



# SOUNDINGS



**PATRON H.R.H. THE PRINCE PHILIP  
DUKE OF EDINBURGH**

**OTTAWA BRANCH  
THE NAVAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
Box 505, Station B, Ottawa, ON K1P 5P6**

*“To make all levels of Government and the general public clearly aware of the vital need for, and value of adequate and effective Maritime security forces to protect and further the interests of Canada.” (Branch Constitution, Article III.)*

46.01

“Trying the depth of the water and the quality of the bottom line....”

May 2010



*HMCS Fundy entering Esquimalt Harbour past Fisgard Light, circa 1975.  
See the anecdote starting on page 17.*





## From the President

By Bob Bush

Dear Ottawa Branch Members,



As we close on the date of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Navy it seems appropriate to look towards the NOAC's future as an association. Clearly we have survived as

an organization aimed primarily at preserving the camaraderie developed while serving in the Navy, for the lion's share of the time that the NOAC has been in existence. This principle still serves us today, and we are strengthening the naval family aspect of the association by introducing a new Directors position for Member Services. The first Director Member Services, **Denny Boyle**, tells me that he has been very busy in his new role. This speaks to not only Denny's selfless devotion to his fellow members and their families, but also to the underlying need for this type of role in the Branch and to the validity of the camaraderie aspect of the association.

However, we must also look to the other pillars that support our association, and in particular our shared belief that the Canadian Navy both deserves to survive as an effective operational force and that it requires our support as Canadians and naval professionals to do so. In this light, the NOAC has been making significant progress in the renewal initiative under the guidance of **Richard Archer**. There is much left to be done, and indeed it will be an ongoing process for some time to come as we develop our internal processes and governance while finding the right "fit" for the NOAC within the group of like-minded organizations. During the past few months we have heard about the challenges facing the Navy in fleet renewal, and in the coming year our Vice-President **Jim Carruthers** will focus the Branch Program on the Navy's personnel challenges. These very inter-related themes serve to illustrate just how critical it is that the organizations that can provide support to the Navy work together in that effort. I hope that the Board can count on the membership to assist in this effort when the time comes.

To be of any real assistance, we must of course build and maintain a strong membership. This comes down to recruiting new members and making the NOAC "experience" one that is attractive to serving and retired naval officers and other potential associate members. We have made some progress in recruiting through a number of our member's direct efforts. This is important work and must continue, but it will be the renewal process and the "transformed" NOAC that will draw in the numbers of new members we need to grow. These potential members must see value in the organization, and it is up to us to create this value to ensure the continuance of the NOAC for the coming years. I believe that our speakers program is one excellent way to demonstrate this value. Keeping topics relevant and the quality of the speakers high, as Jim has done over the past months, brings in new members and provides insight into subjects of importance to the Navy and our association. Other activities to raise the visibility and the value of the NOAC are being considered, and your Board will keep the membership in the loop as these initiatives are developed. Please feel free to add your ideas for potential activities as we move ahead.

In a volunteer organization like the NOAC there is a constant challenge to keep the basic services and bureaucracy in place. To this end, I would like to reach out to the membership once more to ask for your support in volunteering your services as we look for a new Treasurer and a new webmaster. **Rick Guitar** has done fine service as Treasurer for the past three years, but now wishes to stand-down. He will leave the books in pristine condition so that his relief will have no problem in taking on the job. With our current webmaster now residing in Halifax it is also necessary to find a new webmaster a bit closer to Ottawa. If you have the skills and time to do this work, please let **Jim Carruthers** know as he has taken on the initiative for renewing the website. Speaking of volunteers, it is a pleasure for me to acknowledge **Merv Cameron** for his leadership and commitment as the Director for Salty Dips. Merv will be turning over the helm to **Paul "Rocket" Roquet**, a spinner of the odd salty dip himself. Merv's very significant efforts are reflected in the brisk sales that Volume 9 is enjoying and in the imminent release of the combined Salty Dips CD. **BZ Merv!**

I hope to see all of you at some time during the upcoming Centennial celebrations.

Yours aye, *Bob Bush*

**S**





## Financial Report

By Rick Guitar

As we have received dues during the past year, it has become clear that there is some confusion out there as to what is owed and when. I'll start by describing the problem.

At this point in time, the Ottawa Branch of the NOAC relies on membership dues to conduct its business and to make our \$40 per year payment to National. This relationship is always a bit tenuous with regard to the financial health of the organization. But when we have members who do not pay, the situation becomes urgent.

To expand on this, we have several kinds of membership. Of these, those members who are Honorary Life or Paid Life

(about 112 of our 311) don't have to pay, although a significant number of these members do make donations. On the other hand of the 199 dues paying members we have, only 110 have paid up for 2010. In fact, last calendar year I issued 187 receipts for all 311 members and a number of those got two receipts because they paid twice within the calendar year. Given our annual operating costs (which are small) and the \$40 per year payment to National, maintaining delinquent members is not sustainable.

I suspect that there is some confusion regarding dues payment that may be leading to some of the delinquencies. This confusion is caused by two items. They are the **due date** for dues and the **date on the receipt**.

**Due date.** Our membership runs by calendar year, and 2010 dues were owed by 31st Dec 2009. Mail slows down around Christmas, so payments not sent before December won't reach me before the January of the New Year.

**Receipt date.** The receipt is issued for the year the branch received the money. 2010 dues paid on time (before end Dec 2009) produced a tax receipt for 2009. I need to report for Revenue Canada all charitable receipts by calendar year. For example, if I don't receive your payment for 2010 until 2010, you won't a tax receipt for 2009. I understand that some members, who paid for 2009 membership after Dec 08 and therefore received a tax receipt in 2009, are mistaken in thinking that because they have a receipt paid in 2009, they are good to go for this year, 2010, when in fact they are behind.

Of course, I just count the money. Dedicated **Eric Deslauriers** gets to keep track of the members, but we work closely together. I keep lists of who has sent in a cheque or gave me cash and when I deposited it into the bank, so if you can't agree with Eric on your status, I can go back into my deposit lists and figure out when in the year last you paid.

I hope this clarifies the issue, and I look forward to everyone being paid up for 2010! The viability of the Branch depends on it. **S**

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## From Sub-Lieutenant Down – Part 14

By Ted White

*Fond memories of our formative years as young officers can be characterized in the great numbers of minor, mostly humorous incidents, that we all lived through, by merely going the 'nothing ventured--nothing gained' route. Herein are selected vignettes from the 'fifty's, reflecting our life and times.*

*In this edition, I wish to select small fillers of everyday life of a 'Subbie' in London, including the conclusion of our visit to Ireland.*

“O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!”

*Will Shakespeare*

We all have our London cab experiences and enhance the incidents over the years. I knew better but had not considered the fallout.

Arriving Euston Station in late evening, having played an exhibition hockey game in Liverpool for Haringay (not Haringey the Borough), I felt a little pushed for time to enable connecting to the last departure from Charing Cross station for Greenwich.

To my dismay I counted only 6s/6p jangling in my coat. Fine! I hailed a cab and instructed him to get me '6 and 6' in the direction of Charing Cross.

This he did. Popping me off in vicinity of Leicester Square, I leaned forward and put the 6/6 in his outstretched hand, leaping out of cab and started my fast track down Saint Martin's Lane to Charing Cross.

Well.

Within seconds and throughout my fast track to the station I was continuously hounded by one cabbie, shouting insults about my cheapness and other failings within the recognition I was a "Damn Yank", leaving me no option but to accept without rebuttal, my false identification.

I had forgotten to hold back to facilitate a sixpence tip....

"No man lives without jostling and being jostled; in all ways he has to elbow himself

through the world, giving and receiving offence."

*Thomas Carlyle*

With no names, no pack drill....

We, the Canadian contingent of six 'Subbies', had just arrived in London during the 1955 Christmas break, to await the January 4<sup>th</sup> joining at Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

For whatever reason, we were dispersed into two of London's best overnights. Me, with one other classmate cosseted in the old Buckingham on Cromwell Road, the others in the prestigious Regent Palace Hotel in Piccadilly. (You know, bed and breakfast at thirty shillings and sixpence, more if juice ordered at breakfast.)

