

SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2008





VS880 TRACKER AIRCRAFT

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

Joseph Howe , 31 August 1871

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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

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SAMF website: www.samfoundation.ca



**RAdm P. A. Maddison,
OMM, MSM, CD
Commander
Maritime Forces
Atlantic**

During my first few months in Command of Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, I had the great privilege of conducting familiarization visits to many of the Bases, Wings, Stations, and individual Units within our four Atlantic Provinces. On 19 August, Colonel Bruce Ploughman, Wing Commander of 12 Wing Shearwater, hosted me during a familiarization visit to 12 Wing. The visit was primarily developed to afford me a snapshot of the current activities and challenges at the Wing, and after a few hours of briefings on such issues as training, operations and infrastructure improvements, I thought I was departing 12 Wing knowing all that I needed to. This thought was soon to be disproven as, to conclude my visit to 12 Wing, Colonel Ploughman introduced me to the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Having never before visited the Shearwater Aviation Museum, I was astounded by the exhibits. The Museum is a true gem in the crown of Canadian Military Museums. I was so taken with the artwork displayed in the Museum that I have received, on loan, Paul Tuttle's "Banshee Trap" which I now have proudly displayed in the official residence on Lorne Terrace. It is my hope that others too will discover the Museum and experience it for themselves. It truly is an outstanding display of Canadian Maritime Military Aviation history and technology and an exceptional example of our rich heritage. I'm already looking forward to my next visit!

Yours aye, **Paul Maddison**



**Gordon Edwards,
Rear Admiral (P) (Rtd)**

**Message from the Chairman of
the Foundation.**

It was an honour and privilege to recently take over the position of Chairman of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation from old friend, Admiral Harry Porter. I look forward to the many challenges ahead. It is already apparent that my main job will be to come up with new ideas to attain funds for the museum,

and of course promote the museum however possible.

There is always lots of work to do, and as we all know, new and fresh ideas are often more than welcome. I think one of the primary objectives will be to ensure that the museum gets maximum exposure both for the area and for visitors, as in my discussions with many in Halifax, it is apparent that many do not really know the museum even exists. As well, I think we must make the best use of our already great newsletter, and in that regard it behoves all of us to assist Kay Collacutt as much as we can. I am certain that most are aware of the difficulty she has in getting stories, photos, and items of interest from retired naval aviation people. I have also heard that some have stated that the newsletter is really an "officers" periodical, and that lower deck personnel were not good at writing and on it goes. That was never apparent during my career, and good writing came from all ranks. I recall when we started the process of lower deck ranks writing reports on their juniors, and one of the first I received was quite incredible. The Master Seaman reporting on his junior Leading Seaman, wrote: "Some guys have it, some don't, he don't!" What could be clearer and more succinct than that?

I look forward to much more contact with the Museum Foundation, and of course the hard working Board. Any ideas, comments or suggestions are more than welcome, I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has an interest in the Museum Foundation. My preferred method of communication being email, at: ontherocks@eastlink.ca

RAdm H.A. Porter



It is with much regret that we say farewell to Rear-Admiral Henry Allan "Harry" Porter who has decided to retire from the Foundation after many years of yeoman service as a Member of the Board, Vice-Chairman and Chairman. Harry has been a strong supporter of the Museum Foundation from the onset and his presence will be sorely

missed.

We extend best wishes to Harry and a Bravo Zulu for an illustrious career and hope and expect that he will continue to take an interest in the Museum and the Foundation.



Eugene (Buck) Rogers

President's Report

The bright scarlet leaves and the cool, crisp days reminds us Autumn is here and changes are on the

way!

The last AGM meeting held 5 Sep 08 brought one change to the Executive of SAMF. The Chairman for the past two years, Adm Harry Porter (Ret'd) stepped down and Adm Gordon Edwards (Ret'd) was voted to fill that position. The Executive for the fiscal year 2008/2009 is as follows:

Chairman - Adm. Gordon Edwards
 Vice Chairman - Eric Edgar
 President - Eugene (Buck) Rogers
 Vice President - John Knudson
 Treasurer - Peter Staley
 Secretary - Kay Collacutt

On behalf of the membership of SAMF, I would like to thank Adm Porter for his many years of service as our Vice Chairman and his time as Chairman of the SAMF. I know he will still be involved with SAMF, to support the Heritage of Naval Air and the preservation of Shearwater! To our new Chairman Adm Edwards - Welcome Aboard. Thanks for being part of our group.

Membership dues are a strong financial resource for the Foundation. More members are needed, especially present serving personnel; sons and daughters of former Naval Air people and following generations as well as former Naval Air folks who have never joined the Foundation. Stand-up - be counted and support your heritage. The membership year is 1 Jan - 31 Dec. You may become a member anytime and if you are a member and your dues are in arrears - it only takes the payment of your dues for the current year to bring you up to date.

The Foundation Tile Program is an important on-going source of funds under the capable guidance of Ken Millar. If yours is not there - make it so!

At this time, I would like to welcome the Foundation's new Fund-raising Chair - Patti (Collacutt) Gemmell. A vote of thanks is extended to the out-going Fund-raising Chair - Serge Valade.

The Expansion Fund that was started about two years ago now stands at about 22K - with the original Building Fund included, the total amount is about 45K. So keep those generous donations coming!

The Foundation has supported the SAM for all their ongoing restoration projects and will fully support them in their future endeavours.

The Foundations latest Fund-raiser was the Golf Tournament held in conjunction with the International Air Show and was a huge success and netted around 11K! Many thanks to the Committee who organized this event, all the volunteers who worked the tournament and all the teams that participated!

I would like to thank the Directors and the entire Foundation membership for their dedication and support this past year. I'm hoping the fiscal year 2008-2009 will be a great one. Looking forward to the upcoming Festive Season - I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



From the Curator's Desk

By Christine Hines

The last few months, still surrounded by construction, have seen us focus our efforts on entertaining visitors during the high season. We had some interesting people come through Shearwater this summer, an impressive number from Europe interestingly enough! We can even boast some VIP visits, including Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, Premier Rodney MacDonald, and Rear Admiral Paul Maddison, incoming MARLANT/JTFA Commander. Today in

fact was a treat, as Admiral Richard E. Byrd's granddaughter Eleanor Byrd, came with her husband to visit the Museum, and truly seemed to enjoy the time spent here.

The summer months saw progress on the T-33 facelift; the aircraft is stripped, and we've started to paint its distinctive shade of orange on the tail. We've replaced the damaged port tip-tank with a "new-to-us" tip tank acquired from a gentleman in Moncton, NB. Firefly progress has been slow, but as I reported elsewhere in this newsletter in the Firefly update, the team has regrouped after a bit of a summer hiatus. The HUP has come along beautifully, and as I write this the long sought-after windows are en route from the USA. Many thanks to John Goble of Connecticut who made this possible! The HUP was recently moved into its place in Building 13, where it will have the finishing touches put on it such as the rotor blade and the windows installed. I hope you can drop in and see her soon! As I mention every issue, we have a host of volunteers helping us with the maintenance of this aircraft for which we are really grateful. In addition to the retired Navy and Air Force technicians, we are lucky to have current CF members helping us behind the scenes. As deployments and work commitments sometimes keep them out of sight from those that work during the day, these dedicated technicians help us on evenings and weekends and as their schedules allow. I think that when we are lucky enough to have a Sea King in our collection we'll see many more CF members joining our volunteer corps to help us rebuild Sea King equipment and displays that illustrate recent Maritime Helicopter Operations.

As this 90th year of Shearwater's operations comes to a close and we gear up to celebrate the Centennial of Powered Flight in Canada in 2009, I would encourage you to visit us and check out the projects we're planning for 2009. Keep in touch! We'd love to hear from you!

SAM FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT 3 SEPTEMBER 2008

The 2008 Golf Tournament was a resounding success. We had a total of 134 golfers who played a great round of golf that was squeezed in between showers. We enjoyed the support of many sponsors thanks to the staff of the Nova Scotia International Air Show headed up by Colin Stephenson and aided by John Benson Jr. who produces their web site.



**Kurt Heckel, Dave Jabalee, Kevin Dallien, Tom Raymond
Pratt and Whitney Canada Team One
Winners with Chuck Coffen**

The two major sponsors were Nova Scotia Business Inc as the "Presenting Sponsor" and Fleetway Inc as the "Dinner Sponsor". Additionally, Fleetway Inc. sponsored three teams, a hole, and provided 144 sleeves of golf balls and two major prizes. General Dynamics Canada was also generous in sponsoring two teams and four sets of four prizes as was Raytheon Canada who entered three teams. The lunch was sponsored by COSTCO. Marks Work Wear House provided the golf wind shirts.

A big thanks to Lem Murphy who donated a Digital Camera/Recorder used as the prize in our Putting Contest, raising more than \$500.

Other Participants who also provided prizes included IMP Aerospace, a team and hole sponsor, DRS Technologies, a team and hole sponsor, Pratt and Whitney Canada, L3 Communications MAS and Lockheed Martin Canada each with two teams. Assante Capital Management donated a major prize.

Of course we would not be successful without the volunteers who were, in alphabetical order, Ron Beard, Simon Bennetts, Ernie Cable, Kay Collacutt, Christine Dunphy, Eric and Mary Elizabeth Edgar, Patti Gemmell, Bill Gillespie, Dick Jamer,

Cory Jean, Ted Kieser, Duncan Mason, Roger Patey, Barb Ryan, Ron Verbeke, John Webber, Rollie West, Whitey Williamson, Pat Williamson, Shelley Williamson.

We are most grateful for the assistance of Major Duffy McGuire, who not only arranged the COSTCO sponsorship but facilitated the participation of teams from the Military Messes of 12 Wing & CFB Halifax.

The winner of the Tournament with a low gross score of 63 was the Pratt and Whitney Canada Team One: Kurt Heckel, Dave Jabalee, Kevin Dallien and Tom Raymond. Ironically, Pratt and Whitney Canada team Two won the "Most Honest" award.

The forecast bottom line should yield \$12,000 after all payables and receivables have been satisfied. BZ to all concerned!

Chuck Coffen, Chairman

A Julie Tale

I was an LSAO at the Armament Section in Shearwater in 1958, and was tasked one afternoon to assist in the testing of a new Explosive Echo Ranging system in the Tracker. My job was to set off explosive charges in the harbour in the proximity of a sonobuoy dropped by the aircraft.

Off I went to the AW jetty with two cases of Mk 36 hand grenades and an RA (a very nervous French Canadian named Jones[???]), equipped with a radio so that we could communicate with the crew in the aircraft. At their request, I would throw a grenade as far as I could into the water towards the buoy, and when it exploded, they would do their thing. But two problems arose; I couldn't get the grenade close enough to the buoy from the jetty, and the grenade igniter's had seven second fuses which caused them to explode too close to the bottom (they come with either four- or seven-second fuses).

The first problem was solved by taking a small yardcraft out near the buoy. I was then asked if there was a way of shortening the delay time so that the grenade would go off before it got too close to the bottom. My reply was, "Sure, I'll pop the lever on the grenade, count to three and then throw it. We still have four seconds before it explodes."

Poor Jones was having a fit. "What if they are only four-second fuses instead of seven?" he asked. When I replied that they were "only single-shot" and that "the blast would probably blow us clear," I thought he would void. After three or four more grenades were thrown like this he was white and speechless. The testing was terminated.

Never did find out if worked. This "modus operandum" was never used again. Can't understand why. Ingenuity must count for something. **Don Knight**



Shearwater 1958 -59 and 60

by *Captain Robert Welland-
Commanding Officer*

The first telephone call I got on my first day was from a woman who said, "Sir, my name is Val Morris and I'm the president of the Parents-Teacher

Association and we would like you to attend our meeting tomorrow at seven." When I asked her where the meeting was to be she said, "In our school." I said, "We have a school?" It was an honest question, I'd never heard of the school. She said "Sir, we have 200 members and all of them would like to meet you." I didn't know much about Shearwater!

I found the school and was immediately led onto the stage by Mrs Morris who introduced me, quite elaborately, to the 200 or so who clapped enthusiastically as Val indicated they ought, "Our new Captain has agreed to answer our questions", she said, and left me standing alone before all those people I'd never seen before. I had never agreed to any such thing but didn't argue. A pretty lady sitting in the front row got up and said her name was Dotty Gaynor and asked, "Sir, could you tell us why we don't have a Bank on our Station – we really need a Bank?" The audience joined in and I heard remarks like, "Let's have a Bank", "We've never had a Bank," but before I could give any sort of reply another woman in the front row stood up and said her name was Phyl Lowe and said, "Sir, could you tell us why we don't have a gasoline filling station; there are hundreds of us here and no filling station?" Again, before I could even think of a reply a third woman, also in the front row, stood up, smiled at me, and then to the audience. and said, "Sir, my name is Betty Thompson, could you tell us why we don't have a liquor store on our Station, it's miles into Dartmouth".

I twigged this was a good-natured meeting but also that the questions were probably serious. I said, in attempt at humour, "Does anyone in your Parents Teachers Association have a question about school children?" A gentleman, also in the front row, stood up; "Sir, I am John Murphy, principal of our school that has 1,100 hundred pupils and every morning my classes are disrupted by a dozen dogs that accompany the children. Could you do something about these dogs?" This drew laughs and also jeers from the members of the PTA, some siding with the Principal, others with the dogs, "I'll look into it," I said. Val Morris immediately came on stage and thanked me for attending their meeting and then welcomed me to the Station, "Shearwater is a fine place to live," she said, "We have many good things including this new school, and its staff headed by John Murphy, but there is much more for us to do, so let us meet our new Captain over coffee and cakes." I spent the next hour meeting the women; they were young, cheery, and

hopeful. I knew I'd better not overlook the ladies of the PTA and the Hampton Grey School – which four of my children would soon be attending.

In the summer of 1958, when I arrived on the Station it had already been developed to a high level of operational efficiency, there was little to do in getting more of the vital things, aircraft, runways, hangars and housing, those had been accomplished over the 15 years beginning in 1943 when the Canadian Naval Air Arm was initiated – principally by admirals Nelson Lay and Harry DeWolf. In 1958 the Shearwater complex was a major Nova Scotian industrial and operational enterprise: the Navy had 105 aircraft on the Station, 700 married quarters, 600 sailors living in a new high rise building, two churches. Four airlines operated from its runways, the major one being Trans Canada Airlines flying North Stars, Viscounts, Vanguards and the Trans Atlantic three-tailed Boeing's, Shearwater to London direct. Counting everyone who lived or worked on the Station we numbered about 5,000. I was proud to be the Captain- and a bit apprehensive after I'd been exposed to the women of the PTA!

"Commander Air", Cdr. Darcy Lowe took me up on my request to be upgraded from my private pilot license to a higher level, he soon had me in the cockpits of the training squadron, VT 40, finally I soloed the Tracker!

That autumn of 1958 saw Shearwater's football team sweep the Maritime league; the games were attended by thousands throughout Nova Scotia. National TV had not got around to broadcasting professional sports at that period so we had a captive audience - at a dollar a seat – with most games being played on the excellent fields at Dalhousie, St. FX, Greenwood and even Stadacona. Shearwater usually threw in an air show with our Banshee fighters buzzing the crowd at halftime; Stadacona responded with their spectacular gun drill team, lugging a howitzer across a make-believe canyon. The Air Force hogged the air show at Greenwood! The games were played with the best sportsmanship and good humour – even the newspapers said so. Premier Stanfield told me his right foot had blisters from kicking off so many games! The money we made went to support our own Non Public Funds (NPF) that provided cash for things like the children's sports, boats for our summer camp (on our own lake), bus trips to interesting places, like Halifax. NPF benefitted greatly through our "Casino Nights". We managed to get the Premier's approval (He was a frequent user to our runways) to run gambling several days a month in our messes. Leading attractions for the punters were our "Casino Girls," recruited from local talent (often recommended by CPO Pitt who ran the swimming pool) and clad in net stockings, rather low-cut necklines with shapes to suit, and perky hats. The leading ladies of the PTA, previously mentioned, took part in the selections but none of them qualified to the standards needed to roll the dice and spin the wheels! (I do believe Kay Collacutt was a dice roller and roulette spinner).

Getting information around the Station was a problem; there was no efficient way of telling people what was going on and I decided to start a newspaper. Mr Murphy ran a competition in the school for classes to name the newspaper; the winners were the class who chose *NAVALAIRE* and the whole class went for a helicopter ride. I hired a retired newspaper man to tell us how to do it; a pilot, George Seymour, volunteered to be the editor. Our Supply Officer, Cdr. Bev Gaynor visited our major suppliers, Imperial Oil, Fairey Aviation, Bank of Montreal, Sobey's Groceries and suggested they run Ads (at pricey rates) to pay for it, and that included paying the kids who delivered it once a week. *Navalaire* was an instant hit, dozens of upset people wrote "Letters to the Editor". One petty officers wife wrote, "Dear Editor; Yesterday I was bathing my one month old baby boy in a tub and nearly lost him, the tap water was so cloudy. Could something be done about the dirty water?" It was signed "Susan".

George Seymour got Mr. McDonald, the civilian supervisor of all works to reply in the pages of *Navalaire*. "Dear Susan: I am responsible for the water, clean or dirty, and you have my sympathy; we are repairing the pipeline from our lake. Try not bathing the little fellow for a week, we'd all be upset if you lost him." John McDonald.

George and his reporters filled a dozen pages with sports reports, school goings on, activities in the messes, new arrivals and departures. George soon had us on the Station selling cars and bikes to each other! And it made money.

Visitors were a large part of my activity; all aircraft carriers and other big ships secured at our 1,000 foot wharf, which involved me in official visits, sports and parties and great fun it was. A visit by the Royal Navy carrier, *Bulwark*, is a memorable event. Well before she arrived our Commander Air, Hal Fearon, organized a mock battle between the carrier's fighters, *DeHavilland Vixens*, and our *Banshees* as the ship approached Halifax. I wanted to take part and was loaded into the back seat of a T33 with Ray Creery flying it. The fighters, about 20 total, met a hundred miles off-shore and took on one another, flipping between 10 feet off the water to 20,000 feet and back. It went on for an hour but seemed longer. At one point a *Vixen* flew under our T-bird when we were only about 30 feet off the sea; at the debriefing the English pilot claimed a kill! Ray said that he'd shot down that particular *Vixen* down half an hour before! It was agreed that both sides won. I recall another visitor. My phone rang and a foreign voice asked if I was the Captain of *Shearwater*, he said he was calling from Moscow. He said he was the president of the airline *Aeroflot* and one of his planes would like permission to land. I asked "When?" and he said "In about an hour, it is bound for Cuba but has engine trouble." I said his plane would be welcome and we'd help out. In spite of the Cold War running hot at this time I had a soft spot for Russians, they treated me and my ship, *Haida*, well in Murmansk in 1944, and the second reason was that I knew we were obliged by international treaty to

receive any aircraft in distress. We had a good phone system and I switched the boss of *Aeroflot* direct to our control tower and told the controller, Lt. Harry Swiggum, to oblige the Russian. About an hour later the big plane. An *Ilyushin 18* came into view with the port outer propeller stopped; it landed smoothly and taxied up to our ramp.

The president of *Aeroflot* had told me that the plane was carrying Mr. Mikoyan, Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union and would I look after him. I recognized Mr. Mikoyen's name as he was frequently in our newspapers on the subject of Cuba (four years later the Cuban missile crises nearly brought on WW3) and said I would look after him and his party. About 20 people preceded Mr. Mikoyen down the ramp (owned by TCA); I saluted him and said who I was. He said, with a big grin, and in English, "I cause you trouble Yes?" I gave a one word reply "Yes". He translated our conversation for his group who all burst out laughing. So we were off to a good start. We had our Soviet guests for about eight hours; the various messes looked after the party and I looked after Mr. Mikoyan and his chief of staff; Stephanie laid on a couple of meals in our house and he amused our children – by teaching them Russian. Cdr. Spike Morris, head of engineering and his crew repaired the engine, flew for a brief test hop, fueled the plane and had them on their way. Some weeks later I got a personal letter from Mr. Mikoyan, he ended it with, "I cause you trouble, Yes?"

Shearwater's prime task was to provide our fleet with fighting aircraft and all the support that entails. Throughout 1958, 59 and 60, *Shearwater* was the home of nine squadrons; VS 880 was equipped with 12 submarine hunting *Trackers* and commanded by Cdr. Dickie Bird and later by Cdr. Buck Buchanan; VS 881 also had 12 *Trackers* and commanded by Cdr. Hal Fearon and later by Cdr. Pappy McLeod. These two squadrons rotated through the carrier *Bonaventure* in turn. There were two fighter squadrons, VF 870 with 8 *Banshees* commanded by Cdr. Bob Falls and later by Cdr. Wally Walton. Squadron 871 also with 8 *Banshees* was commanded by Cdr. Jeff Harvey and later by Cdr. Bob Laidlaw. Then there was an operational helicopter squadron, HS 50 equipped with eight submarine hunting *Sikorskys*; six of these helicopters were normally on board *Bonaventure* and were being introduced to the new operational destroyers, the CO was Lt. Cdr. Roger Fink and later Lt. Cdr. Duke Muncaster.

The support squadrons consisted of VT 40 that had a mixed bag of planes and provided training and logistics; it had a couple of *Harvards* (that trained me) a couple of *Beechcraft*, several jet T33's and other types depending on needs, including target-towing for the fleet's anti-aircraft weapons. VT 40 main task was to convert pilots from one type to another, eg. fighter pilots to *Trackers*. The CO was Lt. Cdr. Whitey McNicoll for most of the period. The support squadron for the helicopters was VU 32, it also provided helicopters for the icebreaker *Labrador* and for the gunnery and radar schools in

the Stadacona base. Lt. Cdr Hal Welch was the CO for part of my time.

