway through the flight. So we were in dip number 30 (or so it seemed) and I decided to close my eyes, only for 30 seconds or so. Just to get a little bit of a rest. Unfortunately, the dream fairy was right there lurking and I swiftly fell asleep.

Suddenly I heard: "...dio check. I say again; A1B this is C2D radio check over"! As I quickly came to my senses I did what any sensible TACCO would have done and replied "C2D this is A1B you are loud and clear over". While sub-consciously listening to the inevitable "Roger out" response I glanced to my right and noticed our AESOP fully entrenched in dream land! I could see that he was snoring a snore that was so deep it was more felt than heard; especially in a hovering Sea King. I was obviously hesitant to wake him up for, I knew, he was as tired and as deserving of respite as I was moments before.

At this point I had no idea how long I had dozed off, because of course I could not maintain a flight log worth a damn (it has always made my writing of FORMEX 101s an inspiring affair!), and I hoped the pilots had not noticed my brief (I optimistically hoped) moment of unconsciousness. As I looked to my left I noticed the co-pilot was hunched slightly forward, as far as his shoulder straps would allow, with his head down, inches from the cyclic, rhythmically vibrating in tune to the main rotor. Fast asleep! For a moment I felt an amazing wave of pride in our pilot's leadership qualities who, as I had done for my cabin companion, had left our co-pilot catch-up on badly needed sleep. As I cued my mike to voice my deepest admiration I noticed that the pilot's head was caulked to the left at a weird angle to the point of sticking out sideways like a giant white mole on the top left side of the pilot seat.

I froze. It just dawned on me! We were ALL asleep!! For how long? I have no idea (remember my flight log issues?). I hastily repressed my sudden urge to vomit and internally debated the best way to "safely" (everything is relative!) wake-up the front end. I figured; I probably should wake-up the pilot first. After all, he signed for this thing so he might as well be awake when it crashes!

As I delicately repositioned the Pilot's head in a more customary position, in the hope that he would gently wake-up, he thankfully regained his senses. As he inconspicuously wiped the drool off his left cheek, he took a glance at the co-pilot; more in the hope that his junior partner had not witnessed his mentor temporarily 'checking-out' than out of professional concern. After briefly being mesmerized by the rhythmic bobbing of sleepy-head to his left, the pilot slowly turned his head back, his left brain curious as to the state of our AESOP and his right brain scared of what he might find. Right brain won as he saw our sensor expert sound asleep.

I could see the pilot hesitate slightly, as all the gears in his recently frozen brain were coming to full speed. He then quickly looked at me with eyes bigger than I thought possible (the "deer in the headlight" analogy does not even come close to give this one justice). The light gray color of my face must have given him the answer to his unasked question: "Were you asleep too??", and I could see that the reality of what just happened dawned on him. As I gave him an almost imperceptible nod to confirm his worst fear, he slowly turned back forward undoubtedly trying hard to maintain sphincter control. Seconds later, with as much composure as humanly possible in such circumstances he proceeded to gently, almost fatherly, bring the co-pilot back from lala land.

Naturally, after a few seconds to compose himself and a last look around at the crew, the pilot made the only possible call at the time: "Sonar up dome. Seat the ball. We are going home!"

Needless to say the flight back to the ship was rather quiet. Except for the standard calls required to get us back on-board very few things were said. The co-pilot did manage to overcome his stupor enough to enquire: "What is this deep rumble that I feel? Can you guys feel that? I confidently reply: "Oh that! That's OK. That's just our AESOP still snoring!" (OK. This part I made up. But the rest IS true!!)

After putting the helicopter to bed we, off course, all quietly proceeded to our bunks for badly needed rest but not before, almost in unison, hugging an astounded Cpl Jones for having done a bang-up job, the day before, in fixing the coupler!!

LCol (Ret) André Lévesque

Note: While, for your reading pleasure, I have indulged in a bit of literary beautification in telling the story, it remains that the story is true. We WERE all asleep!! For how long, I will never know! But I thank God, and Jonesy, for being alive today to tell the story.



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