Sometime, just after New Year's Day, a festivity not truly observed to any extent, by the Brits at that time, I received a phone call from a purported Lt Cdr Jones, RN, who sounded, with the classical educated accent, somewhat disturbed that we Canadians had not reported to the College on January 2<sup>nd</sup> as we had, according to the caller, should have been instructed. He did not forward any instructions other than to inform that transportation would be alongside the Buckingham in 45 minutes.

Well, I must confess, somewhat pushed to an off-balance limit, considering our senior rank, went into the packing and checking out drill, condition Red!

However, being a team player, I called the Regent Palace contingent to not answer their phone (whether they had one or not) relating my experience with this haughty Brit.

I was surprised that their attitude was somewhat more relaxed than expected. Classmate and I, at the designated pick up time, found ourselves checked out and waiting, in our 'best civilian bib and tucker', on the sidewalk, luggage in hand. Precisely, at the appointed time, around the side street came a cab, all windows down, with four grinning Canadians, who disembarked into howling roars of laughter. A jostling hoax.

I had called the Regent Palace and spoken to the perpetrator who had originated the drill, accent and all. Accepting our being





'had' with promises of 'rounds on us', we had a most difficult challenge to rebook our accommodation.

It seems the Canadian humour plane was not completely understood nor appreciated by the mother country.

"Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday."

*Donald R.P. Marquis*

To conclude from last issue, the Ireland visit took us from the truly deadly welcoming stand at the Irish Officer's Mess held at St. Bricin's Military Hospital, Dublin to the countryside in County Roscommon .

We trooped into Sean's Grandmother's cottage at Longford altogether with feather tick beds that sank in the middle and conveniences outdoors. It was a bit of a challenge.

However, after the battle of survival in Dublin, the grand fireplace was most welcoming with one quiet ale, or so.

The outdoor convenience drill was introduced. The inconvenience, not explained, was that the grazing cattle, when aware that when the convenience shed was in use, as I experienced, had the habit of nudging the cubicle into a near fall down status. One has to understand how traumatic this process is to a Victoria-raised gentleman officer.

However, first night in, early next morning, a firm knock on the front door brought in a well defined cleric by the name of Father Riley. He asked of me if he could borrow "your convenience". I accordingly pointed to the cubicle residing out back.

Some minor clarification sorted this out: he was actually requesting the use of our motor car. The parish 'convenience' had broken down and a wedding planned in a few short hours had run into difficulty. It appears all the men-folk in the wedding party, including groom and fathers of the bride and groom, had not been seen since the previous evening. Father Riley had battle planned to attack Morin's pub and root out the guilty.

Off we went with the fuming Father and found all participants, well packaged,

professing time had slipped them by. I marched them out, bar lady in tow, and perched them on a hay wagon, Father Riley on the right.

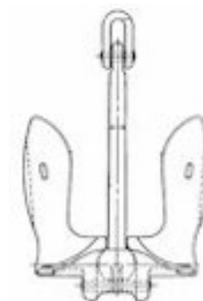
Actor Arthur Lowe in later years played the light comedy lead, in "Bless me Father" as Father Charles Duddleswell. To see a prototype, don't go any farther than one Father Riley. **S**

## **Entertainment News – Receptions under Review**

By Ken Lait

The Fall/Christmas Reception on Monday 30th November was attended by a small but enthusiastic group who enjoyed a feast of Clam Chowder in addition to the normal sandwiches, seafood and cheese platters, desserts and coffee. These events are funded from our annual dues and it was disappointing that more members were not in attendance.

The much better patronized Spring Reception, which was held on 19th April in an effort to beat the upcoming cottage and holiday seasons, will be looked at to see if this is in fact the best way for us to use some of our annual contributions in pursuit of our stated goals to promote comradeship and maintain our naval family ties. If you have any strong feelings one way or the other about these events, be it timing/format/venue or any other issue, or if you feel strongly that this is an appropriate event as it is, please advise one of the Branch Board of Directors or send an email to me at [klite@rogers.com](mailto:klite@rogers.com). Your Board will be making a decision early Fall 2010 about the next Reception based on participation at the Spring event, and your comments are welcome. **S**





## Canadian Naval Aviation and the Navy 2010 Centennial

By Peter Milsom

One thing we have come to learn in the ramping up for 2010 is just how much we as a Navy have lost sight of our once proud and very accomplished air arm. It's nobody's fault really – it is just a natural consequence of the passing of all aviation assets and roles to the Air Force with Integration. And the Air Force's Maritime Air Group continues to do a magnificent job in direct support of the fleet's operations both in national waters and abroad. So why the fuss about the old air arm?

In this our 100<sup>th</sup> year as a Navy, it just seems fitting, right and proper to celebrate the whole of the naval contribution to Canada and not just a part of it. By doing so, Canadian naval aviation personnel hope that not just the new navy but Canadians everywhere will come to better know and appreciate just exactly how truly special that contribution has been. Aviation at sea does not get a lot of face time unless something goes wrong – or goes startlingly well. Of course, everybody watches, somewhat incredulously, as the venerable Sea King just keeps Ever-Ready-Bunnying through year after year of grinding service in the hope that the long-awaited Cyclone will finally appear to seize the baton and run with it. But aside from **Richard Gimblett's** wonderful collaborative centennial work and the Centennial paintings, there is precious little other mention of naval aviation in the current Naval Centennial record. We hope this short article will help to address that deficiency.

The Special Commemorative Edition of *Canadian Defence Review* (CDR) highlighting “100 years of tradition”, for example, makes only cursory mention of carrier operations in the Canadian Navy. In the sole reference, the author writes “*The need for a modern carrier capability was begun in 1952 and after a hesitant start saw HMCS Bonaventure (labelled in the magazine as Canada's only aircraft carrier) enter service in 1957.*” Hmmnnn! While they were RN carriers, Canadians both manned and commanded

RN escort carriers HMS *Puncher* and HMS *Nabob* during WWII and Canadian naval aviators and aviation personnel both take more than a little umbrage at having their years of successful operations in HMCS *Warrior* and HMCS *Magnificent* – “Maggie” – so ignored. This is particularly true when flight records were being set by the Canadian squadrons in *Warrior* in comparison with similar RN carriers.

A number of extremely prominent Canadian naval officers of executive and air branches cut their teeth in carriers – **Lay, Bidwell, Rayner, Storrs, Fraser-Harris, Landymore, O'Brien, Frewer, Timbrell, Porter, Falls, Pullen, Fotheringham, Edwards** and so many more. One wonders how this important component of our rich, collective history could have so completely fallen from view. It is not as though there was a concerted effort to banish all traces in the way of the Avro Arrow. Indeed, naval folks of today might find it truly rewarding to read **Stu Soward's** two superb volumes, “*Hands to Flying Stations*”, covering naval aviation in Canada from 1945 – 1969. He also describes, in brief, naval aviation in Canada during the period from 1918 to 1945. His earlier book, “*A Formidable Hero*”, the story of naval pilot Lieutenant Hampton Gray, RCNVR, the only VC won in Canadian Naval Service, is also an excellent read.

So perhaps it is understandable that there is an abiding preoccupation in naval aviation people in Canada with the record at least giving them their due - and a fair share of the spotlight in this special year. **Allan Snowie's** new book “*Collishaw and Company*” will also prove to be a fascinating and highly informative read as it describes the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service of the First World War and outlines its astonishing accomplishments. The first naval air ace anywhere in the world was a Canadian. The support of Mr. Snowie's book is only one of a number of 2010 Centennial activities in which the Canadian Naval Air Group, whose members had to have served in naval aviation in the RCN, has made a special effort to become involved. The following initiatives do highlight naval aviation in





Canada and may be of interest to *Sounding's* readers:

1. **Historical Monument – Formation of the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service.** Naval Aviation has one of the three most visible and important **national** historical recognitions of the 2010 initiative.