Then there was VX 10, an experimental squadron responsible for new developments and sorting out faults in existing systems. VX 10 had a mix of planes, but always a Banshee or two and also Trackers. I flew with Lt. Cdr. Jack Sloan on an occasion of experimenting with firing six 5 inch rockets in one salvo (the discharge burnt the wing boots), I also flew with Lt. Cdr. Doc Schellinck in the release of simulated atomic depth charge for which VX 10 had wired the aircraft. I flew many miles with Lieutenant Gordie Edwards in the T33's, Shearwater to Bermuda in two hours; to Ottawa in one. Admiral Hugh Pullen was a frequent passenger in our Beechcraft when he toured his huge command; he enjoyed taking the controls.

Shearwater was a place of many parts and probably the Captain and Executive officer were the only officers to visit them all; no-one else had any reason to. Out of the way places included ammunition bunkers at Renous filled with bombs, rockets and torpedoes; an out-of-the-way emergency airport, Debert; the sand dunes of Rivers Manitoba where our Banshee fighters co-operated with the Army; and at Gagetown, New Brunswick every year when we performed live bombing and rocketry to introduce our soldiers to air-strike realities. For my time in Shearwater, Major David Gill lived on our Station to train our pilots in Army Co-op; he also provided colour at our dances and balls in his red/gold military finery. He also arranged that I got a shot at driving a 40 ton Centurian tank!

Commander Bob Timbrell was the XO when I arrived and remained so for about six months and was of great help to me in learning my way about. Bob was relieved by Cdr. Johnny Dawson who I in turn introduced to the Station. Johnny was relieved by Cdr. Peter Chance who saw me off in the summer of 1960 when Captain Tom Pullen took over the job. Tom and I had joined the Navy the same day in 1936; he was well known in Shearwater, he had been Captain of Labrador which used Shearwater's helicopters on risky missions in the Arctic (two still reside on an icy hilltop!)

I left Tom with a minor problem; Ottawa had accused me of using our heavy equipment - tractors, graders, trucks - to build an unauthorized golf course (It was really a 300 yard, dogs-leg left, military obstacle training course!) and would I explain. Tom and his successors, and hundreds of volunteers, managed to build 18 obstacle courses and the heavy equipment sure came in handy - its now called it Hartlen Point!

Shearwater was a hub in the great military organization, NATO, that had developed to counter Soviet hostile behavior beginning just after WW2 ended. Canada's Navy, Army and Air Force were already powerful in 1958 and equipped with the most modern weapons; our Army had two fighting brigades deployed in Germany and equipped with the most up to date

weapons. The RCAF had fighter squadrons on the front line in Germany facing the Soviets only jet-minutes away. In Canada the Air Force CF100's patrolled our northern skies, sharing the air space with Soviet Bear bombers that ranged across the Arctic and into the Atlantic. Soviet submarines, some equipped with nuclear tipped rockets prowled the sea off Nova Scotia and New York and our ships and aircraft made a point of sharing it with them. That was an interesting time to be a Canadian; people, now 60, will remember being taught as school kids to hide under their desks when the sirens sounded - my daughter Jillie reminded me recently of this.

We who lived and worked in Shearwater in those interesting times were an important part of our great Alliance. Our Canadian armed forces had their weaponry in a high state of readiness and were willing to use it - and that in the end defeated the Soviets without a single bomb being dropped. May of us "old timers" regret the fading of Shearwater but we ought not to - we did our job so well that it has become less important.

P S: And by the way, in days there were no longer dogs in the school; there was a Bank within three months (Two trailers, Bank of Montreal) and soon after that an Esso filling station. We never got the liquor store, but the ladies of the PTA had me on the run!

NIGHT ROCKET FIRING

(Dave Williams)

When I graduated as an OM, course#2, I was posted to 881 and flew with Les Rosenthal and Stu Soward. One night the squadron scheduled night rocket firing which in those days the target was 3 long burning smoke floats dropped in the sea and illuminated by one aircraft flying back and forth dropping a series of 4 parachute flares to light up the surface of the water. This was before the advent of the Gloworm Rocket. The crew did not fly with their pilot so I was detailed to fly with Dickie Bartlett, the Air Group Commander, to drop the parachute flares.

All the aircraft were loaded down at the butts and Dick and I walked in the pitch dark from the hangar to the butts and on arrival I realized that I had forgotten my parachute harness. There was no way this OD was going to tell the AGC to wait while I went for it so we just carried on.

The back end of the TBM was piled high with flares and once in the target area the routine was for the OM to attach the rip cord of the parachute to a strong point on the bulkhead and chuck the flare out the chute in a series of four. The pilot would

then reverse course and we would repeat the procedure thus maintaining a constant illumination of the sea surface in the target area.

This kept me very busy but I soon realized that the rip cord opened the parachute with very little effort so I took to just holding the cord in my hand as I threw out the flare. I suppose I got a little careless because all of a sudden the aircraft took a violent pitch up and Dick shouted "what are you doing back there" and of course I said "nothing sir" to which he replied, "well standby, we may have to bail out". Once again this OD was not going to tell the AGC anything, but the rest of the flight was uneventful.

Upon inspection back at the line, the starboard elevator, which you will recall was fabric, had a hole torn in it large enough for a man to crawl through. Nothing was ever said about it, it was just assumed that a parachute had opened prematurely and flipped up damaging the elevator and once again this OD kept his mouth shut.



FROM SHIP TO BASE

J. Brant Fotheringham

In the summer of 1967 I was appointed as the Commanding Officer of HMCS *SHEARWATER* and we moved into the Captain's Residence. What a joy it was to be away from the machinations going on in Ottawa at the time! It was obvious, however,

that difficult days lay ahead.

Ten years earlier, the RCN had acquired *BONAVENTURE*. In the intervening years the ship had earned an unfortunate public reputation as a result of costly refits one of which was about to be undertaken. This was combined with a growing belief that, despite the efforts of determined and highly skilled aircrew, the ship was ill-suited for its intended role of operating a combined air group including jet fighters in the North Atlantic. The ship had not endeared itself to a naval hierarchy which had gained renown for its operation of escort vessels.

During the machinations referred to above, it was not surprising that the proposal to shift naval aviation into the newly formed air element was not strongly opposed. This was combined with a decision to abandon the carrier.

It all became official in February 1968 when the RCN, as well as the RCAF, and the Naval Aviation component, ceased to exist. A burial ceremony was duly held at *SHEARWATER* to mark the event which was attended by the Flag Officer. And so at that time I became, no longer the Captain of

SHEARWATER, but rather the Base Commander of CFB Shearwater.

I was subsequently asked if I wished to be a Colonel or a Captain. Having spent 28 years in the Navy and at sea prior to the commencement of my flying training in 1944, it was not a difficult decision. I became a Captain(N).

Changes at the air station were not momentous despite the adoption of a new trade structure and some altered administrative procedures. My log book includes an entry in December 1969 with Shell Rowell and George Pumble when we made the last arrested landing aboard the carrier. This was of particular significance to me as I had piloted the first aircraft to land on *BONAVENTURE'S* deck during the post-commissioning flight trials.

It became an emotional time for all who had given devoted service to naval aviation. I can conclude with no better quote than one attributed to me by Tony German in "The Sea is at our Gates" - "it all combined to produce the finest and most professional group of aviators in any man's navy anywhere".

I left the air station in the summer of 1970 to complete my service career on the staff of SACLAN in Norfolk, Virginia.

This would not be complete without a 2008 PS. The present situation with both the helicopter and maritime patrol aircraft would be immeasurably worse had those programs been naval rather than part of the air element.

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WALLY SCHROEDER

Very few Naval Aviators can say they did not know and like "The Animal". His fresh, outgoing personality charmed most of the people he encountered in his service life. Wally always saw the best in people, and took them at face value. Many stories circulate around "The Animal" and, like most stories, get embellished with time.

One such story concerns an incident in 1954 whilst at sea in "Magnificent" when VS881 Guppy Flight had a Mess Dinner. This story has already been recounted on several occasions. The authors had, however, selective recall and got their facts mixed up a bit.

This is the real story.

The forecast (by Rabbit Bristow, Met man) was a blanket fog or a howling gale; ideal time for Mess Dinners! The Flight at that time consisted of; Pilots, Joe Davis (RN), Flight Commander, Wally Schroeder, Weldon Payton and Tony Cottingham; and Observers, Pete Needs (RN), Ted Kieser, Pete VanFleet and Colin Macaulay. It was decided to invite "Uncle Bruce" Vibert to be our guest. The "Before" picture below was taken by Bud Service.. (Pete Needs was still trying to get his cummerbund tied on.)

Much wine was consumed along with other potent potables after. At some time, Bruce was invited to stand on a coffee table to recite umpteen verses of "Rangy Nell" to the varied interest of the rest of the wardroom.

After bar closing, the party moved to M55 (6 bunk cabin aft, home of the Glorious Guppy Flight). There, more booze was consumed and the accompanying "After" photo was taken about 3AM just before, to everyone's surprise (including Bristow's), "HANDS TO FLYING STATIONS" was piped. The weather was CAFBI. Two Guppy crews duly reported to the briefing room giggling and a little unsteady. CDR (Air) took one

look at us and we were grounded! Great, everyone went back to bed.

Next morning, Joe Davis, who had already been wrung out by CDR (Air), came to the door of M55 and proceeded to chastize the occupants about drinking at sea, being ready to fly 24 hours a day, etc. He had not, at this time, even turned on the lights and everyone was in their bunks. As Joe started to repeat himself, Wally leapt to his feet in all his naked glory and shouted, "WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR 30 BUCKS A MONTH, BILLY BISHOP?"



Here endeth the story as recalled by one who was there, Ted Kieser.





SHEARWATER

Colonel B. Oxholm

Looking back over my 32 years of military service, my best memories are tied to the people that I served with in Shearwater, Maggie and Bonaventure. The riggers, fitters, aircraft control men, armorers, safety equipment techs, electronics techs all led by extremely competent and professional Chiefs and Petty Officers gave the aircrews a support system that was far superior to any other service that I served in during my career. I should also mention the many civilians that worked quietly in the background providing Shearwater the numerous daily support systems that we all took for granted.

Having said all that I was asked by Kay Collacutt, to write an article on what I considered to be the most significant event(s) that took place during my tenure as the Base Commander of Shearwater from July 1974 to January 1977. There were 3 such events as I remember them.

#1 – When I arrived at the base, I was not very happy with its overall appearance, particularly the married quarters. My immediate goal therefore was to obtain funding to update all the PMQs and after a bit of haggling, Maritime Command provided sufficient funds to clad all the PMQs (below the main gate) with fiberglass siding and new windows if required. It was a tremendous improvement so I thought we might plant some trees as well but six weeks later we got hit with 85 MPH wind gusts which tore most of the new siding of the houses so what the hell I decided that if the Lord liked Shearwater as it was I wasn't going to interfere.

#2 – I was comfortably settled in my office chair reading a good comic book when CPO Hines (ret'd) barged in and asks if I might be interested in providing a bit of support to the golf course at Hartlen Point. One of the things I learned early in my career was not to argue with Chiefs so over the next 18 months the course was expanded to 18 holes through volunteer labour of base military personnel. I well remember the day Admiral Boyle (Maritime Commander Atlantic) called me and asked if I was using "sailors" to work on the golf course. I assured him that I was not and promptly got back to reading my comic book. Well, two hours later I had a raging Admiral in my office telling me that he had just come back from Hartlen Point where he had counted at least a hundred sailors working on the course. I replied that those men were probably on a make and mend, and rather than going into Halifax and slurping beer along with his drunken sailors, they chose to volunteer their own time to complete the course for which they were rewarded a cold beer and a hotdog plus a free round if they so desired. P.S.-I visited the course 3 years ago and I was very impressed with the overall development.

#3 – As far as the RCN was concerned the majority of officers (who served in the the fleet air arm) were executive officers first and pilots or observers second. Accordingly following two or three squadron tours one could expect an appointment to the Junior Officers Technical and Leadership Course (JOLTC) which provided the same training that most "fish heads" underwent as young sub lieutenants. The course was ten months in length and covered such areas as navigation, gunnery, communications, damage control, etc; etc. What wasn't taken into account that Shearwater was full of experienced airmen who easily took the courses in stride as they were already well trained in weaponry, navigation and communications plus aircrew instinctively view such courses as essential to their survival in any environment on what ever platform they serve. Small wonder therefore that many of the frigates and destroyers were manned and commanded by aircrew that sometimes outnumbered the standard fleet officers.

To make matters worse the federal government was cutting back on military spending in order to reduce a massive national debt. I well remember the day that Admiral Boyle gathered all his commanding officers together to spread the bad news that he had been directed by NDHQ to cut Maritime Commands current budget by 15 percent.

He began the meeting by stating that his staff had worked long and hard in arriving at a fair share of the cuts through all units in the Command, and that he would not tolerate any objections from any officer.. It took him about 15 minutes to list the cuts for his ships, submarines and various support units. He then addressed his maritime air bases and this is what I heard.

Base Greenwood, cut from 32 million to 28 million
 Base Comox, cut from 27 million to 23 million
 Base Summerside, cut from 5 million to 3 million
 Base Shearwater, cut from 3 million to 2 million

These numbers came as a complete shock to me so I jumped up and shouted that cutting Shearwater's budget was plain El Toro pooh-pooh or words to that effect at which point The Admiral ordered me to shut-up, sit down and present myself to his office the next morning.

Bright and early (in my best uniform) I presented myself to the Admiral and he said "Don't sit down and explain your disgraceful behavior at yesterdays meeting." I replied that I could not believe that he would cut Shearwaters meager budget while my base flew more hours than the other three bases combined.

The only other person in the Admiral's office was his Deputy Commander, General McKenzie, so the Admiral turns to him and says " That's not true is it Al" to which the General replied " Well I don't know if he flies more but I suspect he flies

as much".

I liked Admiral Boyle because I had worked for him in Ottawa, and I learned that if you faced him with hard facts he would relent without carrying a grudge. Accordingly he reinstated the Shearwater budget, offered me a chair and a cup of coffee and said that he would come to Shearwater in the near future to discuss another important issue.

True to his word, the Admiral arrived in Shearwater, and he informed me that he and General Chouinard, (Mobile Command) were planning to travel to Quebec City to meet with General Carr to discuss the formation of an AIR COMMAND, as the former RCAF had shattered into several pieces during the unification process. He then asked where I thought Shearwater would stand if an Air Command was formed. I replied that we all considered ourselves Navy but if he wanted Shearwater to be an effective base we needed more money and approximately 400 new air maintenance recruits to service the aircraft. I also told him that I could not look many of the Chiefs and Petty officers in the eye without feeling ashamed at the amount of time they had spent at sea thereby missing all the years that their children grew up without Dad. I reminded the Admiral that he had already instituted a routine where his sailors would spend 2 years ashore after serving 4 or 5 years at sea. He agreed that it was unfair but he was not about to train more aircraft techs so I said in that case we should transfer to Air Command if he wanted aircraft support for his ships.

I believe it was August 1977 when Shearwater was turned over to Air Command. Once that happened, I called all the air force NCOs together and told them that they were going to sea to service the Sea-King helicopters. Their senior chief stated that I had little chance in getting the techs to sign a "consent to serve document" which in my opinion was a silly issue dreamed up by some silly people in Ottawa. My reply was that I was not about to ask them to consent as Shearwater was now an Air Force base thus as their Commanding Officer I could order them to sea or to the north pole or any other location where military aircraft operated. There were a few objections but the NCOs accepted my authority over this matter and I understand that many air force veterans enjoyed their time at sea.

In January 1977, I was posted to Esquimalt as Chief of Staff, Operations, for Maritime Command (Pacific). Upon my arrival the Admiral called me to his office where his ships Captains and senior officers were gathered and after pouring a glass of sherry for all he proposed a toast welcoming "Captain Oxholm" back into the fold. I stopped him and said I was no longer Navy and that my correct designation was Colonel. This was graciously accepted by the Admiral and I am certain that this incident resonated all the way back to Air Command, because all ranks were readily accepted by Air Force units which continue to provide first class air support to Maritime Command.

WHO REMEMBERS THE WARDROOM DOWN THE HILL? *By Adm Gord Edwards*

When I first got to Shearwater after jet training in Gimli, Shearwater was a strange place, still having that aura of WW2 about, partly one supposes because of old buildings and old hangars, etc.

I arrived on a Friday morning and did my check in and got a room and so forth at the Officers Quarters next door to the wardroom. Having heard that parties on Fridays at the wardroom were legendary, I decided to drop in about 1800 to see what was going on. I arrived to find a raging party going on, but almost no one there. They were all up in the rafters - just leave one down for drink replenishment. It was a lot of laughs to be sure.

One of the good things about the old mess, it was an "old" building, so no one cared much about destroying things, one way or the other. I recall Chiefy Munroe putting his elbow through one part of the wall, dead easy with gyproc wallboard. For parties it was easy to decorate, just nail or staple wherever you wanted, nothing seemed to make it any worse.

One of the more memorable events was the single car race with the small European car that Peter Poole-Warren had brought back. It didn't even have a key, so easy to "steal" or use or whatever. Someone had the bright idea of putting all the wardroom furniture in the middle of the bar ante-room, and then racing around that. It was dead easy to get the car in, as the bar had double doors leading to the outside. Thus, many took a turn at going around the track, faster and faster, all timed of course, until someone....no names, no pack drill, missed the turn by the bar and went right into the wall, thus wrecking the car and to some degree the wall, the latter of much less concern of course. Some paint, etc., would fix that.

And so, next day, the usual hell to pay, everyone there had to chip in for car and mess repairs, but as far as I can recall everyone thought it was more than worth it.

Some of the parties were legend, and many came over from "staid" Stadacona to what they considered "real" parties. Two of these regulars were Casey Baldwin and Benny Benoit, Casey always bringing his pet parrot, Juanita! It was to laugh, as more often than not, when Casey wasn't looking, Benny would give Juanita some rum, and then Juanita got loaded and could no longer stand on her perch. Benny and Casey were close friends, but one final straw that annoyed Casey was when he asked Benny what he thought of Juanita.....to which Benny replied, "Nice bird, but too bad she has a face like an ingrown toenail!" Casey didn't speak to Benny for weeks.

Others will surely remember many funny incidents in a mess that was more or less indestructible, and in any case, no real concern, as a new one was being built up the hill, which is the Wardroom to this day. It was really TOO nice for a bunch of naval aviators, and thus NEVER as much fun, but they tried.



Dennis Shaw (back left) with other cast members.

SHEARWATER PLAYERS *By Dennis Shaw*

No doubt about it, we had lots to be proud of while serving in HMCS SHEARWATER, foremost, of course, was the fact that we flew and maintained Naval aircraft better than anyone else in the world. Away from work we could take pride in the performance of our sports teams of which, I suppose, the Shearwater Flyers football team would top the list. But we had baseball, basketball, hockey and soccer teams - and - I can remember at one time even a cricket team, in which we could take pride.

Although not a sports team but one organization which also warrants our pride but has been sadly left wanting over the years was the Shearwater Players. What this group achieved on the local, Provincial and National theatre scene was just unbelievable. For three straight years the Shearwater Players won the Best Actor Award at the Nova Scotia Drama Festival. Doug Cooke in 1952, Roy Portchmouth in 1953 and Bob Dalley in 1954. In 1955 the Group won the award for best production, "Mr. Bolfray" which was directed by Roy Portchmouth. In the same production Eileen Dally won the award for being Best Actress. In 1956 the production of "Picnic". Shearwater Players swept the Regional Drama Festival Awards by capturing Best Play, Best Actor and Best Actress. Truly a remarkable performance when you consider we were competing against such Groups as the Halifax Theatre Arts Guild which claims to be the oldest theatre group in Canada.

Strangely enough, the name associated most frequently with Shearwater Players is my own. As much as I would like to accept this accolade, due to having been blessed with a rather large ego (my mother always said if

I went to a funeral, I'd have to be the corpse) it's completely erroneous. Many people did much more than I did to contribute to the success of the Shearwater Players, among them Doug and Sybil Cooke, Bob Dally, Susan and Roy Portchmouth and I could name many others. Having said that, I can well understand why people consider my name synonymous with the Shearwater Players - after all, I did produce, direct and perform in all the Variety shows and Revues we presented. These were the popular productions which packed the Rec Centre and provided some of the money which allowed the Shearwater Players to present a season of straight plays. In addition, the Variety shows also provided money for the Shearwater Central Charity Fund.

I've appeared on many stages in Nova Scotia and I can't think of one that was better equipped than the one in the Rec Centre. It was also able to boast some of the best theatrical lighting in the Province - thanks mainly to equipment that had been brought over from the UK in HMCS MAGNIFICENT. Notice, I refrained from using the word smuggled. The lighting was handled by Lt Cdr Nick Barton who always seemed to me to have a passion for theatrical lighting. I never go into the old Rec Centre, and I frequently do, without feeling like a Muslim going to Mecca, an Anglican going to Canterbury or a Roman Catholic going to Rome, such are the theatrical memories that building holds for me. I can close my eyes and visualize walking on stage when I played Captain Hook in "Peter Pan" and being greeted by my four year old son yelling "That's my Daddy."

In 1949, a Navy group resurrected the wartime Navy Show which was to be part of the RCNs contribution to celebrate the bi-centennial of the City of Halifax. I wrote most, if not all, the comedy material for that show including a skit that I perform dressed as a Clergyman. Little did I know that this was to be my Andy Warhol fifteen minutes of fame. All hell broke loose, the Associated Press got hold of the story and it went coast to coast, Admiral Mainguy got involved, a sign went up at a local west-end Baptist Church, reading "The Navy Plays Dirty". I attended the service the following Sunday, along with a number of members of the cast, and listened to the minister preach the sermon admitting he hadn't seen the show but was basing his comments on two old ladies in his congregation who had. The show I'm referring to was staged on Citadel Hill and the facility was called the "Theatre Under the Stars". Incidentally, the Navy Show played to more people the week we performed than all the other activity that was presented that summer to celebrate the bicentennial.

After the show one night, a fella came back stage and introduced himself to me as Harry Cochrane. Harry Cochrane was a professional musician and impresario who was probably the Provinces foremost band leader before the war. He then proceeded to ask me if I would like to work for him, doing what I enquired, MCing he

replied, I assured him I wasn't an MC and if I had any talent at all it was as a stand-up comedian. He wouldn't take no for an answer and assured me I could do it. This was the commencement of a very happy relationship with a very talented individual and lead to me appearing with the likes of Anne Murray, Don Messer, Juliet (the West Coast singer), John Allen Cameron, the Sing Along Jubilee crowd and countless others. When I'm asked who I thought was the most talented person I ever performed with I always answer Bobby Carl who was one of our own, an Air Rigger I believe, who left the Navy and had a very successful career with CBC. For sometime, Bobby had his own show in Ottawa. I still hear from him at Christmas.

People who have never been involved in theatrical production have no idea how much work is involved in this endeavour. We on stage get our reward with the applause and laughter but countless others working back-stage seldom get recognition. If I've learnt anything in my years of theatrical activity its that successful performances are the result of hard work. The other thing I learnt is that being funny is the most serious business in the world. In spite of all the hard work, I would be remiss if I didn't state that entertaining people is possibly the most rewarding function an individual can perform. Making people laugh I've always regarded as a gift from God, even if in my case I'm not always sure he approves of the material. I've always regarded my humour of the British Music Hall variety so from that perspective I thought I made vulgarity into an art form!

One show I particularly liked MCing in the 60s and 70s was "The Golden Age Theatre Party" which was sponsored by the Halifax Herald. So many elderly people wanted to see that show that it could not be presented at just one location so two cinemas were utilized. A movie would commence at one location while a Variety Show would commence at the other. The performers were then shipped across town by taxi to the other location. On one show I recall we had a very young Anne Murray with us, she came off stage and proceeded to ask me how she had done. I assured her she had done just fine but suggested she was singing her numbers in the wrong order. When we did the second show at the Oxford theatre, she re-arranged her numbers and after she came off stage, she graciously assured me that my suggestion was definitely better. Frankly, at that time I had no idea that the young lady from Springhill would rise to such prominence in the entertainment world.

Other than all the Variety shows, the two Shearwater Players productions which invoke the most happy memories for me, partly because I had lead roles in both, were "Peter Pan" and "Reluctant Heroes" which was produced in 1963. Peter Pan was directed by Sybil Cooke and starred Mary Fink in the title role while I played the dual role of Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. We also had the assistance of the wonderful Stadacona Band with us for this production. "Reluctant Heroes" was an outstanding

success and my guess would be that this product played to more people than any other play presented by the Shearwater Players. I played Sgt Tinker Bell in this production and according to newspaper reports on the show, "I turned a bright shade of magenta whenever I reached a high note of outrage". It was a dream of a part and we sure managed to make the Rec Centre rock with laughter with this presentation.

The Shearwater Players and my theatrical activity is all in the past, although I still do the odd charity affair. Looking back on it all, it was a fantastic experience and I would not change a minute of it. I once told one of my priests that all I wanted engraved on my tombstone was "He made us laugh". Making people laugh isn't always the easiest ambition to have but I found our shipmates were always the easiest to respond to humour. Many of my theatrical associates, both Navy and civilian, have now gone to the great messdeck in the sky, but I can assure my audience that there is a large element of truth in the words of the song which says "there's no people like show people".

A look at the Shearwater Players.

By Ted Cruddas

"On IFR days, the Avenger squadrons' crew rooms would fill with unemployed aircrew, since many of us had only minor secondary duties. That made it easy for me, having been dragooned into the Shearwater Players when the never-reliable Wally Schroeder backed out at the last minute, to practice my lines for the upcoming play, premiering in only two weeks. Of course I needed someone to prompt me, but my choice was probably a mistake. Ian Goose McLennan was able and willing, but couldn't help improvising. A line that was written as 'What's that noise?' would be changed to 'Holy f..k! A fight!' Learning my lines between Goose's jokes was very difficult. On opening night, I bombed so badly that the director, the wife of a supply officer, fired me by telephone, though I was allowed to come to the cast party.

As a footnote, several years later I was in Hereford Cathedral in the UK, and noticed ahead of me a lady who looked very familiar. I wasn't confident enough to speak to her, but noted later when signing the guest book that the said lady was the director who fired me. Either she didn't recognize me, or wasn't going to reminisce about the play. Without me it did win the local competition." The lady's name was Johnston, I believe.



Colonel (Ret'd) Sandy Kerr
Base Commander 1990 - 1993

**1990 - CFB SHEARWATER
 GOES TO WAR**

On August 10th 1990, a few short weeks after taking command of Shearwater, I received a call from BGen Barry Bowen (Commander Maritime Air Group) informing me that in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, NDHQ had decided to deploy a naval task force to the Persian Gulf and Shearwater was ordered to prepare two detachments with five Sea King helicopters to provide embarked air support. Several hours later BGen Bowen and I met with Shearwater and MAGHQ personnel to provide further definition to the deployment to be named OPERATION FRICTION - helicopters and crews were to be fitted with increased surveillance and self-defence capability to prepare for combat operations in the harsh and dangerous environment of the Gulf. Departure date was fixed for August 21st.

Returning to Shearwater I immediately met with my Heads of Departments and Squadron Commanders to organize the deployment. We quickly reviewed the number of aircraft modifications and personnel equipment/ training upgrades required to meet the new tasking, allocated individual areas of expertise and responsibility, and then departed to initiate the daunting tasks facing us. The reality that the modified aircraft would have to be successfully test flown by Monday Aug 20th in order to meet the sailing date, meant that all modifications, training and equipment procurement had to be completed in ten days.

BAMEO (Bob Hardy) immediately set up a 24/7 shift schedule which began removing the sonar and associated ASW equipment from the six selected aircraft (five to deploy plus a spare). At the same time air engineering staffs were finalizing design and installation procedures for the new modifications which included a Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) imaging system, missile approach warning system, infra-red jammers, flare and chaff dispensers, global positioning system and a door mounted C-9 machine gun. Time constraints dictated that all modifications be completed "in house" rather than sending the job out to civilian contract, and because the aerodynamic and c of g characteristics of the aircraft were going to be altered, we would require an AETE team to deploy to Shearwater to test fly and certify each modification to ensure airworthiness.

To ensure effective operator/maintainer co-ordination, a special installation control team was established under the leadership of Majors Mike Creighton and Terry Robbins who dealt with the myriad details involved with cramming as much as possible into very limited aircraft spaces while still providing

for optimum operator flexibility. This team was given as much authority and autonomy as possible and they reveled in the freedom to routinely make decisions in minutes that would normally have required at least a one star sign-off after weeks or months of deliberations. Not that the one stars and above didn't want to be involved! As the days progressed, my time was increasingly interrupted by the requirement to fend off outside interest/ pressure from "higher authorities" all of whom wanted to get personally involved in what was fast becoming recognized as the most exciting operation in recent memory.

While work was commencing on the aircraft modifications, the CO HS 423 (Larry McWha) and BADO (Tom Pile) initiated the myriad operational training and personnel preparations required by the nature of the deployment. One of the things that made this deployment even more unique was the fact that we were deploying a number of female technicians and aircrew - "wives and sweethearts" who were now leaving their loved ones behind and heading into hostile territory.

Recognizing that the climate in the gulf would be a major factor in the ability to conduct sustained operations, crews were being trained and equipped to deal with the anticipated heat and hostile conditions. Special clothing was procured to protect aircrew from the elements and possible biological or chemical attack. Given that cockpit temperatures would routinely approach 45C in the region of the gulf, a special cooling vest was procured which circulated cool water around the aircrew torso - made even more of a requirement because of the layers worn over it - a charcoal suit, chemical coverall, body armour, webbing, a battery pack, a shoulder holster for a 9-millimetre pistol and a mae west.

The hostile environment also dictated that special maintenance routines for washing/protecting the helicopters would be required. In addition, given the projected length of the deployment it was recognized that the major 500 hour periodic inspection of the helicopters would probably have to be conducted aboard HMCS Protecteur in theatre - an inspection that had always been done at the contractor, IMP Halifax. The conduct of these inspections required not only new maintenance procedures but a major adjustment to the number and type of stores and parts required.

The whole base quickly shifted into around the clock posture as innumerable supply, technical, financial and medical/environmental issues were identified and dealt with. When normal supply channels could not respond in time we utilized other MAG aircraft, including our own T-33s to pick up vital parts from extended distances or locations in the USA.

During the first days of the preparations I was frustrated by the fact that every morning I had to fight the notorious Halifax morning traffic getting to and from the base. I had taken over from Barry Bowen who had been promoted to replace Paddy O'Donnel as Commander MAG; however, Barry was still living

in the Shearwater Base Commander's house because Paddy had not vacated the MAG Commander's residence in Halifax due to the fact that his married quarters in Winnipeg were being renovated. So there we were - Base Commander leaving his temporary quarters in Halifax and Mag Commander leaving his past residence in Shearwater, waving to each other as we crossed the MacDonald bridge in opposite directions on our way to our respective offices to prepare for war! However, the pace of activity soon led me to spend most of my time on base and when I was driving to and from the rented townhouse in Clayton Park there were few other cars on the road!

As the hours turned into days the numerous teams each continued to perform miracles on a regular basis and the seemingly impossible list of tasks still to be completed began to shrink to an almost manageable size. Then a welcome reprieve came when it was announced that the sailing date had slipped to August 24th because of delays in the modifications to the ships, and it became obvious that we were going to meet the deadline. Finally, sailing day arrived and Larry McWha led the formation of five modified sea kings in a final flypast of Shearwater as they headed towards their embarkation rendezvous with HMCS Athabaskan and Protecteur.

As the aircraft departed those of us left behind took a welcome breather and reflected on what had just been accomplished - in less than 230 hours, 14 major modifications had been made to the helicopters, and air and maintenance crews trained and equipped to face the first of the post-cold war threats in a part of the world most had never thought to see.

Throughout the next five months the new equipment and training proved invaluable as the sea kings patrolled the central Gulf waters between Saudi Arabia and Iran, checking all unknown vessels' cargo, port of origin and destination.. The flexibility they provided allowed the three ship Canadian task force to conduct approximately 25 percent of the more than 1400 interceptions in the Gulf by December, even though the Canadian warships represent only three percent of the allied naval strength there.

On The evening of Jan 16th I was hosting a mess dinner in the Shearwater Wardroom when a steward approached me with the message that hostilities had commenced in the Gulf and that we were indeed at war for the first time since Korea. For the next few weeks we watched as the scuds rained down and waited for the threatened ground offensive to begin. Of special note was the fact that the first shots fired by Canadian air forces during the war came from the back door of one of our sea kings as one of our female AESOPS effectively used her machine gun to prevent a threatening dhow from closing the allied task force.

Feb 23rd saw the commencement of the ground war. That day my gall bladder decided it was time to be removed so for the next two days I watched the war unfold on TV from my bed in

the Stadacona hospital - certainly made for more compelling viewing than sitcoms like "As The Stomach Turns"! Fortunately the ground war was quickly over and by April our crews were on their way home. April 20th brought quite a welcome sight to so many at Shearwater - our five sea kings in a formation flypast marking the safe return of our friends and family members from the war zone. The efforts of the Shearwater team were finally recognized on 19 June 1992 as BGen Bowen presented the Commander Air Command's Commendation to the base "In recognition of outstanding service for its accomplishments during OPERATION FRICTION - an exceptional performance by all members of the base, military and civilian alike, "

The following 21/2 years brought many other challenges and triumphs: working through and rebuilding military/civilian relationships after the nation wide UNDE strike which sidelined our civilian employees in September 1991; expanding our base facilities to welcome the 140 personnel and 15 aircraft of 420 and 434 squadrons as they moved to their new home at Shearwater; floating the Dartmouth sailing club building down the harbour into its new position as the home of the Shearwater sailing club; the move of the Shearwater Aviation Museum to its present location in the building that had once housed the shearwater gym and later the CANEX facility; the renovation to Hampton Grey school to include the new library, CANEX facility and the French Language Centre; the opening of the beautiful new Sea King Club; commencement of construction for the new Headquarters building; the " Socio Tech" redesign of CE production; three successful air shows; and the list goes on. However, I readily admit that none matched the pace, stress, and pride I shared with the Shearwater family as we successfully sent our members to war and brought them back safely.

We didn't foresee at the time that the OP FRICTION deployment would set the tone and scope for future operations involving our sea kings - the cold war was indeed over, the traditional ASW threat had been replaced by new terms such as regional conflict and terrorism which brought us into operations and environments we had never before contemplated. Who could have predicted that the modifications installed in Aug 1990 were to be utilized two years later by sea kings providing nighttime air surveillance of enemy ground forces sneaking through the desert well inland of a place called Mogadishu in the country of Somalia!! So much for deep water ASW!!

So, change and flexibility continued to be the bywords as unforeseen world events brought new taskings in new locations. Yet as I write this, I realize once again that over my career at Shearwater, the varying taskings had all revolved around the constant challenge of putting trained aircrew and aircraft to sea on naval ships. Indeed, over the 20 plus years and thousands of flying hours I spent there I had basically done the same job albeit in three different colour uniforms and two different rank structures. From Sub-Lieutenant in navy blue, to

Major in green, to Colonel in light blue I had proudly changed into various designs and colours of flight suits to climb into a cockpit and head for the flight deck of one or other of the grey funnel line. Who would have thought I would be so lucky!

NOTES ON THE EXERCISE MARINER FOG STORY

By Brian Hayter

Jake McLaughlan received my anecdotes from Navy days and while they went into a book he wrote, I have seen them repeated in the Shearwater mag so I won't repeat them. However, I have been speaking to Men's groups of late and telling the Exercise Mariner Fog Story and, apart from the sheer incredibility of that miracle at sea, there was an incident that might have some interest.

After the fleet became fogbound, approaching darkness and a shortage of fuel made it doubtful that the aircraft could be saved. A decision was made to ditch the aircraft and preparations were made aboard the ships to recover as many survivors as possible.

Just prior to the decision being put into effect a call was received from a US submarine saying they had a ceiling of 100 ft and 2 miles visibility. The ships could not reach the submarine before dark but the aircraft could so it was decided to head for the submarine where the pilots could ditch in a group near the sub.

Just as darkness approached there was a miracle. The fog began to lift a bit. Other ships could be seen so the aircraft were recalled and came down on whatever carrier was convenient and when I came aboard and was clearing the deck I saw a US Sky Raider parked ahead of me.

After all of the aircraft were recovered safely there were great celebrations aboard Maggie and, indeed, in the entire fleet. We welcomed our fellow pilot and he was overjoyed that we had a wardroom bar. The USN does not serve alcohol aboard their ships.

The following morning I went up top to clear my head and to see the visiting aircraft. It was covered in graffiti! The Captain appeared and he was distressed at the sight, and ordered the crew to erase the graffiti. However, he did acquiesce to leaving a small red maple leaf on the fuselage as a memento of that terrifying night that a young American naval pilot found safe haven aboard a Canadian carrier.

This info was gleaned from Stu Soward's book *Hands to Flying Stations Vol. 1*, Vice Admiral Raynor's recollections and mine. It is a small incident in a very huge scenario and may not lend itself to what you are trying to accomplish. Any way, here it is for what it's worth. *Cheers Bryan*

Colonel (Ret) John Cody



FROM THE SHEARWATER JETTY: JULY 1993-SEPTEMBER 1995

I was asked for a few recollections from my time as Base Commander at Shearwater while I was in the chair from July 1993 until September 1995. This was a pivotal time in the life and times of our old friend Shearwater.

I first thought this would be a challenge, but then more "things" and "stuff" came floating back. I'm sure I could have filled that old steamer trunk that my Mother bought for me when I went off on the train from Toronto to Victoria in September 1963 to go to a place with the thought provoking name of HMCS Venture, and the motto "Follow Me" as large as life right over the front door to the place.

Fast forward through a career that saw me serve as follows:

- Five glorious and highly memorable Sea King flying tours;
- Squadron Air Officer with the First Canadian Destroyer Squadron;
- In Washington DC as the Landing Systems Officer for the USN's LAMPS Mark 3 Helicopter program;
- Ottawa as a LCol in the Directorate of Maritime Aviation as the Sea King class desk officer responsible for the ill-fated Sea King Replacement (SKR) project;
- CO of 423 (MH) Squadron;
- Ottawa again as a Colonel at NDHQ in the absolutely dreadful job as section head of the Air Force's operational audit office (my penance for what followed I think);
- A delightful tour in Esquimalt to make up for that last Ottawa position as Chief of Staff (Operations) for the west coast Navy. This was a delightful break away from the Fort Fumble games spent amongst a cast of great naval characters by the names of Peter Cairns, Bruce MacLean, Hans Hendel, Ken Nason, the inimitable Ken Summers, Jim Steele and many others, some of whom you will note rode my back all the way to flag rank. If any of you repeat any of that, I will deny having said it J; and,
- Finally as Base Commander at CFB Shearwater for which I thought I had been fairly well prepared during the course of an extremely varied and extremely interesting career.

The west coast soon tired on an Air type who spoke the naval language, so I was punted out of there back to Shearwater in command, which started an incredible 2 years in July of 1993, the likes of which I doubt had

happened before, and that I wouldn't wish on anyone else ever again. The cancellation of the EH 101 Project, two aircraft crashes both with loss of life, the reorganization of the technicians trade structure and promotion policies and the dramatic downsizing of the Base all tested my wife and I right in our personal breadbaskets: keeping our guys and gals chins up. They were looking for and needed what I have called sensitive leadership during those dark days.

It all started in October of 1993 when the Prime Minister decided in a fit of pique to cancel the EH-101 Sea King replacement, which my team and I had spearheaded through the Ottawa bureaucracy in 1987 before coming back to Shearwater as CO of 423 Squadron. I left the Base that afternoon, leaving two very good young Captains to man the office phones, while I went and wrapped my head around the magnitude of all of this. I can distinctly recall when Defence Minister Collette visited the base shortly after the cancellation when he asked me: "can you keep the lid on your guys while we put the wheels back on this program"? I assured him that yes I could, as long as he could promise me that he'd go back to Ottawa and get us another replacement program. He smiled at me and said he would by the year 2000.

Fat chance I thought, and how prophetic that was.

So, as the Sea King community has always done the lads and lassies at 12 Wing got on with their jobs. We were, and they still are today just too busy getting on with the work of the OSA to worry about the NSA.

Our focus changed in February 1994 when the Federal budget came down. I was camped out in my office in the old Base HQ building (the new Base HQ nicknamed "the chicklet" was not yet completed) listening to the budget. I heard about the bases closing, heard Shearwater's name mentioned, heard a lot about the need for cost savings and downsizing and waited for my phone to ring. Later that night the Commander of the Air Force called me at home to tell me we were in for a ride. The only other time he had talked to me previously was at the Wing in September 1993 just after assuming command, during 434 (CS) Squadrons 50th Anniversary celebrations. He told me "he had never heard of me before and had nothing for me in future". That was cheery news from the "get go" from the big boss.

It was left up to the head of ACOA in Halifax, a chap by the name of Wynn Potter who I have since come to know, and a fine fellow he is at that, to call me later the next day to tell me "that the Government would be starting with its prioritized cutbacks starting with Chatham, all through the radar stations, ending up at Mill Cove before getting around to Shearwater". It would be a few years but that I was to start preparations to shut Shearwater down.

ACOA: not even the military. That telephone call was my

personal pipe to "Emergency Flying Stations".

Shortly after the budget, ACOA again came to me and said the government was going to start a new agency, the Shearwater Development Corporation (SDC), whose job it would be to do what it could to ameliorate the job losses that were to come from the base closure. While the SDC was being set up, we got on with the job of scaling the base back as directed by my Lord High Commissioners. This was no doubt the single most hurtful exercise I had ever been involved with in my life.

I recall thinking that the cuts at Shearwater were excessive to start, which proved to be true. It turned out that the rest of the Air Force, particularly the go-fast crowd, couldn't wrestle with the size of their reductions. The Air Force met ALL its quotas on the backs of the Sea King community during those first two years. We were then, as Shearwater still is, the place that just saluted and got on with things, no matter how bad they seemed at the time.

It was then that I realized I was going to have to pull out a few additional stops to get a fair hearing. Meanwhile, the Base Commander at CFB Halifax, my good friend Captain (N) Rick Bowers, who had come from the west coast at the same time as I did, worked with us very closely to get the numbers quickly down. I was above all else still in uniform, and I was bound to not fall on my sword prematurely as had happened in the past when unpopular decisions were foisted on senior leaders.

There was one bright spot which I was able to muster during those dark days. I knew that there were 95 more cuts coming just in 12 AMS alone, so I started a campaign to turn two Techs into Reg Force musicians who would form the basis of a new 12 Wing Pipe band. It worked. It took me 1 ½ years to pull this off but finally the job was done and the new band appeared on the tarmac the next posting season. One for the gipper! And two jobs saved.