2. **Naval Centennial Bell:** A number of CNAG chapters responded to the call for contribution of materials for the Naval Centennial Bell.

3. **Centennial Paintings:** Canadian Naval Aviation has been very well represented. The last three of the six paintings selected (the eras portrayed are the First World War, Second World War, Korean War, the Cold War, First Gulf War and the Campaign against Terrorism) have a major Naval Aviation presence.

4. **Commemorative Coffee Table Book:**

Dr. **Richard Gimblett** is the Command Historian of the Canadian Navy and his comprehensive coverage of the Navy in this special publication, featuring articles by distinguished contributors, covers the political origins of the Canadian Navy back to the late 1800's, both world wars, the Korean conflict, the postwar period, and a look at the Navy of the future. Of interest to Canadian Naval Aviation personnel, Naval Aviation is very well represented in the book with colour spreads of all five of the carriers and naval aircraft by noted graphic artist, Lt. (N) **Carl Gagnon.**

5. **CNAG Specific Initiatives:** Formal submissions have been made to the Project Manager, Canadian Naval Centennial 2010 Project, to have a number of CNAG national or Hampton Gray VC Chapter initiatives officially recognized as 2010 Initiatives.

a. Nomination of "Canadian Naval

Aviation" for Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, "Belt of Orion Award" in recognition of the contributions to Canada's Aviation History and the Aerospace Industry by the naval airmen of the Royal Canadian Navy. (*CNAG National*)

b. An initiative, led by **Dave Tate** and **Stephen Quick**, Associate Director General, Canada Aviation Museum, to contribute a detailed, to-scale replica of Canada's last operational aircraft carrier, HMCS *Bonaventure*, as an important component of the Naval Aviation exhibit of the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)



c. Assist the Canada Aviation Museum in developing a multi-media "loop" presentation in audio-video format to showcase the history, evolution and active operational activities of Canadian Naval Aviation over the years as a complement to the static naval aircraft exhibits in the Canada Aviation Museum. Operations on three carriers, HMCS *Warrior*, HMCS *Magnificent* and HMCS *Bonaventure*, are featured (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)

d. Actively promote and support the distribution and foster public





awareness of **Allan Snowie's** new book on the history of Canadian Naval Aviation which may prove to be one of the biggest factors in enlightening the Canadian public on the true nature and scope of the contribution of Naval Aviation in Canada. (*CNAG National*)

e. Identify and confirm registration of Canadian Naval Air memorials, through an initiative undertaken by **Bob Ferguson**, to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this important record. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)

f. Conduct an official commemorative ceremony to honour the only VC winner in Canadian Naval Service, Lt. **Hampton Gray** VC, DSC, MID, RCNVR, at the National War Memorial Valiants site through an initiative by **Paul Baiden** currently in negotiation with Veteran's Affairs Canada. This 19 May 2010 event will be combined with the annual Naval Aviation Rendezvous at HMCS Bytown and will be supported by overflights of the Vintage Wings Canada Corsair and possibly the VWC Swordfish. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)

g. CNAG has been approached by **Kay Collacutt**, Editor of the SAMF *Warrior* Magazine, to assist in ensuring the first edition of *Warrior* in 2010 will be a special edition dedicated to Naval Aviation. SAMF's Chairman, RAdm **Gord Edwards**, is also dedicated to this effort to ensure Naval Aviation receives its due in 2010. (*CNAG National and Hampton Gray VC Chapter*).

- **Gray Ghost Initiative:** This is a Vintage Wings Canada (VWC) initiative in collaboration with Canada Aviation Museum (CAM) and Hampton Gray VC Chapter, CNAG to support the Naval

- 2010 Centennial. Its objectives are:
- To celebrate 100 years of Naval Service to Canada, and
  - To acknowledge the major contributions of Naval Aviation in Canada and the role and contributions of the Maritime Air Group as the successor to the Naval Air Service.

It involves the flights of the VWC FG-1D "Hampton Gray" Corsair (currently on display in the Naval Aviation Exhibit of CAM) and, where practical, the VWC Swordfish over key 2010 events across Canada. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)

- **2010 Tour Of Duty Gala:** This is a Perley & Rideau Veterans' Health Centre and Canada Aviation Museum Foundations' 5<sup>th</sup> Annual event, this year in collaboration with *Hampton Gray VC Chapter*, CNAG whose team is spearheaded by **Bud MacLean and Larry Ashley**, with the theme "A Salute to Canadian Naval Aviation".

In the final analysis, CNAG's objective in these efforts has been to help educate Canadians on the enormous contribution to Canada of its Naval Aviation service in the ninety-one years since Canadian Naval Aviators first took to the skies in the Great War. It is a compelling story and certainly one which deserves to be celebrated.





**Canadian Naval Air Group  
Memorial Service  
National War Memorial  
May 19th, 2010**

Special Guests, fellow CNAGers and Naval Aviation Personnel. The following itinerary outlines the formal details of the subject ceremony:

1. At **10:30 am - Wed May 19, 2010**, CNAG members accompanied by former Naval Aviation Veterans (attending the Annual Naval Aviation Rendezvous at HMCS *Bytown*) will gather in front of the NWM. **Over one hundred (100) Veterans.**
2. At 10:45 am - the formation will commence the commemorative ceremony to recognize the achievements of Canadian Naval Aviation, and in particular those of Lt. Robert Hampton Gray, VC, DSC, MID, RCNVR and the other brave Naval Airmen that shall forever remain “in the DELTA”. This will be CNAG’s tribute to Canada’s past and continuing pride in our Naval Aviation History.
3. At 10:50 am - special guest(s) should be in place on parade.
4. At 10:57am - **The National Anthem**, “O Canada”.
5. At 10:58:30 am - **“The Last Post**
6. At 11:00 am- Commence **“Two Minutes of Silence”** followed by the **“Lament”**, “the **Rouse”**, **The Act of Remembrance**, **Tolling**

of the HMCS *Carleton* Naval Bell “for those still in the DELTA”, the **Naval Prayer**, the **Placing of Official Wreaths**, followed by another **Prayer**, and the **“Royal Anthem”** to close out the official ceremonies.

7. **Note: We have been advised that Vintage Wings will provide a Fly Past at this time.**
8. **Note: As there is no formal march past/salute included in this ceremony, on completion of the Royal Anthem, we intend to have a group photo in front of Hampton Gray’s bust as he is our true “Naval Air Valiant”.**
9. The attendees and guests are cordially invited to join us in the Crows Nest, of HMCS *Bytown* Wardroom, for “UP SPIRITS” and a light lunch/reception.
10. We truly hope that as many CNAGers/Naval Aviation Personnel as possible will be able to join us to help mark this special centennial event. To aid in planning, please **RSVP, NLT April 20, 2010. Tel: (613) 824-1561 E-mail: [pbaiden@rogers.com](mailto:pbaiden@rogers.com)**
11. **Note: To avoid long line ups at the door it would be appreciated if you would send your \$10.00 in advance. Cheque should be made payable to HGVC Chapter CNAG, and in the memo section Naval Aviation Rendezvous. Mail them to Paul Baiden, 702 Clearcrest Crescent, Orleans, On, K4A 3E6.**  
S





## Membership Report

By Eric Deslauriers  
Membership Director  
(613) 680-4030  
edeslauriers@rogers.com

**Annual Dues for 2010.** Annual dues are for the calendar year. Your tax receipt will be dated when the Treasurer receives your contribution. As of early April 2010, approximately 80 members had not yet paid their 2010 dues. **If you are amongst the 80, now would be an excellent time to pay up.**

**Dues for 2010** are unchanged at:  
Ordinary and Associate Members:  
Local: \$70.00  
Out-of-Town: \$60.00  
Serving Officers: \$35  
Special Associate: \$35

*"Out-of-Town" is defined as residing more than 40km from HMCS BYTOWN. Membership includes delivery of Starshell and Soundings and the Membership Directory.*