But I digress. As Shearwater was to be a "Lodger Unit" of CFB Halifax, approximately 500 support personnel (Admin, Transport, Nuclear Response, kitchen staff, NPF, etc) were moved over to the CFB Halifax roster, 300 went to Greenwood with 434 (CS) Combat Support Squadron, and virtually 90% of my CE section, almost 400 good people, went over to CFB Halifax. In the union environment, they had to go on the rosters there and compete for the available jobs on the basis of seniority. That was over 1200 people gone in the course of 6 months. It was cutting back on these good CE folks that personally hurt me the most, as I had known many if not most of them for years, and I knew they couldn't be posted elsewhere. I knew many of their families, and it was a particularly hurtful time in my life as their union reps would holler at me in labour management relations meetings.

434 (CS) Squadron was moved up to Greenwood in August of 1994, a full 12 months prior to their intended date. The Air

Force had already built them new facilities, which we suspected and subsequently found out were actually designed for the Sea King and its replacement to transfer into when the time came that Shearwater would close. That all started in February and the moves were planned and well underway by that posting season. The speed with which that was done astounded the brass in Air Command HQ.

On the 6th of April in 1994, I got that call that everybody charged with the responsibility for his young warriors who fly aircraft hates to get. We had suffered a fatal accident that morning as a Sea King with Majors Wally Sweetman and Bob Henderson who were ferrying an aircraft back to Esquimalt had crashed just outside of Saint John New Brunswick.

When the call came in, I was just heading to a radio interview at the CBC to discuss the recent DND cutbacks with the Radio Noon host. That interview was one of the hardest things I had ever done. Sitting there on the radio like nothing had happened. To make matters worse, Rob North, the CBC military affairs reporter somehow knew of the crash. He stopped me on the way in to the station and had the decency to pull me aside and ask me about it.

I asked him for time for the families to be notified, and then I would tell him the news. The notifications were underway while I was in the station for that hour, and I was able to give him some sketchy details when I came out. As I had done on many occasions before, I marveled at the speed at which my Ops O, LCol Larry McWha, had handled that situation and had it in the bag by the time that interview was finished. I never have and never will forget the personal and professional courtesy extended to the men and women of 12 Wing Shearwater that day, as the CBC let the news catch up to itself, giving us that badly needed hour to get our ducks in a row. Rob North, I thank you!

That incident alone was responsible for a relationship with North which lasts to this day. When he wants to know something, he calls and knows that if I can give it, he will get from me. Nice way to have things, instead of that adversarial relationship that characterizes so many of these types of situations.

To illustrate how these things will always, sometimes in the worst of ways, come back to haunt you, I'd like to relate a quick story to you. Much later that night, when my wife and I were sleeping, the NDHQ phone which was by my bedside rang. It was the first and only time it rang during my tenure in Hatt House. It was the Prime Minister's Office calling me.

I could hear voices, sometimes quite clearly, at other times muffled. They wanted to know what happened and if any criticism of the government could be expected as fallout from the accident. What they were asking me to do was to ensure that if any results of the accident investigation of the crash that

day found any link whatsoever to the Government's decision to cancel the Sea King replacement that it be passed to the PMO immediately. I'll let you draw your own conclusions as to what you would have thought had you received a phone call like this from so high up the food chain.

This was a horrible way to wake up in the middle of the night from what had been a terribly long day, but wake me up it did. It was another "Emergency Flying Stations" pipe. I told the person on the other end of the phone, who as best as I could make out was the Military Liaison Officer in the PMO, that I could not do that. More muffled voices at the other end, and then he came back, the room obviously knowing this was a very bad request to make of an obviously annoyed Sea King Wing Commander, and told me to forget that the question had been asked. They never called me back. Good thing, because by the time I had wakened up and thought the thing through, I was REALLY annoyed, and concerned for what the eventual ramifications of such a request might be. Not much sleep that night, and I carried that knot in my stomach for the next year and a half. I did not tell anyone that they had called.

Meanwhile by that spring, the SDC was beginning to get itself in place to start various endeavours at the Base to assist in offsetting the local job losses. It seemed to everyone that they were being a little tardy at this, until the game they were playing finally revealed itself. They were trying to get their hands on the entire Base. In the meantime, they were in the initial stages of setting Shearwater up as an Air Cargo facility and duty free port of entry for air freight arriving into Canada. It was sheer folly.

Another phantom phone call came later in the spring, this time from my new best friend Wynn Potter from ACOA. I was to give the SDC \$5 million to assist with setting up Fisherman's Cove in Eastern Passage. A little known fact, but the "amelioration of the job losses at Shearwater" really meant "give them \$5 million to assist them in setting up the Cove". Everyone from the Cowards Cove area knows how beautiful that area has become, as it is indeed a real tourist attraction with its boardwalk and nice little shops. I'll bet that not too many folks know that I had to give them a \$5 million cheque to finance that little puppy from DND resources! To add insult to injury, they also took and sold the materiel from the old HQ building which by now had been torn down.

It is now July 1994. My Dad who had been ill for quite some time with cancer, passed away in Ontario. At the same time that his funeral was scheduled, 434 (CS) Squadron was holding a change of command parade at the wing. I had to leave my XO in command and go to Ontario. While I was at my dad's funeral in Newmarket, just north of Toronto, I got a call that we had just lost a T-33 which had been up as part of a 3 ship formation which was slated to do a fly-past for the parade. As nobody could find the aircraft and there had been no communications from the pilot, it was an assumed fatal crash. We skedaddled home from Toronto the next day so I could join the search in

the Rawdon Hills area, between Greenwood and Shearwater. It was four days before we found the pilot, Harry Munro, hung up in a tree still in his parachute. The subsequent investigation of that accident took almost three years to close out as it was so complex.

Harry's funeral at the Base Chapel was yet another whole story about which I could write a separate book. Suffice to say, we sent him off in fine style amongst a fleet of weeping and wailing women, a holy roller and several ex-wives. My Wing Chief and I had a long, cool one after that show. Quite the introduction to my new Wing Ops O, LCol Brian Akitt, as Larry McWha had moved on with a promotion to Ottawa just the week before that.

In August of 1994, we staged a magnificent closing out ceremony for 434 (CS) Squadron, and off they went to YZX with their Challenger and T-33 jets. All told, the Base UE dropped by 25 aircraft that day. At a Mess Dinner a couple of nights before, there had been much bravado. 434 had boasted about how much life they brought to the base, while the Shearwater guys went back with the "we've done OK without the Air Force here for many years". In point of fact, it was a lonely time after they left and they were missed.

That marked the first really visible scale back at Shearwater, as two Squadrons in actuality left the Base that day. 412 (CS) Squadron, a reserve outfit twinned with the regular force 434 (CS) Squadron. Both Squadrons did the target towing work for the navy that VU 32 at Shearwater and VU 33 on the west coast used to do, they had the NORAD penetration role and the Challengers did some Coastal Patrols and Medevac work along with the Canadian version of the Wild Weasel aircraft with their Electronic Warfare suite. But the transfer came off very well indeed and we all got on with things. What else was there to do?

I recall a Sunday morning in November of 1994, when her Majesty the Queen and his Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, were departing Shearwater after a low key and quite informal visit to the Province. They came up to my wife and I as we were standing on the tarmac to see them off, looking very cold and quite alone I am quite sure as I think back on it now. In a very private moment with them, they both told us that we had difficult work ahead, and to keep our chins up. Someone had told them of Shearwater's fate, and they were commiserating with us in a private way. The Duke extended me his hand as he departed and said a few private words, sailor to sailor, which buoyed me. He knew. I shall never forget that day as long as I live. He'd be proud to know that we have persevered and that the "little Base that can" is back.

The next year was difficult to recapture. I have lots of notes which trace the entire, ugly escapade, but it's safer just to say this. The SDC was up to its nose with the government of the day, and with the Canada Lands Company. Environmental

studies were done. Conditions of the runway studies were done. Businesses were brought in. Businesses left. Transiting aircraft bought a bit of fuel. Every imaginable thing was studied and re-studied as the government was preparing to cut Shearwater out in totality.

I recall having to go with my good friend the Wing Chief Warrant Officer, Steve Bale, to Air Command Headquarters in Winnipeg in mid winter, to hear the dreadful news of the massive cutbacks that could be expected in future. Remember, the background for this was that we had already given at the office. It was amusing to watch the go fasters, the Transport guys and even my colleagues from Greenwood crying. Their time was yet to come. I argued and continued to argue the case with anyone I could find for the retention of Shearwater as a viable Base long after returning from that trip, to the point where I determined that I had cooked my goose so much that I was forced to accept the terms of the FRP (Force Reduction Program) later that summer.

In June of 1995, just before my retirement, you may recall that the G7 Summit was held in Halifax. What an absolutely incredible way for the old base we all know and love so well to go out. There we had on our tarmacs approximately 25 large aircraft of all types which brought in the heads of state. The Japanese arrived first with their two red and white gleaming 747's, followed in very close order the next day by the American President in his two blue and white 747's and his entourage of smaller aircraft which follow him everywhere, and the British, French, Italians, Russians and of course our PM in the Taj Mahal.

The Russians were late as his aircraft was circling out in the Atlantic after the Russian Parliament Buildings had been attacked earlier that day, while they tried to wake old Boris up to decide what to do next. Boris decided to keep on coming, as Cirque de Soleil was in town, and he wanted to see it. If it had been me, I might have tended to want to go back to Moscow to watch the buildings being retaken. But I digress again. Shearwater looked for all the world like a real air base. I recall getting a call from an Air Force General from Winnipeg who was watching all this on TV in his office, as he remarked: "good God, we had no idea that's what you were up to down there"! Ah, it's always soothing to get a call like that from Winnipeg. It reminds me of the old cartoon: sleep soundly tonight, your Air Force is awake. Not! They didn't even pay attention to us as Brian Akitt and his team planned the entire thing and they provided zero resources to assist.

When I retired in September of 1995 having accepted the dreaded FRP program terms, the asking price on the land that DND was selling, which at that point constituted ½ the base acreage including the north and south portions of old runway 16-34 outer (the long Shearwater runway) was \$1.7 million. (The available acreage at that time was subdivided by the east-west runway, 10-28). And that is precisely what the Canada

lands company paid for the land when they subsequently bought it several years later, after all the studies were done and the shouting had died down: a mere \$1.7 million. The commercial evaluation of the land placed its value then at \$87 million!

My retirement in September of 1995 was almost lost in the struggle to keep Shearwater afloat. But the team that had worked for me over the course of the previous two years was amazing. It is perhaps worthwhile noting who they were, and where they wound up to realize that I did not carry this fight on alone or without talent to assist me:

A group too numerous to mention by name under the leadership of CWO Steve Bale, who were our Wing, Squadron and Unit Warrant Officers. CO's and the troops have never been better served by this fine group of NCM's;

- LCol promoted to Colonel Larry McWha was my Ops O during my first year. McWha went to NDHQ serving in a NATO policy desk;
- McWha was replaced at Wing Ops by LCol Brian Akitt who had come out of HT 406 Squadron, subsequently promoted to Colonel retiring out of NATO HQ in Brussels several years later. Akitt is currently an executive with General Dynamics Canada in Ottawa;
- At 406 Squadron, Akitt was replaced by LCol, now Major General Joe Hincke, who subsequently rose to Deputy Chief of the Air Staff at NDHQ, who is currently in London in command at CDLS London;
- At 423 (MH) Squadron, we had a parade of future stars. Starting with LCol, subsequently rising to Lieutenant General Angus Watt, who is currently Chief of the Air Staff in Ottawa;
- Watt was followed in the chair at 423 by LCol Dave Martin, who also rose to the rank of Brigadier General, and he in turn was followed by LCol Dave Neil (Pedro) who moved on to NDHQ as a Colonel;
- 443 (MH) Squadron on the west coast was commanded by my good friend LCol Doug Langton, who is currently a Major General in command at CDLS Washington;
- At 12 AMS I was served by LCol Doug Foster who ultimately succumbed to an illness several years later, and LCol Ed Mitchell who did some really innovative things in the maintenance world; and,
- Arguably one of the most talented LCol's anyone could ever hope to have working for him, LCol Tony Wojick who was my Base Technical Services officer. It was Tony who was the architect of the Base downsizing, as hateful a task as anyone could ever be handed. He did it professionally with his tongue in his cheek all the way.

To all these ladies (don't forget Colleen Calvert) and gentlemen and fine officers, I owe my thanks for the support and indeed comfort they shared with me during a pretty rocky tenure at the Wing. It was the least I could do to go to Winnipeg to fight for high PER's for all of you. That was one of my successes during my tenure.

After retirement, I was called back as the "Airport Manager" in February 1997 on a three month DND contract to figure out what was under all the steaming little piles that the SDC had left when they were finally and mercifully ejected from the Base. This three month job lasted for three years, as in addition to functioning as the Airport Manager of the civilian side of the airport, I was brought in as the co-author of the Sea King Basing Study which was commissioned by NDHQ.

It was this study, which after 18 months of preparation and going over with a fine tooth comb by the NDHQ bean-counters, was finally adopted by Parliament on the 18th of November 1998. That is one piece of credit I must give to the then MND, Art Eggleton. This study did the work that had not been done by NDHQ when they ordered Shearwater to be closed in 1994, and was a top down look at ALL the consequences of moving the helicopter operation to Greenwood. Indeed, we even looked at the west coast and recommended that the decision to move the Sea Kings from Pat Bay to Comox be overturned. How was that done you might fairly ask? We simply used logic and in the end our arguments prevailed. Not even the bean counters could poke holes in it.

And, it must be stated, that had our studies proven any other result, they would have been recommended, regardless of the consequences to Shearwater. But our forefathers chose Shearwater's location well and there was simply no other conclusion that could be drawn from an operational efficacy, personnel or financial point of view. Those were the three areas we were charged with examining, and they held up well in our in depth look at the basing decision.

Shearwater is now once more back in the hands of DND thanks to our current MND, The Honourable Peter MacKay. The long runway does not have to be used in order to preserve its usefulness should the time ever arise when it may be required. In the meantime, like a phoenix, a new Shearwater is rising out of the ashes. Approximately \$350 million is being spent to redo all the underground infrastructure, there are a new set of hangars going up, just to the north of the old north gate out onto 10-28, and there is a new short runway that has been constructed on the old 16-34 Inner. It is the western world's first fully functioning IFR Heliport, fully instrumented for the new CH 148 Cyclone when it arrives in the not too distant future.

All in all, Shearwater has had some exciting moments and a couple of very near death experiences over the course of the last 14 years. Starting with that fateful budget in February of 1994 right up until today, her continuation as a perfect little jewel which is a truly National asset was many times in doubt.

And there were some very dark moments. Unknown to most of the outside world, I buried 12 of my comrades during this stint of a mere 26 months. Some died by accidents, some by illness, and regrettably far too many by their own hands. The times were that unsettling for many. My wife and I went from being

normal Mr. and Mrs. Base Commander to chief hand holders and shoulders to cry on. They don't teach this stuff at Base Commander Courses I can assure you. I am glad it was me, and not some others I have known, or the figure may well have been higher than 12 funerals.

And it may come to pass that some day in the future, when all the swords have been beaten into ploughshares that Shearwater's usefulness as a defence asset may once again come into question. But one thing that will never be in doubt is that the usefulness to the country in a strategic sense of a major runway, next to a railway and major highway infrastructure, which is located alongside a deepwater, ice free harbour can never be questioned.

I think the old girl is safe for many years yet to come.

From the waterfront. John M. Cody

Colonel (Retired) John Cody was in command at Shearwater from July 1993 until September 1995. Upon retirement, he served as the first Executive Director of the rejuvenated Nova Scotia International Air Show, as Manager of the Civilian side of the Shearwater Airport, as a consultant to General Dynamics Canada on their successful bid with Sikorsky Aircraft to provide the replacement aircraft, the CH 148 Cyclone. He is currently serving as General Dynamics Canada's General Manager at their spanking new Software Support Facility for the Cyclone behind the Base on Caldwell Road. John is still the Drum Major for the award winning 78th Highlanders (Halifax Citadel) Pipe Band and does not plan on retiring anytime soon.

(Ed. Note: John is too modest in his closing remarks. Until potential conflict of interests in employment on defence work required him to withdraw, his expertise and support were outstanding along with the late Bill Farrell and the Sea Horse group in efforts to avoid the loss of strategic lands and capabilities at Shearwater. *These were covered in two previous editions in "Repairing the Decade of Neglect and Reduction of Shearwater" and "A Shared Heritage and Future - Shearwater 2008".* John can be proud of his contributions. I'm certain they were a powerful factor in MND Peter MacKay's farsighted decision and action on March 28, 2008. Way to go John! Way to go Peter MacKay!

ANIMAL STORIES

FIRST OUT, BEST DRESSED

The Guppy Flight Cabin (M55) was right aft on Deck 4 and housed 6 bunks. It was not very spacious. Things could get pretty confused when everyone was in changing for dinner for dinner, or facing the new day. Wally Schroeder always seemed to be short of something to wear. He seldom put his newly

laundered stuff in drawers, but left them in a pile at the head of his bunk. (He left the dirty stuff at the foot. After all, he had 'couth') He always seemed to be late for breakfast. One morning, he was running around saying "where's my tie!!!" Gregor MacIntosh (I think), said, "Here, Wally, Use mine" He rushed off. Upon arriving in the wardroom, he was reminded that he had a green tie on!. For a while, he stopped asking for bits of clothing from his mates!

TRONDHEIM-BEARD GROWING CONTEST

Maggie was in Trondiem, Norway in September '53 after being at sea for over 30 days. The Captain had announced a Beard Growing contest. Very few people who participated were allowed to keep them. Wally was one. He was very proud of it, and used to place his cap at a bit of angle and talked about retiring in Cornwall and becoming a smuggler. He said he really admired the life.

The first day ashore, we had been made guests of the Norwegian Army Mess and they had invited some lovely ladies to be introduced to us.. Wally met this beautiful girl. Her first words were,"Oh you have a beard!" Wally politely excused himself and hopped the nearest duty boat back to Maggie, shaved off his beard and returned to his new lady friend!

A footnote; He took some leave next spring to go back and (maybe) get married. However, he stopped in Hamburg on the way to Norway and spent all his money, so returned to Shearwater still single, and broke..

ROSIE ROADS LIASON OFFICER

Ted , one of the amusing incidents in 881 was when we were in Roosevelt Roads in the Virgin Islands. A piped request came through for a Spanish Speaking officer and Wally Schroeder immediately volunteered although his Spanish was limited to "mochas gracias" & "buenas diaz senorita". They intended to send him to Havana as a pre arrival liason officer. In his excitement to go he tumbled into a helicopter that was having an engine repair on the flight deck rather than the already warmed up chopper that was to take him ashore. This to the amusement of the entire deck crew as Little "F" boomed over the tannoy " Other helicopter Wally"

(From Weldon Paton)


<p>Catherine Hamilton Home Health Care Manager</p>
<p><i>Kyte's Pharmasave</i> 920 Cole Harbour Road, Dartmouth, NS B2V 2J5 Phone: (902) 462-4187 Fax: (902) 462-0104</p>

VS881- CONVERSION TO NEW AIRCRAFT

by Ted Kieser

As VS881 was equipping with new CS2F Trackers, many aviation techs had received training in US Squadrons and were back in the squadron waiting for these new aircraft to arrive and were training other squadron members. They were key people and formed the nucleus of the new squadron. Similarly, the aircrew were looking at a totally new airplane.

'Dickie' Bird realized that there would be problems converting to the Canadian way of operating a squadron. To this end, he initially set up VS881 in a similar way to a US Squadron. Most of the hands that had been trained in the US were more comfortable with this system. Similarly, the administration was set up along the lines of the USN.

The result was a smooth transition and serviceably rose, and more aircraft were available to fly. In fact, Dickie had set up a flying program that was so successful, that the base engineering folks had to tell him to curb the flying or we would be using up all our hours. This activity was not unnoticed by VS880 who shared the "NEW" hangar. They painted a line down the middle and called it "The 49th Parallel". In fact, one morning, the staff officer opened an envelope from VS880. It contained a Hand Grenade with a note saying "Yankee go Home"!

Just about the time the squadron was readying to embark in Bonaventure, draft chits arrived for most of our US trained technicians! Just at the time they would be needed the most! The CO was furious. He had tried to stop these drafts but with no avail. Next thing, we got a call from Dickie saying he and the Base Commander were off to the Drafting Depot! He got the drafts stopped!



Firefly Restoration Project Update:

compiled by Christine Hines and John Webber

After the summer break, the Firefly Team is back in action and looking forward to hearing some noise...

I am pleased to report that after sabbaticals from the project, two valued members of the team have returned! Long time project stalwart Bud Ayer has returned, bringing his wealth of corporate knowledge with him. Tony Humber, also a member of the engine team, has returned after a bout of illness. All at SAM are delighted to have Bud and Tony back with us, in good health and good spirits. Their presence has certainly added to morale here at the museum! In addition to Bud and Tony, new engine team members include Air Force technicians Rene Rossignol, Aaron Lumley and Brian Kent, all of whom are working after-hour evening shifts twice a week to reach the goal of turning over the engine. A recent meeting of the team, rounded out by Bruce Paige and John Webber, have reconfirmed the way ahead. Bruce and John will be working in the coming months to set up the pitch stops and Bruce will be working on timing the magneto, hopefully before Christmas.

The entire SAM team would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support of the Firefly Project by our friends and colleagues at the Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum. The ACAM engineers have spent significant time recently helping us with the engine, especially giving us access to their water pump for study and comparison from the Griffon engine in the ACAM collection, and also by loaning us their water pipes

with which to fabricate new ones (ours were destroyed during overhaul of our water pump). We sincerely appreciate the assistance of the team at ACAM!

This summer saw the departure of a valued team member at SAM: Wayne Petitpas moved to Quebec this past summer, after many years at Shearwater and Eastern Passage. We miss Wayne, but would like to thank him for all his years of service to the museum and the Firefly project. We'd like to wish Wayne and Mary all the best in their new home and many years of happiness with their family close at hand.

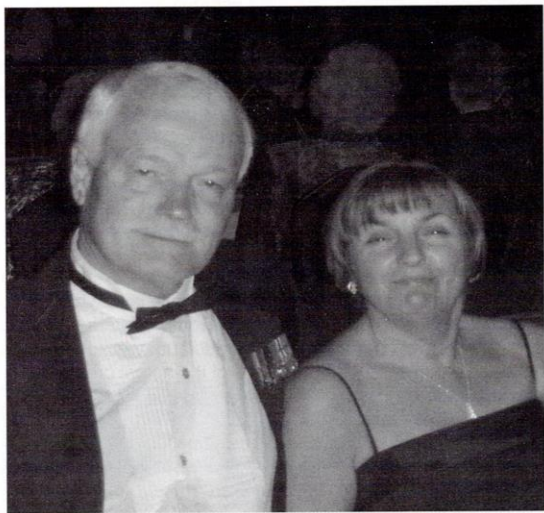
As the saying goes, when one door closes, another opens...after the departure of Wayne from the Team, we received a call from Mr. Ted Wale of Porter's Lake NS, offering us a substantial collection of machining equipment. Mr. Wale, a machinist and Second War Veteran himself, was kind enough to offer us a lathe, milling machine and a host of accessories: in fact, we had enough equipment to kit out a whole shop! So, after some wiring and lifting, we soon had a worthy machine shop. A special thanks to Ted for his generous donation: Ted's quickly become a consultant, volunteer and good friend to SAM. We have also been fortunate enough to recruit a machinist as well: Mr. John Longo has joined the SAM volunteer ranks to help us out with machining projects. This gives us great capability to manage fabrication of parts we need quickly, especially creating adaptors for British fittings, without waiting for outside industries that may be busy with bigger projects for bigger customers. Welcome aboard John!

As you can see, despite a relatively quiet summer, we have great news to report to you. Onward and upward!

ACROSS THE FLIGHT DECK



Canadian Naval Air Group



CNAGER OF THE YEAR

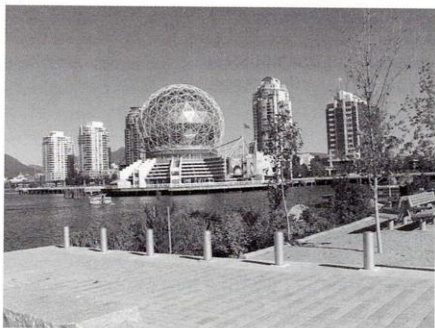
Caption: Shown here with his Wife Debbie at the 2007 CNAG BOD in Halifax, Past National Chairman Paul Baiden has been selected as this year's "CNAGER of the Year".

In a nomination tabled by Hampton Gray V.C Chapter's current President, Ted Forman, Paul Baiden was described as a very active and a critically important participant, usually as initiator and chief organizer over many years, in all of the annual social and program activities at Hampton Gray VC Chapter. He has served in a key role on three National Reunion Committees and is

quick to offer help to other Group Committees planning their reunions. He has perpetually held at least one position on the Chapter executive, cycling through all executive positions on a number of occasions and has served in the national executive on several occasions recently culminating with his service as National Chairman.

Paul has been one of the strongest champions and advocates for CNAG, attending every veteran's event in the National Capital and maintaining close personal association with organizers and with senior executive representatives of major organizations such as Veterans' Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Air Force Association, the Navy League and the Naval Associations, the War Museum, and the National Aviation Museum along with other associations more closely related to his professional career. He has become the automatic first point of contact for CNAG with many of these organizations. Paul also ensures that CNAG is properly represented for wreath laying at all commemorative events in the capital. Both locally and through his wide network of friends in CNAG across Canada he keeps a close, concerned watch over the welfare of CNAG members and he is a very effective communicator in "closing the loop" on CNAG's behalf with such organizations as SAMF and Kay Collacutt and with Veterans Affairs.

Paul was chosen from a field of strong and very deserving contenders and as National Chairman and on behalf of all CNAG members, I extend warmest congratulations to Paul for having earned this special honour.



2008 CNAG National Reunion

VANCOUVER, BC

The Canadian Naval Air Group recently held a successful National Board of Directors meeting and Annual Reunion for 2008. The 39th reunion was held on the 10-12 October 2008 weekend in Vancouver which turned out to be a bright, sunny time to visit the city. Held in the

Executive Airport Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Richmond, it was three days of active meetings, receptions, touring, ceremonial and fine dining.

The Reunion was hosted by Swordfish Chapter and its Reunion Committee under President Roger Rioux and including Margaret Rioux, Stan Witwicki, Irene Campbell and Barb and George Lenihan, produced a memorable and well-organized event. It started with registration on Friday afternoon and a most enjoyable "Meet n' Greet" reception on Friday evening which gave everyone a great opportunity to renew friendships and catch up on the news from other chapters.

An eight o'clock start on Saturday morning saw the national and chapter executives launch into a busy agenda of issues, proposals, reports, motions and votes to address the business of the organization. Special reports were tabled by the representatives of CNAG to such organizations as NCVA (John Eden) and SAMF (Buck Rogers and Bud MacLean) and John Eden also addressed the updating issue of the Naval Air Personnel Data Base. Other reports on Navy 2010 and CNAG Post 2010 were tabled and are the subject of separate articles in this issue.

Directors each presented the meeting with a summary of their local operations and issues for the year and while other representatives adjourned, the Directors remained to present their candidates for the Tul Safety Equipment/ Fred Lucas Memorial Award and cast their votes for selection of CNAGer of the Year. The winner was decided and was announced, as is traditional, at the Reunion dinner. The winner is also announced in this issue and pictures of the actual presentation will be available for the next issue.

Because of the Swordfish Reunion Committee's special care in planning to make the reunion unique as well as enjoyable, the Board of Directors Meeting had to be concluded no later than 10:45 am. This was to allow the Board Members to take part in and witness a special parade demonstration by the Richmond Sea Cadet Corps, 195 RCSCC Bicknell under the command of LT (N) M.A. Cordoza. The Executive Officer, SLT Terry Misener, commanded the parade. Bud MacLean was designated as the official Reviewing Officer and while he inspected the Guard, the National Chairman, Peter Milsom and the National Secretary, Gordon Moyer, inspected the Colour Party. It was a fine display by the young Naval cadets and was thoroughly enjoyed by all reunion participants.



The Sea Cadet display was a perfect lead in to the traditional "Up Spirits" ceremony which was conducted with high enthusiasm on both sides of the grog table.

Sea Cadet Inspection

RUM ISSUE

Rum issue was presided over by Buck Rogers (who performed quality control duties), David Patterson, Jim Elton, Kit Gough and John Turner, turned out in the rig of the day to pour tots and carefully check the HMCS BONAVENTURE grog cards. After an afternoon of sightseeing, Saturday evening was dedicated to fine dining and to socializing with friends. The food was excellent, as it was throughout the weekend, and the meal was capped with short speeches and the announcement of Paul Baiden as the recipient of the CNAGER of the Year Award.



Dinner was followed by high energy entertainment by songstress Linda who is well known to British Columbia military groups as a highly accomplished singer, funny lady and entertainer. Not one to let her audience sit idle, she pressed past National Chairman John Eden to be a streetlight so she could sing the Marlene Dietrich classic Lily Marlene "Underneath the Lamplight.. etc"



John Eden with Linda

A superb evening of entertainment was followed on Sunday morning with the traditional church parade conducted by a retired Salvation Army chaplain, Ron Butcher, who had been a naval airman in his early career and who had a very profound understanding of the world of naval air. Stan and Jane Witwicki led the singing of hymns. The formal reunion wrapped up with an outstanding buffet brunch and most of the members, in a flurry of "See you next year's", departed for home.

As National Chairman and on behalf of all participants, I would like to congratulate the Swordfish Committee on a very enjoyable and thoroughly successful event.

Canadian Naval Air in 2010 and Onward

I have written in the past on the plans for the 100th Anniversary of the Navy in 2010 and tried to encourage active participation of the Canadian Naval Air Group as an entity in these celebrations. I do this because it is going to be a lot of fun. It will be a great opportunity to celebrate our naval history and our own ties with a lot of friends we may not have encountered for years. I have my scrapbook open in front of me with pamphlets announcing the 50th Anniversary of the RCN. The Sail Past and Fly Past took place in Halifax harbour on Thursday afternoon, 19 May 1960. I had just returned to Stadacona after trades training in Naden and it was an exciting time for a young sailor.

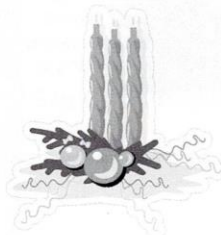
But there were no Sea Kings, no mention of VPs, no DDHs, and a very different fleet. The pamphlets also announced "the 15th anniversary of Naval Aviation in Canada". I was surprised to read this in an official naval pamphlet. While it is true the reincarnation of the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service took place in 1945, it had certainly been around a lot longer than 15 years. New publications will bring the true history of the RCNAS into sharp focus with the formation of the service not in 1945 but in July 1914. There are some very surprising statistics emerging not only about the large number of Canadians that flew and worked with the service but about the amazing number of flying aces produced among its members. In World War One!

As 2010 approaches, we are trying, thanks in large part to Bud MacLean's thoughtful paper on CNAG Post 2010, to grapple with what the year means to us and how we as an organization want to operate after the tumult and excitement dies down. As the CNAG representative to NCR Canadian Naval Centennial Committee, I have been focusing my efforts on ensuring CNAG members know what events are going to take place, what memorabilia will be available, what information will be available, etc, so that they can participate in and enjoy to the greatest measure the full sensation of the event.

However, discussions this weekend with the National Executive of the Royal Canadian Legion and the executives of more than a dozen veteran's organizations to ponder the best organizational model for each of our own organizations after 2010, underscored the related question of how best to perpetuate the fact of Naval Air in Canada. In 1960 they only recognized 15 years of Naval Air, so how do we ensure, within the umbrella of the 2010 celebrations of 100 years of successful naval operations, that the key role played by Naval Air over its 96 year span is properly recognized?

CNAG is all about RCN years, but naval air capability has continued to contribute to the success of the naval mission up to this very moment and, if we are to believe the long term strategic thinkers, will be increasingly important in the future. 2010 is about bringing the Navy to Canadians. Let's make sure they get the full story by supporting writers like Allan Snowie, Stu Soward, and Jake McLaughlin in getting the "complete and unabridged" version out to Canadians and by getting involved in every CNAG Chapter and in every possible way in the 2010 celebrations. Naval Air was not a bit player in the Naval record of Canada – it was a full partner. And remember, one of the three national historic designations of the year will be the formation of the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service.

P. Milson





Col Mark Aruja

My tenure as Wing Commander started in September 1995, having returned to Canada from a year seconded to Estonia, a nation just starting to rebuild from 50 years of Soviet rule, a year which involved me intimately in the challenges of nation building. The notion of change of that magnitude would be inconceivable in Canada, but we were fortunate in that we had not lived under Soviet domination.

That said, the 12 Wing which I commanded was also to undergo change that was profound and not without its challenges. It is necessary to consider the context of what we faced in 1995. Firstly, the government was committed to restoring fiscal discipline, and defence, at the end of the Cold War was required to do its share, and many would argue, more than its fair share. For the Air Force, that meant a 40% reduction in personnel, and associated funding, and as I argued in many a forum, 12 Wing and the naval aviation community bore the brunt of that reduction.

Secondly, the government convened an inquiry into events which occurred in Somalia. This inquiry became a daily media event, which called into question the reputation of all those that served in uniform, and ultimately led to the very visible resignations of two Chiefs of Defence Staffs, albeit for different reasons. The Somalia inquiry was not a venue for improving morale, nor an argument for increased support by the government for defence.

Thirdly, the government had just cancelled the New Shipborne Aircraft, or EH101 project. Finally, the Navy had just taken delivery of its new Halifax class ships. These years would later be characterized by General Hillier as the "decade of darkness". The next few lines will tell anecdotes from those years, in no particular order of importance or chronology, but to record some of the changes that took place during the three years from 1995-98, and not to dwell on the black clouds but rather the silver linings to show that difficult times do bring out the best in people. At the risk of invoking a faulty memory and incomplete notes, and risking omissions, I will only name CWO Jack Shapka, the Wing Chief who was my confidante, supporter, the check and the balance throughout those three years. No matter how difficult a situation seemed to be, he had the knack of finding a solution that worked, and keeping everyone's dignity throughout: in short, everything you would expect of a Chief Warrant Officer.

Cutbacks were seemingly everywhere, so we needed to find new ways to get things done, everything had to be done cheaper, and tomorrow was seemingly too late. An early, and memorable event, was the retirement luncheon for the base telephone operators. Perhaps technology could replace connecting telephones, but the anecdotes of these ladies, who for decades patched sailors and airmen calling from around the world together with their loved ones should be destined for the national archives. For it wasn't telephone calls that were being patched, but in many cases it was lives and marriages that were being patched; the luncheon marked the end of an era. Who will the ships' companies bring flowers home to now?

Technology also came to the base photo organization. Housed for years in the old armament shack by the transport garage, this building was a chemical and structural problem. The photo technicians did a survey of the state of digital technology, and engaged HOTEF in that study, to conclude that digital technology was not only mature enough to replace most of the wet-film technology that was creating the chemical problems, but would lead to operational capability improvements. Within months, the shack was down, we had a new facility built, and indeed a whole new technology and capability was brought to the Wing. The inspiration was budget cuts, but the perspiration and ultimate success was rooted in allowing everyone in the Wing a voice in bringing forward new ideas, and a role in implementing those new ideas.

Some years beforehand, Air Force engineers had developed an electronic aircraft data management system, called ADAM. Unfortunately, it turned out to be an idea ahead of its time, because computers were not cheap nor particularly good at that time. Fortunately, someone at 12 AMS realized that the time for ADAM had come. The end result was spectacular. By putting the Sea King maintenance records into a computer environment, two people who had to do records checks for several days to get aircraft prepared for a long deployment could now be done by one person in minutes. ADAM was now put on every maintenance desk on the Wing, eventually put into a suitcase and sent to sea, and then exported to the rest of the air force. Critically, this freed up valuable technical resources to put into place a massive Sea King upgrade program, something like 40 + modifications undertaken both at the Wing and at IMP at Halifax airport. From replacing the entire centre section of the aircraft, replacing the analog navigation system with the ASN123, upgrading gearboxes and engines, rewiring etc., this effort required not only every skilled individual on-deck but a lot of careful management of the risk to the fleet.

Finally, the Det Chiefs, who for years had sign-off authority at sea, but not when they got back ashore, were able to manage their crews ashore in the same

manner, and have the engineers focus on some of the critical engineering issues that needed attention, and managing an engineering plant that ran around the clock. Facing the reality of having to operate the Sea King indefinitely, the Wing Maintenance organization conceived and hosted the first Sea King Maintenance Symposium. This symposium was the forum for a crucial discussion with military and commercial operators on how to support the Sea King into the future, with the United States Navy engineering staff playing a grateful and critical role. As they had been the de facto engineering depth for the global Sea King fleet, and needed a withdrawal strategy from that role, the Symposium provided them a forum to help move sustainment out to other users after the US had retired their fleet. With numerous aircraft in various mod programs and periodics, the increasing operational tempo, and the ongoing demand to train new crews, Wing Operations became a focal point for managing the fleet, and new tools were developed locally to do so. An initiative which started with Maritime Force Pacific also saw 443 and 12 Wing operations connected to a global Navy Command and Control environment, an early step into the digital world which is commonplace today.

While the Wing was "re-engineering" as it was called in those days, the most significant organizational change took place with CFB Halifax assuming responsibility for the running of the Base itself. For the Wing Commander this was a significant step forward, as indeed operations would take primary in all respects, and the infrastructure would be looked after by people and organizations focussed on those issues. The transition involved the odd cantankerous session as we were concerned about getting some of the "service" that sailors might not get at CFB Halifax, but at the end of the day, it just made too much sense. There were some layoffs that created hardship for some, but the Wing and the taxpayer were better off at the end of the day.

Operationally, it seemed that we were all on a different planet from the nation we served. We would have a Helairdet in the Adriatic for almost 1000 continuous days with STANAVFORLANT, we would operate widely in support of a greater foreign policy effort in the Pacific, while a Helairdet sailed to South Africa for the first time ever. The Somalia inquiry was convened against a backdrop of the incredible efforts by Sea King crews in that theatre of operations in 1993. The real challenge was that the Navy which had been focussed for a decade on getting new ships, actually had them, and wanted a Helairdet on every single one of them, now! So the left hand was downsizing, while the right hand was upsizing. The new ships were fabulous, the Navy had its mojo back, and they perhaps saved the day for the morale of the people at the Wing. The Standing Committee on National Defence was focussed on the low morale of the members of the Canadian Forces, and 12 Wing had more than its share of stories to tell. The first

stop on the Committee's tour was in fact in Victoria, and with the very forward presence of Admiral (retired) Chuck Thomas, they got an earful; after years of wage freezes, and a general abandonment by the Departmental of National Defence of the troops it was there to support (it took General Hillier to finally get the fix in), the situation in Pat Bay was particularly untenable because of the very high cost of housing. 443 Sqn was running on the goodwill of our troops, and that visit to Victoria by the Senate Committee became a pivotal point in implementing quality of life initiatives, such as cost of housing adjustments, which were desperately needed. We also finally had a window to show the facts to the Navy, that Helairdets spent more time at sea than sailors, and that changes to arcane compensation procedures needed to be undertaken. Fortunately, with the statistics in hand, the Navy was very supportive of what needed to get done.

At Shearwater, the Officers Mess dining facility was effectively shut down, and a new all-ranks dining facility built in Warrior Block. This turned out to be a great success, even if it meant that the Officers had a trek to make. Unfortunately, one of the things that remained undone was to bring much-needed repairs to the Warrior Block accommodations as it seemed that it needed, into today's parlance, a serious "make over". We brought in a caterer to run the Sea King Club, and an all-ranks social facility was built from a refurbished building across from the Sea King Club. The Museum hit its stride with tremendous volunteer efforts, particularly from the SAM Foundation, and became a focal point for teaching our history not only to the public at large, but to all of the members of the Wing.

Some things need to be recorded that might not make it into war diaries. The Shearwater Development Corporation was conceived during the days of my predecessor, Col John Cody, but it seemed to gain its stride during my tenure. The SDC was set up to develop new opportunities to offset the decline in military spending and in particular the imminent closure of the long runway and turning Shearwater into a heliport. Others may well have written on the subject extensively, but suffice it to say that it was conceived by the Chretien government as a political animal, and it lived the life of a political animal which may not be the lifestyle you need to have to be successful in attracting business. One business that came, and went, was a cargo airline. Another business was much more interesting; facilities were rented out to film a movie. I am amongst many no-doubt, that wish that they had spent more time getting autographs and taking pictures, if they had only known that the Titanic would become such a success! The closing party for the cast provided me with the most personal amusement. Evidently, some disgruntled employee on the set of the movie put a hallucinogenic into the chowder that was served at the closing party, resulting in at least a dozen people visiting the Dartmouth

General. I got the story from two perspectives; the first was shortly after sunrise from the caterer who ran the Sea King club, who ran into my office, complete with his chef's hat on exclaiming "I didn't do it, I didn't do it"....until we all calmed down and I was told what "it" was. The other angle arrived minutes later; Doc had been doing extra hours pulling the evening shift in the emergency room at the Dartmouth General. As it turned out, the disgruntled employee had laced the chowder with a drug that was not available in Halifax, and was ultimately traced to one of the crew who had come in from California.

An SDC story that turned out rather well, one would hope, was the delivery of several rail cars filled with trees felled from the infield, to communities in Quebec crippled by the ice storm. This period also saw the transition from the Shearwater International Air Show, to the Nova Scotia International Air Show, which saw many members of the Halifax community step forward to take over the role of managing this highly successful annual event, but which continued to run with the steady hand of numerous base personnel who knew had years of experience in how to make it happen. CWO Shapka's considerable skills were needed every year to ensure that the fine line between providing the support that was needed, and invoking a "press gang" were kept in check. Finally, the annual United Way campaign which culminated with a day of activities run on the infield. Many a dunking from the sharpshooters who seemed to hit the bull's eye, and many memories of madly pedalling the tricycle; it was the one time that CWO Shapka's leg-length, or lack thereof gave him a speed advantage.

The period from 1995-1998 was a time of transition, from the Cold War to a new navy, a fiscally responsible government, a nation at peace, and a military that was at war. Change was forced upon the organization, and that isn't always a bad thing. Flight Plan 97 was the program created by Air Command to provide individuals and organizations within the air force to be successful in a changing environment, by developing the skills to lead and manage change. Flight Plan 97 provided me an opportunity to explain what the mission of the Wing was and what tasks we had been given to achieve. Members of the Wing were trained to run a multi-day program which every Wing member undertook, to help Wing members understand the implications of change, and how they needed to be part of the process. I well remember a session we had with 443 Squadron at a facility run by the University of Victoria overlooking Pat Bay. Down the hall were a group of people from the lumber industry, and as it turned they were doing their own Flight Plan 97, as they faced difficult times. As it turned out, the next day our own instructors had a session with the lumber folks; the context may have been different, but the themes were the same, and our instructors were able to share their skills with this group and to their great appreciation. One group of individuals that also were key during these years were Honorary Colonels, a concept that was still new to the Air

Force. Some incredible people from society, all accomplished in their own right, gave of their considerable capabilities and time. These included Fred MacGillivray who was instrumental in getting NSIAS organized, the former mayor of Dartmouth Gloria McClusky, Professor Emeritus Orest Kochkanoff, and Roger Bannister at 443 Squadron. They brought their circle of influential friends into close contact with the military, a gap with society which we Canadians had somehow created over the years, but now more than ever, needed to close.