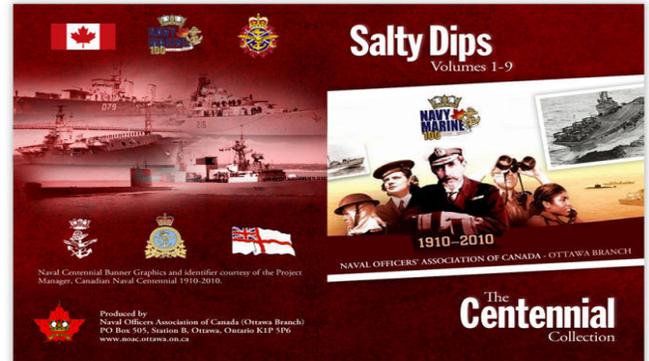
**Recruiting.** The Branch currently (early April 2010) has 312 members, of whom some 110 are Life members, either paid or honorary. Since mid October 2009, 18 new members have joined, plus 5 one year honorary members (recently swallowed the anchor). Six members have left the branch. Most of the new members were encouraged to join by current members. So, while we have had some success in getting folks to join, I ask all of you to recruit new blood at every opportunity. They can contact me to join, or use the membership page of the Branch website at:

[www.noac.ottawa.on.ca/Members.htm](http://www.noac.ottawa.on.ca/Members.htm)

**Contact Information.** I maintain contact information for all branch members, which is published in Soundings as the Membership Directory, and used for mailing, both by the Branch and NOAC National. Whenever we distribute Starshell or Soundings, or when we try to send out a "Branch GEN" by email to advise you of upcoming events, we invariably discover that some of the

addresses are no longer correct. Kindly advise me by email, or phone, or note scribbled on the back of a pack of cigarettes whenever any of your contact information changes, particularly your email address. It will ensure we can keep you informed, and you can stay in touch with other members. **S**

## Naval History by Those who Lived and Made It



This year the Canadian Navy celebrates its Centennial. To honour this event, the Naval Officers Association of Canada (Ottawa Branch) has produced a CD containing the nine volumes of the books known as *Salty Dips*, the first eight revised to include many photographs not in the original printed versions, many new footnotes to help clarify terms and acronyms that are no longer in common use, and indexes. There is also a "master index" to guide the reader through the stories in the nine volumes.

Part of the stated purpose of the Canadian Naval Centennial is to "build and strengthen in Canadians an appreciation of their Navy". To this end the *Salty Dips* Centennial Collection CD gathers in one place the reminiscences of men and women who served their country at some time over the last 100 years in the Navy and Merchant Service. These are not stories limited to war; included are many stories of peacetime experiences.

There are interviews with some who were present at the formation of the Royal Canadian Navy and its participation in the First World War. There are Dips by some who witnessed the near abolition of the Navy during the 1920s and the depression years of





the 1930s. There are wonderful Dips by Veterans of the Second World War and by those who participated in the Korean War, the Cold War, Peacekeeping in Africa, the Gulf Wars and Afghanistan; and yes, many Dips from the years in between.

Volume 9 also contains two excellent Prologues. One describes the early and challenging days of the Royal Canadian Navy and the second deals with the unification of the Canadian military and the evolution of the Canadian Forces as they stand today. These essays were considered essential for the reader to develop an understanding of the tenacity of the Navy and those who served in it through this 100 year period.

**"Salty Dips Volumes 1-9 The Centennial Collection"** is available for purchase from the Ottawa Branch of the Naval Officers Association of Canada at a cost of just \$15.00 plus shipping, through its website at [www.noac.ottawa.on.ca](http://www.noac.ottawa.on.ca). **S**

## The Watch is Changing

By Merv Cameron  
Salty Dips Committee

The latest news of the Salty Dips activities appears in another article in this edition. I would like to devote this space to the Committee members.

The strengths of the people who agreed to work with me must have been obvious when I went looking for help. We all worked well together and we got on with the job because we were dealing with people and time and "time and tide waits for no man (or woman)." Yes, on one occasion when the Committee and wives came to our home for lunch, the talk naturally turned to the shipment of books which had just arrived. So, after lunch the wives decided to help page muster the many boxes of books. On another occasion, two of our wives pitched in to provide much needed secretarial and proofreading skills. I firmly believe that after all the effort put into the project, the results were excellent. So, well done all, you have done great work.

By the time you read this I will have finished my tour as chairman of the Salty Dips Committee. After 21 years, the time is

long overdue for a new chairman to bring new ideas to the Salty Dips project. To the new chairman, I wish you well; there will always be sailors out there somewhere who have important stories to tell. **S**

## Change of Helm at Salty Dips

By Bruce Hayes,  
Member, Salty Dips Committee

With the completion of the Salty Dips Centennial CD, **Merv Cameron** has decided to step down as Chairman of the Salty Dips Committee.

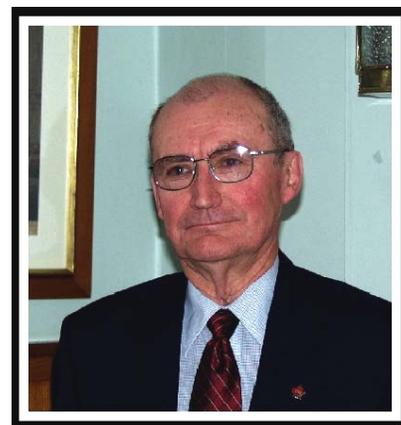
Merv has served as Chairman since 1989, succeeding **Graham (Wags) Wagland**. When Merv assumed the Chair position there was no Salty Dips Committee and a book had not been produced for a few years. With sheer determination Merv led a new Committee through the trials of producing Volume 5 and every volume thereafter through to Volume 9.

The production of all nine volumes on a CD has been completed as an NOAC Ottawa Branch Centennial Project and Merv feels it is time for a new Master at the Helm.

We thank Merv for the tremendous job he has done as Chairman and we welcome **Paul Roquet** to the Committee as the new Chairman. We wish Paul good sailing with Salty Dips in the years ahead.

On a sadder note we regret the passing of **Whit Armstrong**, a member of the Committee for the last few years. Whit was always ready to step into the breach whenever a job had to be done. **S**

Merv Cameron,  
Thanks for everything you have done for the Branch and for NOAC as a whole!





## **POGO – A Tough Little Boat - HMCS Labrador’s Survey Vessel Part 2 - The Journey from Seclusion to Public Life: 1995-2009**

By Marc Laplaine  
Outaouais Branch  
Navy League of Canada

*[Part I of this epic tale is found in the Fall 2009 Soundings, where in 1995 we left Pogo, named after the comic strip character, in the hands of the Canadian War Museum.]*

Despite the Museum’s best intentions, *Pogo* remained stored in its damaged condition at Vimy House (the museum’s annex) and was not displayed in any exhibition.

In 2003, the Museum reviewed its collections in preparation for the move to its new location on Booth Street, Ottawa and concluded that *Pogo* should no longer be retained because it was never involved in an armed conflict. As a result of this decision, the National Office of the Navy League of Canada was then contacted to determine if it had any interest in acquiring *Pogo* for its Royal Canadian Sea Cadets.



Fortunately, the Navy League recognized *Pogo*’s tremendous potential for the cadets and immediately identified the

Outaouais Branch as the most likely group to succeed in revitalizing her, based on its experience since 1995 with its two motorized 27 ft training boats.

The Branch enthusiastically agreed to accept *Pogo* in its inventory but, because of the additional responsibility involved, decided to create the Maritime Affairs Committee. This financially independent committee ensures that funds collected for the regular cadet activities cannot be redirected to refurbishing and maintaining the training boats.

At the beginning of 2005, preparations were undertaken to remove *Pogo* from the museum’s Vimy House. The Centre de formation professionnelle de l’Outaouais (CFP) became a major partner in this endeavour by agreeing to construct a steel cradle for transporting and storing purposes. The CFP further agreed to provide temporary housing for *POGO* and to use her as a teaching aid for its students from various disciplines.