They were difficult times, but eventually the nation realized that it needed to support its troops, the population and its leadership is asking better questions about what it wants its armed forces to do, and the answers seemed to be better thought out. Even if the Sea King replacement is still not here today, there is a renewed commitment to our troops, and a sense that Canada should play a leadership role on the world stage. For all those at 12 Wing, who have sailed the Canadian flag to the far-flung corners of the world in times of peace and war, we always had a belief in what our nation could do, and in these years that notion was put to the test. By 1998 the Wing had in some senses gone through some remarkable changes, many visible, and many not. At the end of the day, however, the venerable Sea King needed to soldier on to provide Wings for the Fleet, and that challenge had no end in sight.

Three years in command went quickly, and it was time to hand over the reins to Col Brian Akitt in May of 1998; undoubtedly, his recollections start with Swissair 111.

Per Ardua ad Astra



WE'LL MEET AGAIN...

We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again, some sunny day.
Keep smiling through, just like you always do,
'Til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.

So will you please say hello to the folks that I know,
Tell them I won't be long.
They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go,
I was singing this song.

We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again, some sunny day.

FEEDBACK

From **Bill McDermott**: Hi Kay: Got the latest of the newsletter. It was the information regarding the cheesy things etc. that we did not appear to be getting. Meant to mention it before, but can a move be made to correct the painting on the telephone switch box as you approach the old bridge from Barrington Street. The box has an airborne T-33 and several others awaiting launch from the flight deck of a carrier. Gather the overall painting contract for numerous boxes did not cost the city all that much so re-doing one box should be relatively inexpensive. Assume the correction can be negotiated through Mayor Kelly. Willing to help pay for the re-paint. (**Cheesy? Ron Beard tells me they are Banshees. K**)

Other item. I recollect the Shearwater school used to say Lt. Hampton Gray VC on the side facing the highway. Now it is a depository or something and the sign honouring him has lost the details that ensured all knew who the building is named after. The county is infested with public buildings named after councillors who really did nothing for the area other than promote themselves. Let's press to preserve one of our own. (*I'm with you on this one Bill. Hope you have done something about it. I would have thought the Military would have something to say about it. K*)

Bgen (Ret) Jean Veronneau writes:

I have just received the Museum Foundation newsletter. It was as pleasing to the eye as it was to the mind. Great articles, great presentation, great editing!

It was also clear that the timeliness of your articles was no accident. It had been carefully planned that way. The articles were, on the whole, highly pertinent and relevant to what is happening now in the Northern hemisphere and what is important for the reader to know about it. I was also pleased to read about the current Shearwater's developments. It was a real treat to read your newsletter from cover to cover.

Thanks to your effort, the Foundation is finally getting the kind of newsletter that complements its professional status and that its readers deserve.

I am now really looking forward to the next one. Cheers.

Peter Fane writes: Do not let the RCMP hear you claiming the first ship to circumnavigate North America was HMCS Labrador. They will tell you that "Labrador" was the second ship to do so as the RCMP vessel "St. Roch" had already done that feat in the '40's. The "St. Roch" is presently in a museum in Vancouver but is looking for a new home. Yours aye, Pete
pfane@shaw.ca

Hi Mr. Fane. I am assuming in your email you were

referring to the caption under the photo of LABRADOR on pg 36 - the caption could have been worded differently - I could have said the first Military ship or the first RCN ship. The articles that were in the nsltr speaking about LABRADOR and her trip(s) were just that - referring to the Royal Canadian Navy's Ship LABRADOR. My apologies. There was no intent to dismiss the magnitude of the job performed by the RCMP. **Ed.**

STORY ABOUT WW II

by *Les Rosenthal*

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the authorities were casting-about for ways and means to facilitate their escape. Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where-stuff-was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses', where a POW on-the-loose could go for food and shelter. Paper maps had some real drawbacks: They make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear-out rapidly, And if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads, and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise what-so-ever. At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of items qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross, to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were located (Red Cross packages were delivered to prisoners in accordance with that same regional system). When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass,
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together.

3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American air-crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set ----- by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square! Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWs who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war.

The story wasn't de-classified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honored in a public ceremony. Anyway, it's always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail Free' card.

The Least He Could Do

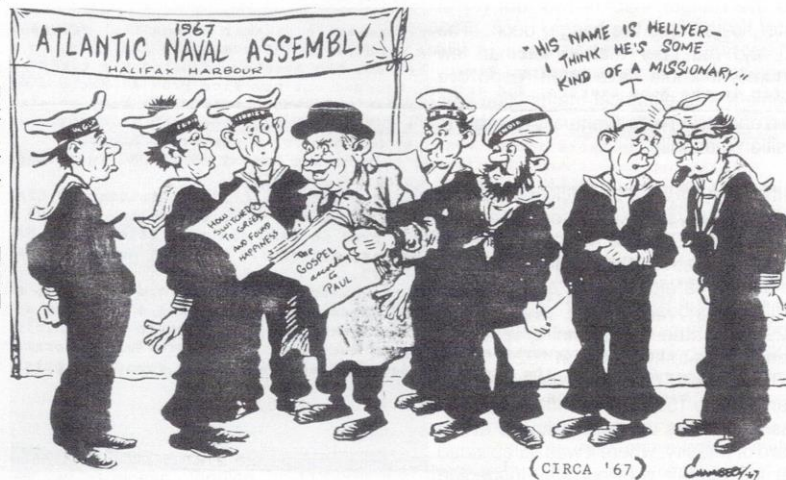
A golfer and his buddies were playing a big round of golf for \$200. At the eighteenth green the golfer had a ten foot putt to win the round, and the \$200.

As he was lining up his putt, a funeral procession started to pass by. The golfer set down his putter, took off his hat, placed it over his chest, and waited for the funeral procession to pass. After it passed, he picked up his putter and returned to lining up his putt.

One of his buddies said, 'That was the most touching thing I have ever seen. I can't believe you stopped playing, possibly losing your concentration, to pay your respects.'

The golfer turned to him and said, 'Well, it was the least I could do. We were married for 45 years!'

(Thank you Eric. K)





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THE NEW POOL

The new Pool grand opening in the mid "50's" was planned for the following day. I was assisting the duty phys-ed type filling the pool for the very first time. Being on the swim team and the water polo team, I was very excited over getting our own pool.

When the pool was within a foot of being full we decided, together, we should "christen" the pool early so we changed and nearly perishing, swam the length and back in water that must have been drawn directly from the harbour, it was so cold. No. It wasn't salty, but it was painfully cold. We both enjoyed the opening that day knowing "we were first in". **Ben Blotnicky**

GUY LARAMEE'S STORY

(Guy was 91 on August 14, 2008 - I am copying his hand written epistle.....may have some errors...Ted Kieser)

As Squadron Air Engineer officer in VS881 when they amalgamated with VS 880, I was the first and only Squadron Air Engineer Officer with 24 Trackers to run.

Many memories.....Tom Copeland once told me that I was known as "Mr Unflappable".

Some memorable people for me were CPO's Hynes, Moseholm and Mullen.

Remember in 1959...It was decided that Bonaventure needed a refit, but what to do with 12 Trackers? So European Flight Training should be a good exercise. England to Portugal (where I swiped a BEA Flag and put it on Bird's Aircraft to establish "Birds European Airways"..

From Portugal to Gibraltar. (Remember the Monkeys?)

From Gib to Bordeaux, where I met a French officer technician and had lunch in the French Carrier "Joffre"(?).

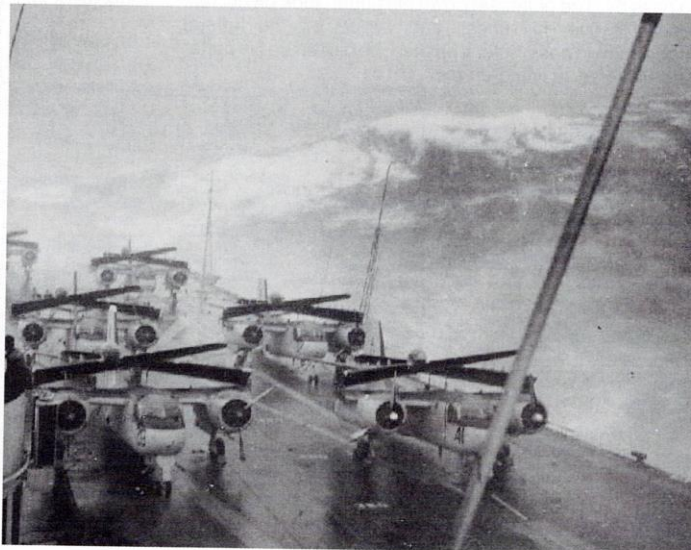
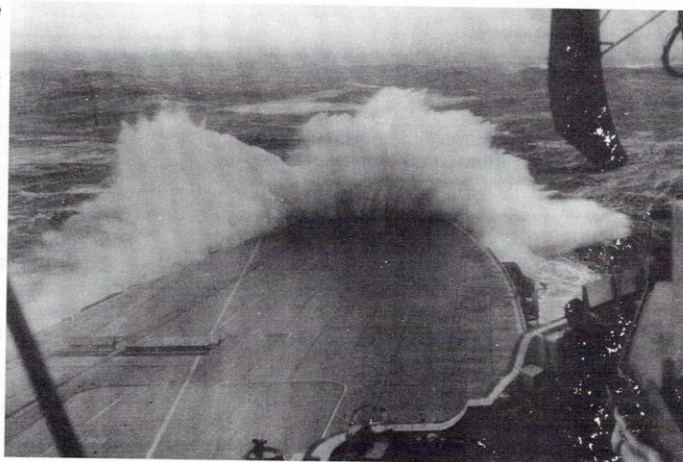
Bordeaux to Malta, then to Capodechino (or something) airfield in Rome. Carrier arrived in Naples, then left for home.

It was December 1959 and we encountered a huge storm in the North Atlantic. During that horrible storm, the forward lift was stuck open. Water poured into the Hangar. Some two feet (?) of water flowed onto the hangar deck. The XO told me later that in another few minutes, it would have been "good bye Bonnie"! The electrical malfunction was fixed and the lift was eventually raised into position manually.

All the trackers were on Deck and took the brunt of the storm.. After the storm abated, the XO asked me, "Guy, can we fly to Dartmouth?". I said, "Sir, I'll have all the aircraft carefully inspected". All were certified serviceable.

1529 was at the stern, running up as the spare. I was to fly ashore in 1529. One a/c had radio problems, so the crew changed into 1529. It took off, stalled and crashed. I was the "star" witness at the board of enquiry, where it was established that the aircraft was properly inspected prior to launch. I don't believe the cause was ever determined.

Further story about the Hook problems. About three o'clock in the morning, during flight operations, a sailor came to me and said "Sir, what is this thing?" It turned out to be an arrester hook, and he had found it up in' fly one' forward. "Many thanks", I said "but what the hell are you doing on the flight deck?.. He was a cook on a break! I went up to the A/C control room and said, in the pitch dark, "There is an aircraft airborne without an arrester hook!" He asked me how I knew, so I showed him the hook! The crash barrier was rigged and the a/c made a safe landing, Thank God!





Col. B. Akitt

For those of us who have called Shearwater home for the majority of our military careers and who would have stayed forever if the Canadian Forces (CF) had allowed us, it is a formidable challenge to capture just a snapshot of the period from May 1998 to July 2001

Before I say anything else concerning my role as Wing Commander (WComd) during this interval, it must be stated that the memories that remain forever are of the many individuals that served at 12 Wing and Base Shearwater during this era and the outstanding support that I received. The dedicated service that 12 Wing, and all those serving within the MH Community provided to the CF and, with our HELAIRDETs deployed world wide, to our great Nation of Canada was exceptional and second to none across all the CF.

Looking back at having started my flying career at Shearwater as a young Lieutenant, and then having served at Shearwater at each rank level along the way, I suddenly found myself appointed as the WComd in May 1998, with my office located in the Wing Headquarters Building (otherwise known as the "Chicklet"). My first undertaking was to tour the entire Wing, and it was with tremendous relief that I encountered so many familiar faces as I made my way through the various buildings, hangars and messes and then touched base with those from our community serving in the higher headquarters. Among that group from years gone by, I would later find Peter Gotell, who I remembered as a young Corporal and who would eventually reach the lofty heights of CWO and see me depart the Wing as the Wing Chief in my final year. He was followed in turn by Wayne White, both of whom had served with me as the Squadron Chief in my earlier HT 406 days.

Before these appointments came to pass, however, there were other significant events within the MH Community. Under the watchful eye of WCWO Jack Shapka, we experienced the first major visit of my Command. The SCODVA Commission arrived in Shearwater in May 98 seeking input on our current conditions of service, and who could ever forget Gloria McCluskey's passionate plea on behalf of all military servicemen and women to the SCODVA panel assembled in the Sea King Club! Shortly thereafter, MARCOT 98, reportedly the largest naval-amphibious exercise ever conducted in Canadian waters post WW II, began as the fleet steamed towards Stephenville Nfld to conduct an opposed landing operation. We, and what seemed like half the Wing establishment, headed off to Newfoundland in support of

the exercise. Of course, I was most ably assisted by my Newfie Executive Assistant, a newly promoted Major Bruce Ploughman, who had just started to show some potential for bigger and better things. Once the exercise reached its successful conclusion, it then was back to Shearwater to prepare for the annual rite of prepping the Base for the NS International Air Show.

Little did we realize that SWISSAIR 111 (a commercial airliner with 229 onboard) was literally inbound at this time; an aviation tragedy that profoundly influenced our Wing activities over the many never-ending days, weeks, and months that lay ahead. The Wing, with outstanding support from Formation Halifax, responded to the disaster in magnificent fashion, and was suitably recognized for their efforts by being awarded the CDS Commendation for service "above and beyond." For those who had participated in the long, arduous and often emotional recovery action, serving those long shifts in B Hangar (the nickname - the Morgue seemed to stick forever) and performing a multiple of other supporting tasks, the SWISSAIR memories that remain today are not necessarily so much of the CDS Commendation award as of the magnitude of the human tragedy.

As if the Wing had not been tested enough, the SAR community then suffered the tragic loss of aircraft Lab 305 in the Gaspé, resulting in 12 Wing being assigned coastal Primary Search And Rescue (SAR) duty for an undetermined duration. All MH Units and their respective Commanders on both coasts: Wing Operations - Sean Burtenshaw; 12 AMS - John Madower; HOTEF - Gary Doiron; HT406 - Jim Cox; MH423 - Al Blair and MH443 - Chris Little, responded in apt fashion to the trying times. Collectively, they found a way to meet the pressing demands of Primary SAR duty and yet minimize the impact of operational HELAIRDET assignments to Admiral Miller, Commander MARLANT, and Admiral Buck, Commander MARPAC. Having personally witnessed this MH Community-wide response, I must confess that I walked a touch taller and stuck the chest out a bit farther each time that I had to visit 1 Canadian Air Division HQ in Winnipeg.

Overall, it was an incredible first few months on the job, capped off at year's end by the WCWO, Rick Chartrand, who had organized an "all hands" Christmas Dinner in F Hangar. The Wing, led by the 12 Wing Pipes and Drums, marched in formation up the hill from Warrior Block to sit and enjoy an exceptional four-course turkey dinner complete with all the fixings. It was a unique occasion to be shared among close friends, surrounded by Sea King aircraft and naval aviation tradition, and truly an event to remember.

While all the achievements and shore-based events brought with them tremendous satisfaction, our at-sea maritime aviation mission and commitment to providing "Wings for the Fleet" seemed to bring the very best out of

the MH community. Our testimony of ops readiness and commitment to the Navy, Air Force, and indeed the entire CF was portrayed in terms of HELAIRDETS assigned in support of major global deployments to include: OP AUGMENTATION - Arabian Gulf; OP SEMAPHORE – West Coast Migrant Search and Arrest; STANAVFORLANT - Vanguard Commitment to the Standing NATO Force Atlantic; OP TOUCAN - East Timor; and a host of CANLANT patrols and training exercises in support of the Navy. Perhaps OP TOUCAN best exemplified the resident Wing operational capabilities and the level of support that the MH Community could draw upon when deemed necessary. The ship's Captain, Randy Maze and the HMCS PROTECTEUR crew sailed for East Timor at 0900 hrs 21 September 1999 on 10 days notice to move, augmented by 34 aircrew and 2 a/c from 443 (MH) Squadron on a ship that had not had a Sea King embarked in the previous three year period. Mike Muzzerall served as the HELAIRDET Commander, and was responsible for overseeing an incredible level of pre-sail activity that rivalled the 12 Wing first Gulf War preparations of almost 10 years earlier.

Meanwhile, on the East Coast 423(MH) Sqn also had its time in the spotlight, when on 3 August 2000 the ship GTS Katie was intercepted, boarded, and taken under control by HMCS ATHABASKAN. Video of the boarding party operations were seen around the world, courtesy of a 423(MH) Squadron Sea King crew captained by Mike Kostecki. Elements of risk and danger always were inherent to the day-to-day MH operation, and once again the HELAIRDET team managed to come through with flying colors.

There was even humour to be found in the gravest of MH situations, as evidenced during the 2001 loss of Sea King 12422 off Hawaii captained by Zlatko Neral. The aircraft was successfully ditched in the Pacific Ocean due to impending gearbox disintegration, with the crew safely evacuating the aircraft prior to its sinking. It almost seemed that more time was spent explaining how Bishop Tutu (as the a/c was referenced in the National Command Post at NDHQ) of South African fame had come to be lost at sea (clearly no one foresaw how designating a/c 12422 as call sign "BISHOP 22" could complicate life - obviously there was a HELAIRDET that had far too much time on their hands). Meanwhile, force generation of newly-arrived aircraft maintainers and aircrew, together with regular a/c test and qualification requirements, continued unabated at Shearwater through the efforts of 12 AMS, HT 406, and HOTEF personnel, while force execution demands for sea-qualified technicians and aircrews persisted at the two operational Squadrons. And so on it went, for the full three years in Command; always a challenge to be met head on by all those who served within the Wing, and never was there to be a dull moment.

Despite the heavy aviation workload, however, there also were some memorable special events and forums that took place. After SWISSAIR, the annual Air Show came back bigger and better than ever, while the spring time MH Symposium continued to draw huge crowds. During this period, Michel Villeneuve, took over the reins for the Annual International Sea King Maintenance Symposium, carrying on an outstanding initiative by the previous CO of 12 AMS, LCol Ed Mitchell and elevated this world wide gathering of Sea King operators and technical teams to a new high. Who also will ever forget the Winter Carnival that saw Stu Laurie and those incredible ladies from 12 ARAF bring the magic of Shania Twain to the Shearwater stage? We celebrated the 80th Anniversary of flight operations from Shearwater, as well as the 35th Anniversary of Sea Kings entering military service with the Royal Canadian Navy through a moving ceremony. The image of the vintage Sea King in classic RCN paint scheme emerging out of the fog and entering D Hangar before a large crowd of onlookers will last forever in this aviator's memory. As well, a never-to-be-repeated RCAF paint scheme and lightening bolt on a Sea King celebrated the RCAF's 75 Anniversary, much to the chagrin of most HS loyalists that witnessed the occasion. The visiting "Tall Ships" armada arrived and departed Halifax with pictures of Sea Kings positioned much too close to their masts for this WComd's comfort. 111 Mic Mac Wing was masterful in their efforts as they hosted the most highly attended AGM on record marking the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force Association. The support from the Shearwater Military Family Resource Centre (SMFRC) led by Mary Ann McKinnon and our own MWO Colleen Calvert continued to receive accolades and their growth in the Hampton Gray Memorial Centre was expanded to include a teen centre dedicated in the memories of Majors Bob Henderson and Wally Sweetman, two exceptional HS officers who had lost their lives in the crash of a/c 425 outside St John, NB.

Finally, the Shearwater Aviation Museum (SAM), under the able stewardship of Chuck Coffen and the SAM Foundation, turned the sod on its new building. It was an event that realized the vision of Cdr Doug Peacock and was so ably supported through the likes of Kay Collacutt and many other naval aviation volunteers; an historical event that was so instrumental in instilling the documentation and preservation of our Naval Air heritage. While others may debate just how successful this particular period of MH history was, we MH Community members should take tremendous pride in the various accomplishments of this era. The success can be attributed primarily to individual efforts on the Wing, building on the multi-trade team capability, advancing the common MH cause, and never forgetting a naval air heritage that truly made a difference.

From a personnel perspective during my tour, there was a significant changing of the leadership guard as BGen Colin Curley passed the 12 Wing Honorary Colonel's

responsibilities over to Dr Tom Traves, President of Dalhousie University. There was a succession of Commanding Officer appointments that included Wayne Krause, Rocky McManus, and Sean Burtenshaw, together with Steve Allan at HOTEF; each of whom checked into their respective Commands and never missed a beat in tackling the many challenges thrown their way. Within the administrative Wing Headquarters domain, Anne Teasdale continued to work her magic in ensuring that the WComd's office remained in order and in tune with Lillian Gallant in Wing Ops. There also was Sharon Day (God Bless her) with Maj Diana Herrington, who was later succeeded by Line Leboeuf in Wing Admin, and a host of other civilians and military personnel distributed about the Wing offered up their share of exceptional and dedicated service. On the Comptroller side, John Benson had previously given way to the next generation of financiers and strategic planners in the likes of Jean Coursol and "Boots" LeBouthillier, supported so brilliantly by individuals such as John MacDonald and Barb Hicks and so the posting cycle continued to infuse fresh blood and frequently new ideas into the MH Community.

There also was that core cadre of experienced rotary wing aviators who formed the backbone of MH flight operations and set the standard for the new aircrews, engineers and technicians: experienced airmen such as Brian Northrup, Dick Boehm, John Latimer, Paul O'Reilly, Ken Whitehead, Charlie Brunet, Roger Chiasson, Pete Nordland and Gary Cherwonick to name only a few that made their presence felt. From the wings, there appeared a new generation of MH leaders prepared "to pick up the strain" that included the likes of Larry Crewson, Brad Baker, Doug Grimshaw, Bill Boutin, Doug Fairley, Simon Sukstorf and Donald Leblanc. Following them was yet another younger generation that included aviators like Greg Leis, Jeff Tasseron, Sam Michaud, Tim Garriock, and a most competent young lady at MH 423 called Lise Bourgnon; all clearly cut from "HS" stock and all focussed on meeting the challenge ahead. Without question there were many others that time and space will preclude me from mentioning and for that I will ask for your forgiveness. However, it was clear then, from the richness of personnel and the quality of leadership, that the future of the MH community seemed bright, intact, and in good hands.

However, to be fair, these years also were very troubling and challenging times for Shearwater and 12 Wing as an aviation community. Defence budgets had been drastically reduced, post-Cold War efficiencies were still being sought, and the very viability of the Sea King operation was being questioned as a replacement helicopter for the venerable old Sea King had yet to be announced. Real Estate and Business developers were in hot pursuit of the CFB Shearwater site, and with that threat came the risk that MH helicopter operations would over time become ineffective, relocated, or even terminated. To the rescue came a previous BComd in the

person of John Cody, who engaged the various local politicians and all those who would listen to a prudent way ahead. As a result, Shearwater operations continue today largely through his persistence in ensuring "the right thing" was done from a naval aviation perspective. At the same time, a NDHQ-sponsored Sea King basing study led by ex-423 (MH) Sqn CO Dave Neil assessed several basing options for future MH operations. As a result of these two concurrent and influential activities, the "right" decision ultimately was reached with the MH Community projected to operate from the well-established Shearwater and Victoria Main Operating Bases well into the 21st Century. In addition, no review of this period would be complete without mention of our Member of Parliament for Shearwater, Peter Stoffer, whose commitment to the well being and success of those serving at Shearwater and also our veterans was outstanding and in turn, has helped pave the way for our future.

In summary, I would close by saluting all those 12 Wing members who toiled so hard and without complaint during this period. My belief is that it was probably because of the numerous challenges and hardships that we all faced together that the current MH Community is so strong and focussed today. It proved to be an exceptional time to have Command of the Wing, to experience the opportunity of working with such an outstanding MH team, and to realize the validity of that famous old Shearwater proverb: "It was (and is) a great time to be in "HS".

VS881 PUMPLE STORIES

THE SNORT SIGHTING

1957. VS-881 is the first fixed -wing squadron to operate from the carrier BONAVENTURE. We are on a combined ASW operation with the Brits and the semis. Weather is so-so, VFR but windy, with white-caps galore. Yours truly is a crew commander, in the left seat to-day. We are tooling along at cherubs 3 (300") doing our thing with all ASW gear operating, when LO & BEHOLD! I sight a periscope/snort! WOW! We attack, dropping depth charges - well, practice depth charges. After several attacks the sub dives. The rest is anti-climax, but I am feeling great. We are credited with a kill in the wash-up.

THE SCREAMING ""WAVE-OFF"" SCAM

It is 1958. VS-881 is on board BONAVENTURE. Night ops. I am one of VS-881's 'black-ass Knights' as I never miss a launch - Must be a rub-off from my cabin 'roomie' Joe 'the pro' Stanley, USN. Tonight, however, my regular co-pilot Gus Saunders is down and I have a replacement.

The flight is normal right down to final approach. We are almost over the round -down when my co-pilot screams "WAVE-OFF" into the intercom. Only my laundryman knows for sure how I reacted to this startling gem of information, but everything still looked good from where I sat, and about one second later we taxied into #1 wire (my favourite). We were on the center line.

Afterward, with great apology, "co-jo" confessed that he was 'all cocked up' and thought we were going into the Island for sure.

BOB BISSELL'S PERFECT CCA

1968. BONAVENTURE is at sea west of Scotland, I am OIC the COD Flight and Bob Bissell is in the left seat for to-day's mail delivery. The weather is CAVU above 2,000' and thick fog below. We are enjoying the sun in the Delta when we get "Signal Charlie, Foxtrot Corpen 150, CCA this channel". Bob proceeds to perform a perfect CCA. I barely have time to call "Meatball" before we are trapped in our usual #1 wire. Good pilot, that Bob.

FREE TAKE-OFF FROM BV FOWL-UP

We were trapped on board BONAVENTURE (our usual taxi into #1 wire). It was a "hot turn-around" meaning we would not shut down. The mule towed us back a bit for a 'free take-off'. Benny Milhomme locked the brakes and we exchanged seats. My turn to fly. I strapped in and did a fast pre-take-off check. We informed FLYCO that we were ready. The Flight Deck Officer wound us up and let us go. We started moving.

Approaching the forward lift I commenced rotation of the control column-- but what the XXX the controls are really stiff!! We are almost to the bow; I really yard the wheel back, and it suddenly ceases resisting aft movement, but now it is fully aft and seems stuck there as we pass over the bow. I am now pushing forward hard as I can as the nose comes up, and up, and up.

Ben fortunately has enough of this foolishness and adds his push to the wheel. We level off as I realize that we must be fighting the auto-pilot and punch it off with the control wheel button.

Tim Hortons.

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The lads on deck said afterward that we were actually going straight up, directly over the ship's bow!

Now the COD is a Mark-1 tracker, which means that there is an "ON-OFF" toggle switch on the folding console as well as those on the wheel. My guess is that in our haste to switch seats the auto-pilot got switched on and I did not do a proper check for free control movement. We were lucky. One wonders whether Roger Harris had a similar situation, with disastrous results. Thanks, Ben.

881 PUMPLE STORIES 2

HOW I NEARLY PRANGED THE COD- WITH THE DIRECTOR OF FLIGHT SAFETY ON BOARD!!

Bermuda. Kindley U.S. Air Force Base. I am OIC the COD. No flying today. Great opportunity for the four of us COD Crew to relax over a rum or six. This we do, in spades. I am all set to sack out early- big day tomorrow- flying the DFS plus our own FSO Jim Burns out to BV. OH! OH! Along comes an old Air Force pal from Centralia days who insists that we share a grog or two. Too darn many wets later I finally hit the sack.

Daybreak. My head wants to break. We file the flight plan. The big wheel arrives and out we go, me in the left seat, coping, sort of. Circling in the Delta makes me dizzy-dizzier I mean. Signal Charlie! Thank God. Final approach. Co-ordination not so hot. Ball goes high! Piss on it! I've got to get down! Nose over - a 'high dip'. We hit hard - the hardest landing I've ever made. I think we caught 5 wire. I am all apologies to the pax. I stagger out of the cab and solve my problem in the nearest heads. The A/C is given a thorough going over and declared serviceable. We depart, my tail between my legs.

THE MRS B INCIDENT

Winter at Shearwater. I am OIC the COD Flight, with Bob Bissell. We are picking up some AOG parts, returning to the Puerto Rico area via XXXX AFB in Florida to pick up other parts and of course mail for the big BV, or Club 22 to many.

Bob and I file the flight plan. Bob casually mentions that Mrs. B will be a pax, that he has official approval. I accept his word. Prior to Take-off OPS calls and inquires re: civilian B. Bob repeats over the R/ T that he has the approval. We go. No problems enroute to NAS Isla Grande at San Juan, Puerto Rico.

We are called before the Commodore and invited to explain about carrying Mrs. B. It develops that Bob does not have official approval after all!

Next time we are at Shearwater my CO, VU-32, CDR Rod Lyons has me into his office for a little chat. He is very

nice, but it seems that the "Brass" are not happy with the 'civilian B' caper. Bob and I receive a Reprimand. Better than a fine, I think.

If you can't trust your co-pilot, who can one trust?

THE STRIPED -TAILED COD CAPER



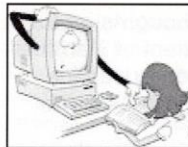
BISSELL, COLEMAN, BENTLEY AND PUMPLE

It is another super day at NAS ISLA GRANDE, San Juan, Puerto Rico. It's a day off for the COD Flight. What to do? I decide that we will make the COD stand out from the other stoofs. YES! When I was Resident Instructor VC-922 Naval Air Reserve Squadron, Pat Bay, B.C; the Reserve a/c all had striped rudders and they looked pretty smart to me. My crew and I will do the COD. We obtain multi cans of blue and white spray paint and in almost no time we have done the deed. Boy does she look good - different, you know? I have a small guilt pang- should I have requested permission first? Nah, I decide; I am the OIC, my A/C, right?

Next day we land on board the carrier. All is normal. No-one seems to notice my handiwork. At the evening brief I am informed that the COD is to proceed to Shearwater in the morning. This we do. At VU-32 nothing is said, but overnight my painted (tainted?) rudder is replaced. I get the picture, finally.

Now, I think, wasn't that just like our Naval Air? Some ass gets out of line - no problem, no explosions or confrontations. Just quietly correct the situation and get on with the program. Great bunch, Naval Air.

Now and then I wonder why I was never promoted?
George



This being the 90th Anniversary of Shearwater, I asked the present and past Wing/Base Commanders to write an article about their time here as 'Commanding Officer'. Those who replied sent in great articles. Thank you for your time and effort.

(Their work was exciting, important and they used their smarts to the fullest for the welfare of Shearwater. Ed.) Due to a heavy work schedule, we will not be hearing from the current 12 Wing Commander. As well, there are a few articles that did not make this edition due to lack of space, date received etc. You can catch them in our Spring edition.

Guess who came to dinner??? On the 23 Oct 08 a formal Mess Dinner was held in honour of the 90th Anniversary of Shearwater. Invited guests listened to speakers who eloquently spoke about the Adm Byrd years, the Air Marshall Edwards years and the current years of Shearwater. I guess the Naval Air period, when Shearwater Naval Air was in its glory days and the envy of the ASW world (read Gen Manson this issue) didn't make the cut or for those of that era, even the opportunity to buy an invitation. I'm certain Adm Porter former Commanding Officer of BONAVENTURE or Adm Edwards a former Naval Air Pilot, would have been delighted to share words on this historical period - had they been invited to attend.

2008 has been another busy year here at the Wing. They are digging, rebuilding, moving, etc but they can't kill it - it's still here. It doesn't matter that they call it 12 Wing and have an enormous Wing mounted at the entrance - it's still Shearwater. The new hangars are huge and badly needed. Looking good. Basically the members serving here today are doing what personnel did during those magnificent Naval Air days; some are maintaining the aircraft and some are flying those aircraft off ships and therefore still supporting the Navy. To me, that sounds like Naval Air. (Now if they would only get into the proper rig of the day...n... b... Ha)

When you and your family get the chance, visit the Museum. It's wonderful. You know, we still need your support. The 'In the Delta' list keeps getting longer and who will support the Museum and your heritage when we are gone? God only knows. There are a few ways you can ensure support - one is get your family involved in the Foundation - at least have them become members. In addition to this, we can use the Codicil that is shown in the pull out pages of this issue.

Well dear friends, it's that time of year again when I wish only the very best for you and yours. For those that are ill and those that are alone, you're thought of often - truly. You're my reason for being here.

Merry Christmas and may 2009 be everything you want it to be. Kay



Some Thoughts on the Development of Maritime Aviation in Canada During the Cold War

By General (Ret'd) Paul Manson

As a former RCAF/CF fighter pilot with no operational experience in sea-going or land-based maritime aviation, I am an odd choice for the authoring of this article.

Indeed, my only direct involvement was the three years I spent in maritime operations research back in the mid-sixties, specializing in antisubmarine warfare (ASW). I have nevertheless accepted the challenge of writing this, encouraged by my lifelong interest in military aviation in all its forms, and by the fact that as a senior officer I held three positions that brought me into contact with maritime aviation, namely as Chief of Air Doctrine and Operations, Commander of Air Command and Chief of the Defence Staff. In any case, the views of an "outsider" are always of some interest!

Here's a touch of irony: my very first flight in a military aircraft was in an RCN Harvard. It was November, 1952, and I was one of several fledgling air force cadets from the Canadian Services College at Royal Roads in Victoria, B.C. who were treated by the Navy to a familiarization flight out of Pat Bay airport. For me, it was a wonderful beginning for my 37 years of military flying.



At that time, naval aviation in this country was enjoying a glorious era, having emerged so strongly from World War II as an effective fighting force. Against the background of the expanding Cold War, many changes were taking place. The straight-decked HMCS Magnificent was replaced by the new pride of the fleet, HMCS Bonaventure, with its angled deck, steam catapult and mirror landing aid, greatly improving flight operations. By 1955 the prop-driven Sea Fury, a truly remarkable aircraft in its own right, holding several speed records in the early post-war years, gave way to the Navy's first carrier jet aircraft, the Banshee. Before long, the RCN's Banshees

were out-performing the RCAF's latest jet fighters in many ways. For example, they carried Sidewinder missiles some 20 years before the Air Force got around to using such guided anti-aircraft missiles. The Banshee was a fine air-to-ground weapons platform, providing support to the Army in numerous tactical exercises. Meanwhile, similar changes were taking place in the naval rotary wing world, notably the replacement of the HO4S "Horse" by the new Sea King in the early sixties.

Over on the RCAF side, land-based maritime patrol aircraft were active on both coasts and in the Arctic. The venerable Lancaster gave way to the P2V Neptune, the Argus and eventually the Aurora, still in service today.

It was an exciting time for all elements of maritime aviation, and the process of change then underway would continue throughout the remaining four decades of the Cold War. In looking over the history of this extraordinary period, one is struck by the intersection of four influencing factors, namely people, organizations, aircraft, and politics, all of these factors operating against the background of the growing Soviet submarine menace. Whereas protection of shipping was the key role in World War II, the emergence of Soviet strategic ballistic missile submarines, with their immense destructive power and extremely quiet operation, became the dominant focus of our maritime forces.

All of this meant the end of a great era in the history of the RCN, with the close-out of carrier-based fighters in 1962 and the paying off of HMCS Bonaventure seven years later. But the same period saw the application of the shipborne helicopter as an effective hunter and killer of submarines, and here the Navy excelled, first in the 1950s by pioneering the operation of helicopters from small decks, and then leading the world in the development of the hauldown concept and the famous beartrap system. Thanks to this ingenious Canadian invention our helicopters were able to operate from the decks of St. Laurent, Annapolis, and later Iroquois and Halifax class ships, in tough weather environments, day and night, when helicopters from other navies were often kept deck-bound.

Meanwhile, ASW sensors were being perfected for use not only aboard helicopters, but also in fixed-wing aircraft such as the Avenger, the Tracker, and the RCAF's long range maritime patrol aircraft. Active and passive sonobuoys, magnetic anomaly detection, sniffers (to detect the exhaust trail from snorkeling diesel subs) and on-board processing technologies were all brought to bear with increasing effectiveness. Some years later, I personally had the remarkable experience of observing a night-dipping operation aboard a Sea King helicopter out of Shearwater, from which I came away with the greatest respect for the skills demonstrated by the crew, and the advances in technology that were changing the character of ASW operations.

In all of this, the RCN and RCAF, although separate services,

operated closely together, each service having capabilities that complemented the other. The relationship was to change dramatically with Paul Hellyer's unification of the Canadian military with the implementation of the Canadian Forces Reorganization Act on February 1st, 1968. On that day the two venerated services disappeared with the wave of a political hand, to be merged into the new Canadian Forces, with its common green uniform and army rank nomenclature. The Navy was particularly hard hit, having lost so much of its distinctive character. (Indeed, the old naval ranks were quickly restored, and three service uniforms came back some years later.)

The consequences of unification at the individual level generated much of the headlines during that difficult period. The public, however, paid less attention to the operational implications of the dramatic changes brought about in the aftermath of unification. Organizationally, Canada's maritime air forces floundered for some years, with a predictable impact on morale and operational command and control. Finally, after seven years of uncertainty, the CDS of the day in 1975, General Jacques Dextraze, and the Deputy CDS, Lieutenant-General Bill Carr, created Air Command, consolidating all of the nation's military's aviation resources under a single organizational umbrella. An important element of this development was the formation of the Maritime Air Group, based in Halifax, giving all of Canada's maritime aviation forces, land-based and sea-based, East Coast and West Coast, a common home.

It was a difficult transition, especially for those individuals and units that had served so proudly under the aegis of the RCN. Because Air Command was *de facto* a reborn air force, former naval persons were in a sense being asked to transfer their loyalty to another service. It was perhaps in the case of the helicopter detachments aboard destroyers and frigates that this situation called for the most delicate consideration, for it was here that members of the two former services came into particularly close contact, with lots of potential for friction. Greatly to their credit they, and others in similar circumstances, made the new system work. Within a remarkably short period the integration of helicopter detachments was functioning well. Aircrews, regardless of previous service affiliation, were proud to be part of the ship's crew, and teamwork became the watchword.

Understandably, the shore-based long-range maritime patrol aircraft were less affected by the changes following unification. Of significant importance was the improvement in operational coordination with sea-borne elements, through Maritime Air Group HQ. With the application of techniques such as what in today's jargon would be called "data fusion", a broad array of sensor inputs from various sources allowed a clearer picture of both the tactical and strategic pictures in the cat-and-mouse game of ASW.

Increasingly in the years following unification, the Canadian maritime air system was applied beyond anti-submarine

operations, for example in the interdiction of smuggling (of people, drugs and other contraband). Fisheries protection likewise took on new importance as fish stocks (especially cod) dwindled and foreign fishing vessels encroached upon Canadian zones of economic interest, in at least one instance leading to a serious confrontation. And then the need for federal control and protection of Canada's delicate maritime environment gave Maritime Air Group a whole new field of operational interest. Underlying all of this was the increasingly important part that maritime aviation played in the assertion of Canadian sovereignty, especially in the Arctic.

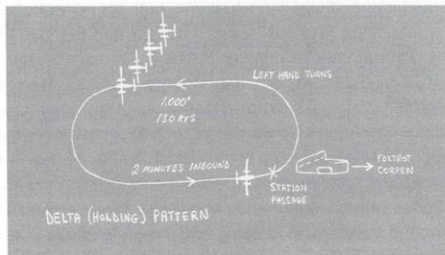
The return to three distinctive service uniforms in 1984 presented some interesting situations, both for individuals and for the Canadian forces at large. The fact that the Canadian Forces Unification Act eliminated the RCN, Canadian Army and the RCAF didn't deter the Progressive Conservative Government of the day from introducing three new service-based rigs. Deciding who was to wear what colour uniform was a challenge, since so many members of the forces had in fact by this time become unified, without any particular service affiliation. In the case of maritime aviation, however, light blue became the standard, in keeping with the general rule that "if it flies, it belongs to Air Command". From that point on, the image of ships' crews sporting a mix of navy blue and air force blue became quite familiar, thoroughly accepted and – one suspects – quietly admired by other militaries. Who but Canadians could make such a system work so well!

Whole career paths changed. A truly impressive number of former naval air officers rose to high rank in the Canadian Forces and Air Command. Admiral Robert Falls, a distinguished RCN fighter pilot from the early days, was Chief of the Defence Staff from 1977 to 1980, following which he became Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO, and thus the Alliance's senior military officer. Lieutenant-General Larry Ashley, a renowned shipborne helicopter pilot, became Commander of Air Command in the late eighties. Several former Navy fighter pilots moved into the Starfighter program, including Bendt Oxholm, who commanded 421 Squadron in Germany, eventually becoming the Commander of the Canadian Forces Training System as a brigadier-general. Gord Edwards became the Director General of Military Plans and Operations at NDHQ in the rank of commodore, culminating a remarkable career which, following numerous pioneering accomplishments as a carrier-based fighter pilot, included command of HMCS Assiniboine, Bras d'Or, Athabaskan, the 5th Destroyer Squadron, and Commander, Standing Naval Force Atlantic (a major NATO naval command). On the Maritime Patrol side, Lieutenant-General Hi Carswell concluded his distinguished career as Assistant Deputy Minister (Personnel). These are but a few examples. Although small in numbers, the people of Canada's maritime air forces have collectively and individually made an enormous contribution to Canada's military history and heritage.

This has been a brief and therefore rather superficial account of

the development of land- and sea-based military aviation in this country during the Cold War. It is no exaggeration to say that those who took part in all of this, whether as members of the RCN, the RCAF or the CF, and at all rank levels, contributed significantly to the successful outcome of that long confrontation between East and West. Their skill, ingenuity, perseverance and accommodation, sometimes under trying circumstances, have created a proud tradition that lives on in the twenty-first century. (General Manson was Chief of the Defence Staff from 1986 to 1989.)

IN THE DELTA



CAVANAUGH, John
 CHANCE, Helen
 COLLENS, Donald "Rocky"
 COOK, Whitney Arthur "Ted"
 CORMAN, Jim
 DUNHAM, Charlie
 DUNN, Mary Florence
 FORSYTH, Len
 HARDING, Ross
 HASPECK, Margaret
 HUNT, Ronald 'Red' Don
 IRELAND, Hugh
 KING, Claude
 LABIUK, Nickolas Matty
 REAUME, Wayne
 SNOOKS, Fred
 TRIPP, Frank
 VANGALEN, Joe
 ZBITNEW, Sheila
 ZWICKER, Fulton

Memories from "the partner"

by Joan Paquette

In April, 1965 Joe headed out to sea on The Bonaventure sailing to England and then on to Stockholm. He left me, eight months pregnant with our first baby. And so my story is about the friendships that developed and have lasted through these many years among the wives who stayed behind to keep the home fires burning. Across the hall from our apartment on Acacia Street were Carol and Grant Smith. Grant was on Bonnie with Joe et al and Carol was there to share dinners with me and to eventually drive me to the Infirmary when the time came for Kelli to join this world. We visited with Carol and Grant in Toronto last year. When I hugged her I could still feel the closeness and the gratitude I felt for her presence that June 1st, 42 years ago.