In the Spring of 2005, the War Museum transferred ownership to the Outaouais Branch of the Navy League of Canada. The Maritime Affairs Committee took charge of *Pogo* and organized its move to the CFP.

In the two years that followed, students from several departments, including welding, diesel mechanics, electricity and building maintenance carried out several tests and repairs.

In the fall of 2007, *Pogo* was moved from the CFP to the only marina in the Outaouais equipped with a travel lift capable of transporting her in and out of water. From 2007 to 2009, volunteers from the Maritime Affairs Committee continued working on the boat and enlisted the support of the CÉGEP de l’Outaouais whose Administration students developed various marketing strategies.

On September 13, 2009, *Pogo* finally sailed the Ottawa River on a trial basis, escorted by the two cadet training boats, the *Fred Gordon* and the *John Boucher*. It proved to be in remarkable water-tight and mechanical condition despite its many years of inactivity. On arrival in Hull, our long time partner, the Club de Yachting Portage Champlain greeted her with enthusiasm and provided high visibility docking until the end of the boating season. She then made the return trip down river to her winter storage





facilities. The official launching is set for the spring of 2010, subject to the availability of funds. If at all possible she will participate in the festivities surrounding the centennial anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy.



Intentions are to use *Pogo* -- on a cost-recovery basis -- for training various Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps in the National Capital Region. In its off-hours it could enhance the practical skills of new boat owners and accommodate other youth organizations interested in nautical activities. In the meantime, Maritime Affairs Committee volunteers are seeking the necessary material and financial assistance to allow them to fully restore the *Pogo* and to remind Canadians of her contribution to establishing our country's sovereignty in the Arctic.

Anyone wishing to provide equipment, or contribute financially to the success of this undertaking can contact the Committee at [info@affairesmaritimes.org](mailto:info@affairesmaritimes.org).

Anyone wishing to donate on-line can visit our Web site at: [www.affairesmaritimes.org](http://www.affairesmaritimes.org). **S**

## ALS Walk D'Feet Saturday, June 19, 2010

By Fred Herrndorf

This year the ALS Society of Ontario (Champlain Region) is again organizing the ALS Walk the D'Feet. This will be the tenth time this event is held in Ottawa. The Walk will start this year from the Canadian War Museum at 1 Vimy Place along the Park Way (5Km) and back. Participants will be

registering in the Barney Danson Theatre at 10:00 in the Canadian War Museum and the Walk D'Feet will start at 1100. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this worthy cause, the number of patients with ALS in Ottawa increased significantly over the last year. Those willing to participate please contact Fred Herrndorf Tel: (613)226-2964.

**Last year Allan and Pat Brookbank, Len Forrest, Jake Freil, Andy Geddes, Bruce Hayes, Tim Porter, Bruce Wilson and Debbie Young sponsored Elizabeth and Fred Herrndorf to participate in the Walk.**

Six hundred participants and their friends and families raised \$124,800 for ALS Research and Patient Care. Bravo Zulu to the Ottawa Branch Members for their continued support (\$340.00). **S**

## Capt. Mack Lynch NOAC Library

By Peter Mace  
613 729-3766

Quoting from a recent e-mail, my name is **Peter Mace** & I have recently relieved **Carl Gagnon** as OPI for the **Capt. Mack Lynch NOAC Library** located on the second floor of HMCS *Bytown*. My objective is to make the library a welcoming and useful information source for current and former members of the Canadian Navy.

**Step one** has been to clean up the library and improve the display space for books we already have, removing some books not relevant to the sea or seagoing activities;

**Step two**, currently underway, is to organize the books we have, update the listings and identify key ones we are missing, especially those relating to post-WWII developments. As a start, I am looking for copies of:

- **The Naval Service of Canada 1910-2010, The Centennial Story** (edited by **Richard Gimblett**)
- **Through a Canadian Periscope** (**Julie Ferguson**)



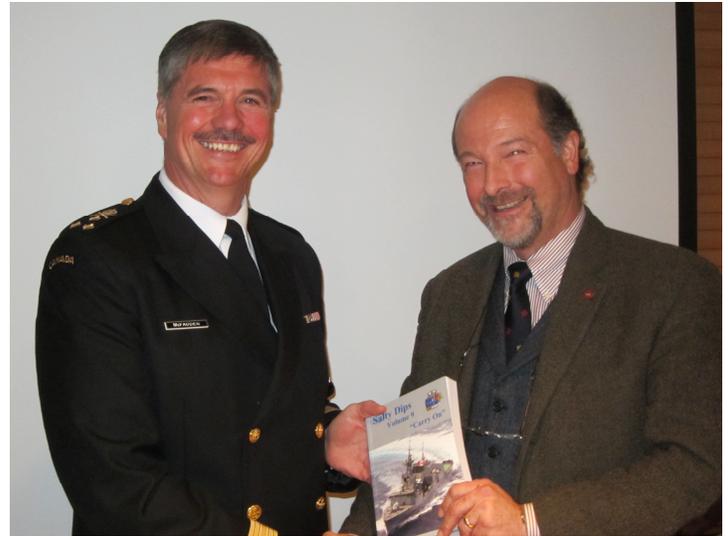


## - The Canadian Submarine Service in Review (J. David Perkins)

If you have a copy of these available for the library, please let me know.

For the future, my other "job" is with the **FCWM Book Room** where we sell surplus military history/fiction books to raise money for the Canadian War Museum. With this other hat, I can transfer non-naval, or non-sea related history books to that body to "earn" credits towards books for the NOAC Library.

If your spouse is after you to clean out your history book collection, give me a call. I will pick them up from you, check them against the NOAC library and then transfer any extras to help the CWM. **S**



## Events



During Veterans Week in November 2009, **Norm Inglis** stands by the NOAC Table to promote our organization at a Legion event at Billings Bridge Centre. We'll do this again, but with perhaps with a more flashy display.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the Chief of the Maritime Staff, VAdm Dean McFadden provided a "State of the Navy" address to the Branch. Past President Richard Gimblett presents Salty Dips, Vol. 9.



On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Vice-President Jim Carruthers organized a panel discussion to complete the series of guest speakers on the future of Canadian Shipbuilding. Left to right: **Jim Carruthers**; Commodore **Pat Finn**, Project Manager for the Canadian Surface Combatant Project and Director of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy spoke to government planning; President Bob Bush; **John Dewar**, Vice-Chair of the Canadian Shipbuilding Association, spoke to industry's perspective; **Ken Bowering**, Vice-President Navy League Maritime Affairs Portfolio, spoke to current government procurement policies. **S**





## A Navy Now for a Hundred Year

By David Killelay  
<http://forcespoetry.com/>

A Navy now for a Hundred year  
In times of peace and times of fear  
After Sailors prayers of many a year  
Across the sea a true course steer  
Of Cities with their name sake ships  
With Swinging lamps or Salty Dips  
With graying hair and aching hips  
To talk with friends to us "OLD SHIPS"  
Gathered here to shoot the breeze  
Helps us to forget our aching knees  
No more Transfers at sea with heaving line  
No windswept hair and salty brine  
No Talk of Knots or fancy bends  
We thank the Lord for our good friends  
In Modern day the task not done  
Our youth today happy heart and song  
Ensure to us the TRADITION goes on.

## Naval Monument Design Chosen

From the CF Newspaper "Maple Leaf"

A team from British Columbia will design the new naval monument to be erected on Richmond Landing on the Ottawa River adjacent to the Portage Bridge. The team was selected unanimously from a field of five finalists.

At the heart of the monument is a white form suggestive of many things Navy, including sails, classic ship design lines icebergs and naval attire. Then aim is said to be, Speak to all citizens of Canada, but must especially reflect back the importance of their role to those who have served and will serve in the Canadian Navy.