And while my memory is back there in 1965, I am remembering what it was like to stand on the jetty at 10:00am on July 8th (??) watching the Bonnie sail into the harbour and move toward her home in the dockyard. The sun was shining, it was hot. I was holding this tiny girl who was about to meet her daddy and I was staring at the ship looking for one face among the two thousand or so standing on the deck, all in uniform, all looking alike from a distance. I was standing among thousands of women and children all trembling with anticipation, all looking for their one special member of the Bonnie's crew. (I still get emotional when I watch one of our ships coming home from duty away.) And as the ship got closer to her docking position the men on deck took on familiar looks and finally small waves were being exchanged between fathers and kids, men and sweethearts. It seemed an eternity for the ship to be tied up and the men to begin to leave the deck and move toward their families. I'm not sure how everyone found each other, but I was soon exchanging Kelli for a bag of laundry!

I started by saying that my story is about friendships that developed and have lasted these many years. So there is more to my story. There were the years living on Albacore in married quarters. Our little girls (there were three by then!) played with the Vishek children, the Halladay girls, the Fords, the Postmas, the Lotts, the Byrnes, the Coffens, the Ashleys. We, the wives of our flyboy sailors, had coffees, lunches, potlucks. We minded each others' children, we shovelled snow together, we mowed lawns. We comforted each other when the going got rough and we grew strong and competent together as these separations gave us full responsibility for our households. That's why we love the reunions! The boys think it's about Venture and Shearwater mess and the Bonnie Wardroom. We think it's about friendships and children, about our youth and about our memories. With love to all who are still dear to me, **Joan**
 (Ahh yes, I'm certain others will remember as well. **Ed.**)



Ken Sheedy

**881 GRAND TOUR 1958 –
BV-GIBALTAR-
LISBON - BORDEAU -
SHEPHERDS GROVE-BV**
(SUBTITLE - Request the
whereabouts of VS881?)

The following article is purported to be true in all respects, and comprises the sworn statements of several parties to this tour. I.E Ted Kieser, Ted Gibbon (the other Ted), Dave Williams . Ken Sheedy

44 Years have transpired since the events I am about to relate took place and I feel the saga of 881's European Tour must at last be told. I'll do the best I can despite a memory that grows dimmer by the day and I confess that some of the detail may have been embellished with the telling of the story over time. Finally if the events aren't covered by a statute of limitations they should be and I apologize to those who have been forgotten, misplaced or who may feel maligned in the narrative.

It all began in the Mediterranean and it was Bruce Baker's fault. After a night recovery during MEDASWEX 26 he was making his way to the Island from Fly One when Chief Chuck Hynes appeared out of the dark and asked him if his aircraft was serviceable. Bruce said it was. Then the Chief handed him his tail hook and casually mentioning that it had fallen off his aircraft after he taxied out of the wires.

This event was more than a little disturbing and led to some serious anguish amongst our seniors and even a little concern was demonstrated by the engineers but it didn't have much impact on the Sub-Lieutenants who in accordance with naval tradition were treated like and had the status of mushrooms.

Following rollicking port visits to Naples during which Dickie Bird traded a wine luncheon and a Squadron crest to the CO of an Italian S-2 Squadron for 12 hook assemblies and Toulon six aircraft wound up ashore in Gibraltar providing proficiency training for the aircrew while the arresting gear problems were being resolved. When it was determined that the cause was still undetermined (see Stu Soward's Hands to Flying Stations Vol II for details) the six trackers were dispatched to the UK to await further developments .

Nov 24: The briefing for the selected crews took place in Bonaventure where it was revealed that our destination in the UK was a USAF Base at Shepherds Grove with a refueling stop in Lisbon followed by a RON in Bordeaux. We were advised not to fly over Spain or Morocco and admonished to be on our best behavior as Canadian

Ambassadors in Foreign lands. (Hadn't we already proven our reliability in that regard?). We were then issued a travel advance and for the first time in Bonaventure's history provided with a flight lunch. The ration was as meager as the travel advance consisting of one tin of Brunswick Sardines and to ensure the contents lasted the duration of the journey came without a key. As there were no Supply Officers in attendance (probably in fear of their lives) we raided the in-flight supplement box for as many chocolate bars and chicklets as we could take without drawing too much flak for misusing a grateful government's largess. Thus, fully briefed and victualled we departed BV for the Gibraltar airport and eventually six aircraft took off in stream eastbound to join up on our CO in the right turn around the Rock.

Dickie rolled out of the turn and leveled off while his co-pilot, Sandy Dewar, busied himself with the task of leading the flock to Lisbon. I was flying with Bob Forrest in the #3 position and promptly stowed my Nav gear to enjoy the sights. The first thing I noticed was that the blue of the Mediterranean had turned decidedly brown in tone and there appeared to be white puffs of smoke emanating from scattered sources amongst what looked like sand dunes below us. I had the temerity to inform the leader that I thought we were over land, which I vaguely recalled, from the briefing was a no-no. This bit of information prompted and abrupt right turn and a perceptible change in power settings. The formation reassembled and we regained the comfort of airspace over open water in short order.

The remainder of the two hour trip to Lisbon was uneventful and as we closed the coast the CO told the flight to tighten up the starboard echelon formation to show the Portuguese the mettle of our professionalism. There were two airfields on the outskirts of Lisbon a small one slightly left of our inbound track and a larger one to the right. Our leader lined us up on the left one and we descended and closed the field for a left-hand break. About a mile back with the formation as tight as it could possibly get it was determined that the field to the right was our real destination and we were in jeopardy of overshooting the approach. To correct this deficiency the leader broke hard right and dropped his gear to get into a position to land however the maneuver had a devastating effect on the integrity of the formation as all took whatever evasive action was necessary and available to avoid intimate contact with a colleague. I'm sure many Portuguese raised their eyes to the heavens in utter terror to determine what was casting such a large and erratic shadow on the ground as the first recorded aluminum eclipse took place.

Sandy was in charge of refueling as he had been assigned the onerous responsibility as guardian of the LPOs and had been issued a brand new book of those financial devices by the Supply Officer prior to departure. The aircraft were serviced and the paper work completed

while the crews enjoyed a light lunch in the terminal saving the sardines for the much longer leg to Bordeaux.

According to my log book and a 78yr old memory, (Ted K writes) we RON'd in Lisbon and departed the next day. Nice hotel. I bought a record of the beautiful singer in the lounge (Line Renaud).

Nov 25 The briefing was short, we were going to Bordeaux via an over-water route and it was our destination because the airport had the only UHF radio within our range. Somewhere well into this 5-hour flight Sandy discovered he had left his book of Cadillac chits (so called because in those days you could buy a fully equipped Cadillac with one without exceeding the \$5,000 limit) in the bowser in Lisbon. There was no turning back and I don't know if any ever surfaced again but this could be the reason Sandy took up his second career with DSS to be in a position to intercept any that may have been misappropriated. The trip went well but the weather was deteriorating and there was now a natural reluctance to keep the formation too tight.

About 50 miles out Dickie attempted to contact the tower with the usual: "Bordeaux tower, Bordeaux tower this is Canadian Navy 15??". This call was repeated every few minutes as we closed the coast without result. Suspecting a language problem the lead called to an accompanying aircraft: "Robida you give them a call". Maurice (a French-Canadian by birth) responded immediately with: "Bordeaux tower, Bordeaux tower dis is Canadienne Navy 15??". Whereupon the CO interjected over the air: "in French you flaming idiot!" which elicited the following transmission in perfect English: "Flaming idiot calling Bordeaux tower you are loud and clear." The recovery at Bordeaux International took place without incident.

The aircraft were refueled (I don't know how the petrol was paid for) rather posh accommodation was obtained at a well known hotel and at the CO's direction Peter Lavigne organized a sort of dining in at a local restaurant to ensure we were exposed to the local cuisine during our brief visit to the famous Bordeaux area of France. The sardines were again saved for another day. On our arrival at the restaurant Pete entered into a lengthy dialogue with the maitre'd over the menu following which the CO directed his attention to the wine list insisting champagne (this may have been the only French word in Dickie's vocabulary) was most appropriate for the occasion. There was a brief discussion with the wine steward, 12 magnums were ordered and Pete concluded the deal with the admonishment: "and don't bring us any of that domestic shit" I guess the garcon didn't hear him.

On completion of our excellent repast we repaired to the hotel and noticing most doors were marked with pairs of shoes left for cleaning and polishing by the valet

staff. We placed our flying boots outside for similar treatment.

To our dismay we awoke the next morning (Nov 23) to find the weather was COXOF and the duty cleaning crew had totally ignored our footwear. We checked out and proceeded to the airport where with some difficulty we located our aircraft and while the CO tried to negotiate a VFR departure with Air Traffic Control, the rest of us went to the terminal to partake of a French breakfast. We weren't allowed in as the doors only opened for arrivals and none were expected because of the weather. Since we had already arrived, Gallic logic assumed we were departures and had already departed ergo no need to open the doors. Gordie Mowat located a couple of vintage vending machines and coaxed a "jambon" sandwich and a bottle of "PFFSST" for a petit dejeuner. We all quickly followed suit once again saving the sardines for more dire circumstances.

To our astonishment the CO's renowned persuasive powers failed him, take offs would not be permitted until the weather improved and that apparently was unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. We returned to the hotel that had recently been our hosts to discover we were no longer welcome which led to a search for alternate accommodation in a lower price range. The unexpected delay had a severe impact on our budgets so some austerity measures were called for. The hotel that eventually put us up was well worn but acceptable and dinner was not nearly as flamboyant as the previous night. Peter was no longer in charge. Our new digs did not offer valet service so the boots remained unpolished but at some point during the night Keith Stirling paid a nocturnal visit to our previous hotel, avoided the concierge and redistributed all the shoes in the hallways to show his disdain for the ill mannered louts who refused us comfort in our hour of need.

Nov 24 The next morning provided more of the same foggy conditions. We checked out of our hotels, proceeded to the airport and while the CO entered into renewed negotiations with the controllers the rest of us proceeded to the vending machines for another "jambon" sandwich and a bottle of "PFFSST". The sardines were becoming tempting.

Once again our CO was stymied. We were in shock could this be the same guy who talked an Italian Air force Colonel out of bits of his aircraft for a few libations and an 881 Plaque? The French were made of sterner stuff. Now francs were becoming scarce and we split up in pairs according to our means to seek accommodations for the night.

My partner and I located a small pension with a "Chambre a Louer" sign in the fenetre and made an inquiry. The landlady was most hospitable obviously entranced with the suaveness and linguistic ability of my

associate and a deal was struck which we concluded with typical North American arrogance and ignorance by requiring that the adjoining WC be included in our package. This led to much animated discussion and the exchange of a few more scarce francs but the deal was finally done. It was later that evening that we discovered through much banging on the locked lavatory door, rattling of door knobs and some loud French expletives that we had secured the only bathroom facility on the floor and other lodgers had to go either up or down for relief.

That afternoon we went our separate ways. I strolled around the streets of Bordeaux and managed to locate a small market from which I purchased a hunk of fromage, a few tomatoes and a bagatelle. This, with the sardines in reserve was our simple evening repast. Reality was quickly setting in.

While I was shopping my roomie had found a bistro and was mingling with a large group of locals. In a moment of convivial enthusiasm he ordered a round of drinks for the house. As they were being prepared and served he suddenly remembered his lack of funds and beat a hasty retreat. As he emerged from the bar I happened to be walking by having just rejected the offer of a ride and other services from a beautiful young lady driving a little red sports car. He exclaimed that he was in dire need of escape so I directed him to the car, which was proceeding slowly along the curb about half a block away. He sprinted away opened the car door, jumped in and the vehicle sped away. A few seconds later a mob of gesticulating Frenchmen emerged and questioned me about my knowledge of any individual passing by in haste that might be the kind of knave who would order a round of drinks and not pay for them. (At least that's what I think they were saying) I then realized the need for the haste I had observed, denied any knowledge of an encounter and proceeded on my way with some trepidation. I was followed for some time but finally thirst overcame the need for retribution and the mob dispersed. Several hours later my roomie returned and we dined but we had no way to open the sardines.

Nov. 26 dawned the same way as the previous 2 days and the same rituals were performed but by then departing was imperative as most of us were flat assed broke without even enough coin for a "jambon" sandwich or a bottle of PFFSST.

The CO understood the predicament but again failed to persuade the tower to provide us with departure clearance. The whole of Europe was socked in and not a wheel was turning anywhere. He did however, through some obscure typical Bird manner, manage to make contact with an old "friend" who happened to be a Squadron Commander at the French Air Force Base in nearby Miragnac and talked him into providing us with accommodation in an old barrack block. His persuasive powers were returning and we rejoiced but were not

surprised when it was announced that he had also prevailed upon the French CO to have his Squadron host us to dinner that evening. The sardines were saved again. Following a huge steak dinner (rumored to be horse) and copious flagons of "Plonc" (Pete said that is the word for "domestic shit") Guy Laramée decided we should pool our remaining resources and the rallying cry: "Mirgnac for Cognac" was eagerly responded to. We slogged through the mud to and from the little village and managed to rid ourselves of the last sou we had knowing the CO's powers had returned and we would be out of France the next day. That night we encountered the French version of central heating which is to place the radiators in the hallway and keep the temperature out there well over 100 F degrees while simultaneously keeping the rooms as close to freezing as possible. Who said the French weren't efficient, they had that routine mastered and the average temperature in the building was a comfortable 65 degrees.

Nov 27, Same old, same old. We gathered at the base of the tower perhaps in an unconscious show of strength as the CO made his climb to the tower cab and his daily confrontation with the senior controller. The fog was even thicker that morning and you couldn't see your feet while standing but to our utter surprise the CO emerged almost immediately and announced that despite our professional assessment of the current and forecast weather conditions the ceiling and visibility would become VMC at precisely 0900 and remain so for precisely 50 minutes. We were to depart at 10-minute intervals and all would maintain 3,000 feet proceed along the coast from one low powered beacon to the next until we could home in on the beacon at the USAF field in Shepherds Grove.

We dutifully took off and, upon clearing cloud, rejoined, and the group proceeded to cross the channel. (from Ted Kieser) I believe Dickie got his friend to authorize us on the equivalent of a "Purple Airway" in which only our aircraft were authorized. This is a procedure used whenever the royal Family aviate. After all, it would be very embarrassing if they were involved in a collision, what?. In addition, as virtually no facility enroute to Shephard's Grove had UHF, we could not respond to normal airway procedures.

We finally contacted the base and proceeded to land with the use of their GCA. ..(from Dave Williams). I recall doing a GCA at Shepherds Grove but at that time they did not have a glide slope. They would just say that at a certain distance one should be passing through a certain altitude. There was a great amount of air traffic in that area and the controller said, "you have traffic at 12 o'clock 10 miles". A little later it was at 12 o'clock 8 miles, then 12 o'clock 4 miles, 2 miles 1 mile, a moment of silence, then 6 o'clock one mile and opening. I forgot to mention that I was in cloud throughout so I have no idea if we missed by 10 feet or several thousand feet but it seemed to be standard routine for the operator.

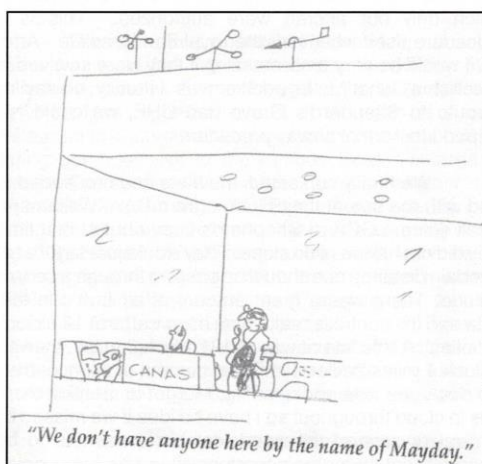
Nov 28-Dec 5. Shepherds Grove was a small USAF Base (Ted Kieser writes) flying one small squadron and had very little in the way of facilities. As everyone was running short of money, arrangements were made with the USAF to put everything on "Tic" and we would sort things out upon return to BV and square things with the USAF at that time.

They were unable to provide us with any transport to move people to and from the flight line or to obtain provisions from the nearby village. Dickie, resourceful as ever, proceeded to London and returned with a rented vehicle large enough to take a few line crew on their errands, etc. This vehicle was an Armstrong Siddely "Sapphire" complete with driver and intercom!, as none of us had UK licences. (The driver spent most of his time in the bar playing A-D). Bad weather continued and only a couple of local flights were conducted there.

Dec5 Bird's Bandits finally departed Shepherds Grove for RAF St Maugans, Cornwall, and the next day,

Dec 6, embarked in BV at sea off the Cornish Coast.

It was finally determined that the hook problem was a result of the joints between the lateral Steel deck plates of the ship (along the painted angled deck area) were not smoothed out and tail hooks would occasionally engage these high spots and exceed the 30degree maximum they could veer on landing. This caused considerable wear on the bolts. The squadron immediately embarked on an ambitious flying programme of Sustained Operations (SUSTOPS) enroute to Halifax.



**VS881 FLIGHT DECK SERVICING CREW
HMCS MAGNIFICENT
OPERATION MARINER - FALL 1953**

BR: AB Hugh Bright; CPO Bert Butes;
AB Bruce Smethurst; LS Claire Hewens
FR: P2 Ray Belliveau; AB Bob Booth;
AB Bruce Walker

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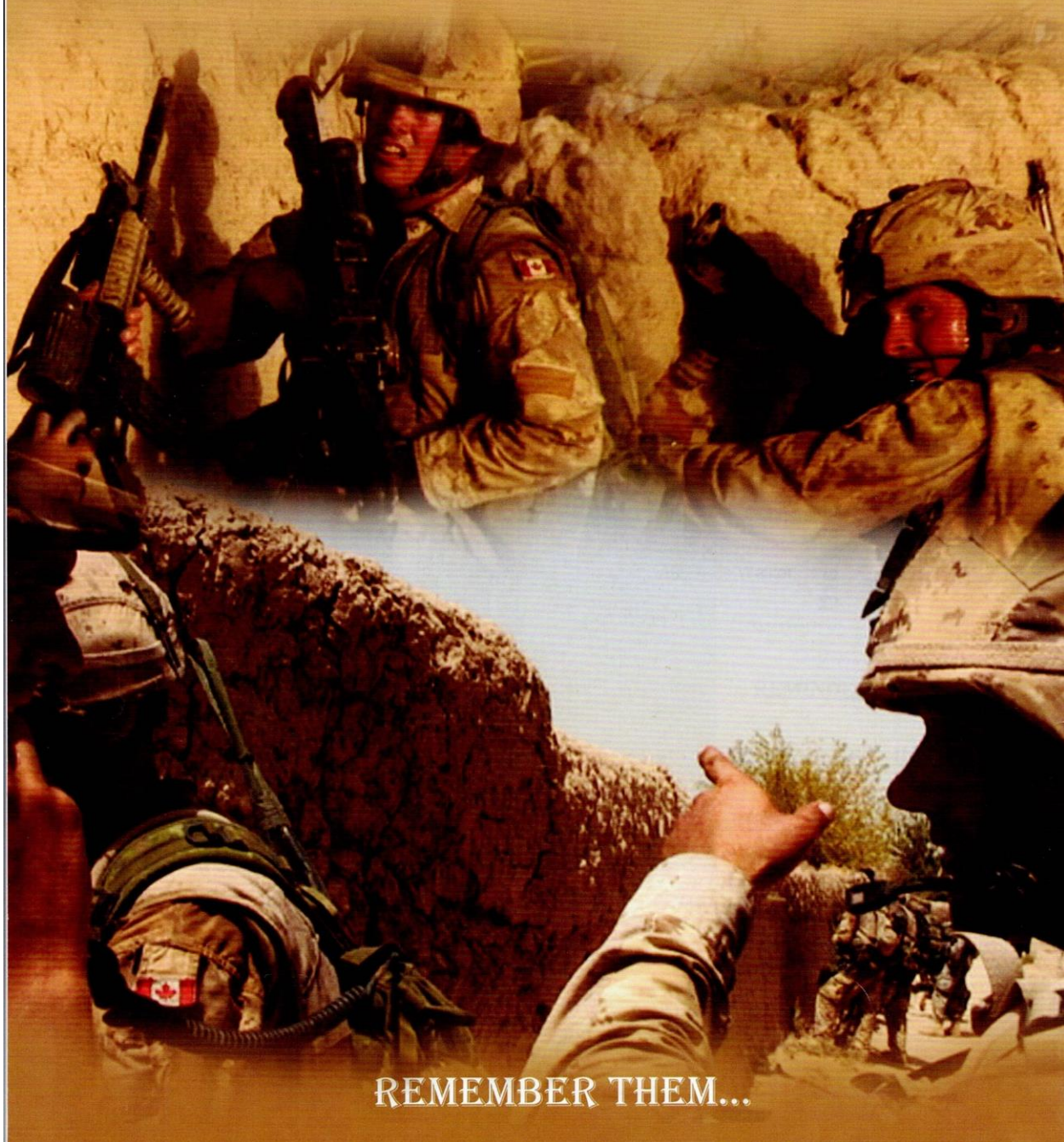


Such perfection is an art!

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