The sod-turning ceremony on the site will take place on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Unveiling is expected in Spring 2011. **S**

## HMS Griffin Bell Passed to HMCS Ottawa

In a ceremony at HMCS *Bytown* on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the ship's bell from the RN WWII destroyer, HMS Griffin was passed to the crew of the current HMCS *Ottawa* by the Naval Reserve Division in Thunder Bay, HMCS *Griffon*. With the loss of the first HMCS Ottawa, HMS *Griffin* was transferred to the RCN and became the second *Ottawa*. **S**

### REMEMBER

By Pat Barnhouse

#### Active Members

**Glenford Whitman ARMSTRONG**, Lieutenant Commander, CD\*\*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 15/03/10 at 71.

**Robert Hilborn FALLS**, Admiral, CMM, OSt.J, CD\*\*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 06/11/09 at 85.

**Morris JONES**, Lieutenant Commander(S), CD\*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 16/02/10 at 77.

#### Others Known to Members

**Clarabelle Henrietta CHENOWETH (nee BUCK)**, Lieutenant, WRCNS(Ret'd). In Kingston 28/04/09 at 89.

**Derek Alton HENLY**, Constructor Lieutenant Commander, CD\*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 23/01/10 at 83.

**Robert Allan KELLY**, Lieutenant Commander, CD\*\*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 01/01/10 at 70.

**James William SHORT**, Lieutenant, RCNVR(Ret'd). In Armprior 18/12/09 at 85.

**Joseph Brian VALIQUETTE**, Lieutenant, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 22/01/10 at 78.





## **Memoir** **The Saga of “Two-Gun” Ryan**

By Bill Edge

“Two-Gun” Ryan was a true Irishman, who was qualified as a merchant marine captain but transferred to the RCNR during World War II. He was called Two-Gun because he reportedly carried two pistols in his pockets.

He was captain of HMCS *Niagara*, an old US “four-stacker” on convoy duty in the North Atlantic. On one such convoy he attacked a German submarine, which he believed he has sunk, but for which he had no direct proof. When he arrived at St John’s and appeared before Captain(D) he was not given any credit for the sinking.



**HMCS Niagara**

Later on another convoy, he attacked and disabled a U-Boat, which he then towed into St John’s. “There,” he said, there’s your proof!” Two-Gun became a hero to his crew! His action proved a great success as this was one of the first U-Boats to be captured and be dismantled by the Allies.

Not long after, Two-Gun was transferred to the West Coast and given command of HMCS *Dawson*, a corvette, and that is where I met him. I had only recently graduated from Royal Roads, and to get the chance of going to sea was very exciting.

Shortly after, we were detailed off to join a large American convoy of battleships, etc. on their way to the Aleutians. By the time we got there the Japanese had deserted the Islands. As we returned home and I was the officer-of-the-watch coming in to Victoria I called the Captain to let him know and, he said, “You bring her in.” I almost had a heart attack! Luckily I brought the ship in alongside perfectly. I shall never forget.

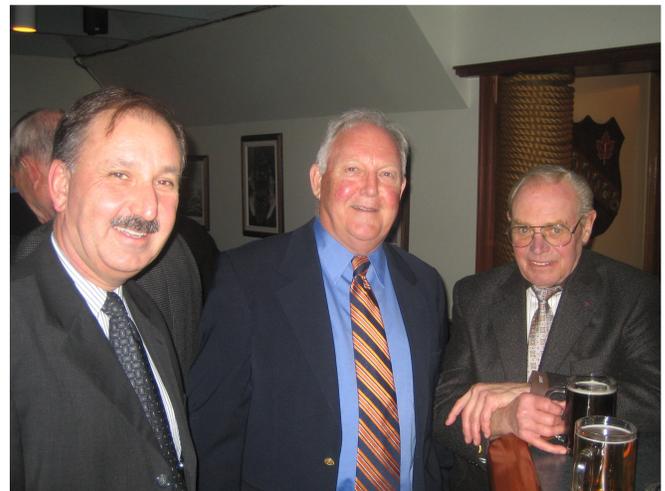


**HMCS Dawson**

Later I was transferred to a new West Coast frigate, which moved to and served in the Atlantic until the end of the war. Then I was back to McGill University.

Many years after the end of the war I read in an old Montreal newspaper that Two-Gun had returned to the Merchant service and was last seen in England at a seaport still wearing his two guns! **S**

## **Branch Meeting**



**Wade Konecsni** (left) and **Denny Boyle** (right) chat with guest speaker VAdm (Ret’d) **Peter Cairns** after his presentation to the branch on the Canadian Shipbuilding Association and the prospects for the industry. **S**



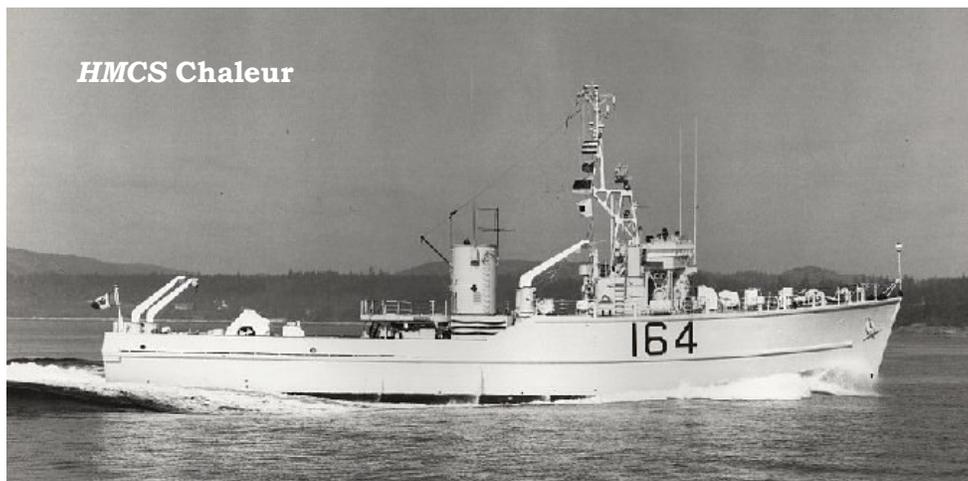


## The Answer to Your Question About the Trees, Sub-Lieutenant, is, “No”.

By Richard Archer

Did I ever tell about the three best jobs I ever had in the Navy? It was in the late '70s as Commanding Officer, in turn, of HMC Ships, *Chaleur*, *Miramichi* and *Fundy*.

I always had a soft spot in my heart for the minesweepers. As a sub-lieutenant, along with more than 20 others, I had to sit the Lieutenant's Qualifying Board. I seemed to do okay, but as I stood up to leave the Board President referred to me to a picture of some underway sweepers and asked me what was the overall length of these ships. Well I knew that one: 152 feet. The upshot was that I was top of the list and received the maximum points towards my promotion to lieutenant. The two other candidates from my ship HMCS *Mackenzie*, RMC classmate Rob Murrell (who was later recruited by IBM) and Brock Horseman (who later switched to pilot and rose to be a major-general in the air force) came second and third. This of course pleased our CO, Glen Derosenroll, no end.



My next exposure to sweepers occurred in the early '70s. After stints as operations officer in *Bonaventure* and *Saskatchewan* I was posted to Fleetschool Halifax as a navigation instructor. I was a lieutenant at the time. Part of my duties was to teach both Destroyer Navigator courses

and MARS training classes, among others, and to take them out to the west coast to take advantage of the sweepers in their junior officer training role.

By this time I was command qualified and as “course training officer” I took to the sweepers as a duck to water. There were six in sort-of commission. Besides the three mentioned above, there were also *Thunder*, *Chignecto* and *Cowichan*. When the Canadian Navy got out of the minesweeping business, the ships had been laid up. But an enterprising CANCOMCORTRON FOUR (C4), the naval captain in charge of the training squadron, had convinced authorities to run four of them at any one time in the junior officer training role, to fill the huge gap between the classroom and the training destroyers. The problem was that no personnel positions could be established for the ships. So the destroyers in the squadron ponied up men to crew the sweepers. This meant that the sweepers tended to be crewed by misfits...but it all seemed to work out well. Happier ships I've never seen. The COs, lieutenants in those days, were appointed as supernumerary to the training squadron. For each of the four

ships in operation, an up-and-coming junior lieutenant was assigned as XO, and clever sub-lieutenants took turns as ship's navigator. The EO was a CPO2, and there were enough engineering watchkeepers to man two watches instead of the normal three. This meant that the ships normally berthed or anchored each evening. Except, that is, when overnight training or

voyages farther afield (such as the Portland, Oregon Rose Festival) were required. Then the ships' watchkeepers just made do. A petty officer signalman (who also acted as ship's coxswain), a cook, a radio communicator, a combat system technician and a couple of boatswains led by a leading seaman rounded out the crew. The captain maintained the public funds and confidential





books, etc. So instead of the full complement of 40, the crew numbered about 15...which of course left enough accommodation for the trainees. With such a small crew, watchkeeping in harbour was problematic. So the ships took pains to berth, normally two abreast, but each pair stern-to-stern with easy access, so that one ship could take its turn to provide the duty watch for all four. At anchor, normally two ships secured together on one ship's danforth anchor.

But as I was saying, I was working in Fleetschool Halifax and only seeing sweeper sea time on trips with courses out to the west coast. My best friend, Ron Copley (for a while we were the only two officers on the East Coast Navy rugby team) was also in the Navigation Section, and we used to chat about how great it would be to get command of a sweeper. I looked forward to every trip out there, and gradually my name was made. I gained more and more of the COs' trust and began to be left on the bridge to run the training.

In 1973, I took another step closer: I was posted to Fleetschool Esquimalt as the MARS Training Officer. Not only did a whole generation of MARS, even a few marine engineering officers (for Officer-of-the-Day training) passed through my hands. And of course I saw more sea time in the training role.

In the summer of '74 I was called into C4's office. C4 was Capt(N) Dick Okros, who had been the first XO of mine in *Mackenzie*. Apparently the CO of *Chaleur* had to leave on posting early and his relief, Ron Copley no less, couldn't arrive until a month later. So I was temporarily assigned in command of *Chaleur* until I had to turn the ship over to Ron. I couldn't believe my good luck.



The day I joined, a destroyer navigation class was just starting. I took a one-day turnover at sea from the departing CO and it was all mine. We set out into the beautiful Gulf and San Juan Islands to provide the navigators with experience in passage planning and execution. I quickly gained more insight into

the ship itself, which besides the 152 feet in length, was about 500 tonnes full weight. To reduce its minesweeping signature, the ship had been built from mahogany (or was it teak?) and originally commissioned in 1957. (This led Dick Okros to muse in an article I wrote for the CF's periodical *The Sentinel* on the sweepers that we were a throwback to "iron men in wooden ships".)

The heavy minesweeping gear and the 40mm gun had been removed from aft so that the ship tended to be down by the head, which made steering troublesome, especially in the rip tide conditions (similar to river rapids) that we often encountered. (Although, the empty 40mm magazine did make an excellent wine storage area.) The bridge was open, while the wheel house and the one navigation radar display were located one deck down.

But of course the biggest eccentricity was in the propulsion. The two main engines were powerful diesels taken from CN trains. They were designed for pulling heavy loads at relatively slow speeds. Even so, the minimum powered speed on two engines was about nine knots, which made for a powerful kick when going from stopped to slow ahead or slow astern. We could coax out about 16 knots at full speed. This was fine except of course that the engines themselves didn't reverse. Each drive train was fitted with two large inner tube-like clutches, one for forward and one for reverse. While these clutches deflated rapidly, they took a full nine seconds to inflate and engage.

So when you were bearing down on the jetty and timing was everything, once you stopped power ahead you had to wait the nine seconds after your engine order before the reverse engaged. The trickiest manoeuvre occurred when you wanted just a slight kick. Like most other COs, I got into the habit of tapping my toe at one beat per second and counting up to nine. The trick itself was to give the order to stop both engines just before the reverse kicked in so as to take account of the slight execution delay through the wheelhouse and the engine manning the throttles.

So it was two glorious weeks in the west coast summer sunshine exploring all





the channels and inlets in both Canadian and US waters between Esquimalt and Nanaimo. I could leave the bulk of the actual training to the course training officer and concentrate on keeping the ship safe and on schedule...and relish the ship handling opportunities that arose daily.

I can confess it wasn't all smooth sailing. Once I was going through Active Pass and true to its name it was at full rip tide. Steering was all over the place. The students were doing the navigation. The Officer-of-the-Watch was a full commander naval reserve, on board for a week's sea training. (He seemed to have no problem taking orders from a lieutenant.) At this time I also had the added luxury of a Second Officer-of-the-Watch, one of the Singaporean Navy cadets who were getting some basic training with the Canadian Navy.

I turned the first bend and up ahead was a tugboat going in the same direction towing a log boom. I quickly caught up to it and had to slow to minimum speed. But it was no good – the steering was getting impossible and in any case I continued to overtake him. There appeared to be room between the log boom and the starboard side of the channel. I had a quick glance at the chart. The cliff to starboard was steep-to. There was a rocky shoal up ahead near the exit of the pass, but it was far enough away. I increased speed to 12 knots and started to pass up the starboard side of the boom. I had just reached the leading logs of the boom, when the tug veered hard to starboard, so that now I was heading directly for the towing cable. I guess he was moving over the starboard side of the channel in case one of the big BC ferries (this was their normal route between Vancouver Island the Mainland) came through. But what to do? I couldn't go astern because I would end up going sideways without any steerage way at the mercy of the current. I had another quick glance at the chart. There was just enough room to still squeeze by the tug and then get back into mid-channel before the rocky shoal (the one a BC ferry ran up on some years later). I ordered max speed, steered the ship between the tug and the cliff face (noting the shocked visage of the

tugboat captain as I passed), and swung back into the fairway. Whew!

But of course to get into this pickle I had made two serious mistakes. I should have tried to contact the tugboat captain on vessel-to-vessel voice radio, which was just coming into its own on civilian craft then. And in any case I should have used the ship's whistle to signal my intentions. In all the time of my subsequent commands, I never made these mistakes again.

Unfortunately, after two weeks the training came to an end, and *Chaleur* entered a two week summer leave period. I took the opportunity to take my own annual leave. Then Ron Copley showed up and I had to turn the ship over to him. But later, to anyone who would listen I was able to declaim that in my first command, I took exactly half the time on leave....

Besides the prestige of command (it was great being piped aboard the destroyers...) and the adventure that I had always sought, in my short time in *Chaleur* I grew to really enjoy the camaraderie, particularly with the other three COs. But of course they loved to tell me, the new kid, scare stories about close calls they had had. One of the principles followed in the sweepers was that for training purposes a CO would not take over from a trainee until he was really endangering the ship. I used this practice myself, and saw the result in the trainee's blanching face when I took over and told him to take another fix, or whatever. It seemed to work well.

One particular story sticks in my mind. John Kilner was CO of *Chignecto* when he was conducting some navigation passage planning and execution through the channels to the north of Campbell River. He went through a channel called "Hole in the Wall", going with the peak tidal current. Just as he passed through the narrowest part, his ship suddenly turned sideways to the channel and he was heading directly for the cliff face. It was only through a lot of full speed manoeuvres and some exceptional shiphandling that he kept the ship from bouncing its way down the channel. I concluded that in that neck of the channel there had been a *waterfall*, and that





*Chignecto's* bow had dug in at the bottom of it, lifting the stern out of the water and losing the steerage. Whatever, I took this story seriously, and as an object lesson.

I went back to Fleetschool Esquimalt and got back into the routine of training and classroom work interspersed with some sea time. The following spring I made an appointment to see Dick Okros, to hit him up for an opportunity to command a sweeper once again, this time for real. Knowing I was coming he had spoken to my career manager. I made my pitch, but he said, "Sorry, Richard, but the decision's been made to bump up the rank requirement for sweeper CO to lieutenant commander, and your career manager tells me that you're not getting promoted this year." I was shocked, and it showed, not so much for the non-promotion, more for the loss of the command opportunity.

I moped back to my office prepared to take on another year in fleetschool. That fall, I was on an advanced instructional technique training course in Camp Borden, and I received a call from Dick Okros. Apparently, the career manager had been wrong, and my promotion to lieutenant commander had just been announced. Yea! I was appointed in command of HMCS *Miramichi* in January, 1975.

By this time the sweepers were called "Patrol Frigate Light" or PFL. Peter Haydon has told me that when he was in NDHQ, he's the one who invented the name. Whatever, we began to refer to the ships a "piffles" and to refer to what we were doing as "piffle-driving".



What followed I remember fondly. We had a busy syllabus of seamanship, navigation, shiphandling and manoeuvring across a wide range of students at different stages in their training. About two-thirds of the way through my two years in command, we returned *Miramichi* to refit and took over the newly refurbished HMCS *Fundy*. The senior CO, at first John Mackintosh and then Mike Duncan, was



*With the Olympic Mountains in the background, Ron Copley (you can just see him in his captain's chair on the port side of the bridge) in Chaleur bearing down on me in Miramichi during officer-of-the-watch manoeuvres. This picture was taken by a professional Navy photographer who was on board to support my article for the CF's Sentinel magazine.*

made division commander. Other COs included Ron Copley (also promoted to lieutenant commander), John Kilner and Al Cole. We became best friends and were a true band of brothers. C4 generally left us alone to meet the requirements of the syllabus. It was truly rewarding to see what a difference we were making to the naval competence of the trainees.

We explored all of Puget Sound as far south as the Washington State capital, Olympia, and were treated like visiting





royalty wherever we went. Graduating classes of training hospitals in the Tacoma area specifically requested our (by that I mean the trainee's) presence to help them celebrate. We got as far south as the Portland Oregon Rose Festival well up the Columbia and Willamette Rivers (I was told that one local paper referred to our visits as "Canadian sailors coming up the river to spawn"), and as far north as Ocean Falls. But our favourite port was Vancouver. We were able to talk the harbour master into letting us use an otherwise condemned pier just across the CP railway tracks from Gastown. I still remember with pleasure sailing in under the Lion's Gate Bridge, taking the salute from *Discovery* and then taking the ship alongside, usually for the weekend. We had made friends with the young manager (and folk singer) of a Gastown restaurant and he introduced to life there. And leaving Vancouver we also took the opportunity to drop in to the Howe Sound village of Gibsons where the CBC program "The Beachcombers" was being filmed, and where we had made friends with the cast. Ah, memories!

But let me tell you about the last close call I had. The four of us (Mike Duncan (*Cowichan*), Ron Copley (*Chaleur*), John Kilner (*Thunder*) and I (*Fundy*)) were doing multi-ship manoeuvring and navigation training in the Gulf Islands and Straits of Juan de Fuca. The plan was to anchor that night in Port Angeles harbour on the US side, south of Victoria. The harbour had a significant sand "hook" to protect it, open to the west. But the weather forecast that night called for westerly gales, so Mike Duncan decided that we would instead anchor that night in East Sound, at the head of a long inlet open to the south in Orcas Island, one of the US San Juan Islands.

We arrived as it was getting dark. Mike, in *Cowichan*, and I berthed together riding on his anchor, while the other two paired up a short distance away. We followed the usual practice of leaving it to the two XO's to sort out the watchkeeping, and put the trainees in rotation to stand watch and maintain the fixing on the bridge. There weren't any lighted navigation aids, so the fixing had to be by radar in the wheelhouse below.



**HMCS Miramichi**





The first trainee was a sub-lieutenant newly graduated from ROTP. With the ship's navigator there, I gave him my night instructions and told him what I expected him to do. I went down to my cabin to catch up on some paperwork. I couldn't have been at my desk for more than two minutes, when the curtain in my doorway was thrown back, and the wild-eyed sub-lieutenant from the bridge cried out, "Sir, sir, are those trees supposed to be so close?!"



I grabbed my weather jacket and went out to the upper deck. The wind was blowing hard. I looked across *Cowichan*, saw nothing but a rock wall and then had to look up to see the trees in question. I found my way to the bridge, and looked across to *Cowichan's* bridge. Mike wasn't there yet. The ship's announcing system was in the wheelhouse, so I leaned on the action alarm. I glanced at the chart and ordered the XO, Bob Allen, who had taken over the navigation to take a fix. It seemed to me that we had been blown down on the cliff face, but that it was steep-to; that is, *Cowichan* was bumping up against the cliff face, but we weren't actually aground.

Not surprisingly, the crew went to their stations, the ship's engines were wound up and the ship closed down for watertight integrity in record time.

By this time Mike was on his bridge, and he told me later that while he was getting his ship powered up, he suddenly heard a voice and saw a light from above. A man was walking his dog along a cliff path with a flashlight, and he called down, "What's going on down there?" What could Mike say? -- except, calmly, "Oh, just passing through...." Mike also told me that some time later he and his wife made a special trip to Orcas Island just to see the location in daylight. On the chart at

least it appeared to be the only cliff face within miles that was steep-to.

Given the green light by the engineer I gingerly ordered the engine movements to move both ships away from the cliff and out into the sound. Once clear we decided to leave and head for Esquimalt. The other two ships weighed anchor and followed suit. Bob Allen was on the radar display doing the blind pilotage, assisted by the ship's navigator. I looked at the chart and decided that the way out was through the narrow, awkward channel between Orcas Island and Shaw Island. I ordered Bob to proceed that way. I stayed on the bridge, but of course in the stormy weather and a complete lack of lighted navigation aids, everything around me was pitch black. Bob, bless his heart, got us out of there safely, and we made our way to Esquimalt, arriving about 4 am. Bob later told me that when the action alarm had gone off he was on his way to the head. He had spent the next couple of hours hunched over the radar display in more or less urinary agony.

On arrival Mike immediately sent a diver down to inspect the hull. But not even scratches were found. Mike decided not to report the incident as a grounding. Our careers were intact. **S**





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## Membership

Annual Dues Payable January 1st Annually:

Ordinary & Associate Members	
Local:	\$70.00
Out-of-Town:	\$60.00
Serving Officers:	\$35.00

“Out-of-town” is defined as residing more than 40km “as the crow flies” from HMCS *Bytown*.

Membership includes a membership Directory, delivery of **Starshell** and **Soundings**, and other mailings throughout the year. Our Members reside across Canada, in the United States, and overseas.

### Fellow Members of NOAC Ottawa Branch

Your Membership Chair needs recruiters! Our Branch is slowly diminishing, as of this time we number **about 310**, but we are still the largest of the lot.

The difficulty is that your Membership Chair does not know the majority of the people on the lists; hence there is no personal approach.

Full details respecting membership are available on our Website:

[www.noac.ottawa.on.ca](http://www.noac.ottawa.on.ca).

### Membership Directory

A Directory is enclosed with each issue as an aid to our membership. However, its accuracy depends on how we are advised about errors, changes and additions. We now have most members who are on the Internet and with whom the Branch can communicate with ease -- a magnificent medium for the rapid movement of information. Think about it! Please advise your Membership Chair, **Eric Deslauriers**) of changes to your email address. When

messages are bounced you are removed from the network.

## Soundings

This newsletter was founded in 1982. It is published twice a year, normally in May and November, reporting on NOAC Ottawa Branch programs and activities, trends and other matters of interest to its members. It is posted on the branch web site.

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Contributions, input, feedback, ideas, anecdotes, naval signals, trivia, reminiscences, humour, salty dips, good and bad news items, comments and letters to the Editor are welcome and invited.

Contributions by email (preferred), telephone, mail, fax, CD or memory stick are welcome. Electronic files should be converted to Word 2003 format before transmission to the Editor. Please remove all automatic formatting!

Soundings returns in November 2010. Please send contributions to the Editor by September 30th, 2010.

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