

SOUNDINGS

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

THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA - OTTAWA
C/O HMCS Bytown, 78 Lisgar Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0C1
<https://nac-o.wildapricot.org/soundings>

First objective in Ottawa Branch Bylaws

“Make all levels of Government and the general public clearly aware of the vital need for, and value of adequate and effective Maritime defence forces to protect and further the interests of Canada.”

54.02

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

November 2018



The *Bangor*-class minesweeper HMCS *Esquimalt*, J272, which was sunk off Halifax in the waning days of the Battle of the Atlantic. See the personal memoir of the sinking and its aftermath starting on page 11.

- ▶ **Canada is increasingly a maritime nation, becoming ever more dependent on the seas for its prosperity, security and standing in the world.**
- ▶ **A developing maritime nation must take steps to protect and further its interests, both in home waters and with friends in distant waters.**
- ▶ **Canada therefore needs a capable and effective Royal Canadian Navy.**





From the President

By Barry Walker



It seems like no time has passed since I last sat down to write an article for Soundings, so it is hard to realize that an entire summer has come and gone, and that we are now into the 2018-2019 program year for NAC Ottawa.

I would like to extend my thanks to **Tim Addison** and **Dave Forestell** and the entire planning team for their dedication and hard work in bringing the 2018 Battle of the Atlantic Gala to a successful conclusion. Over 430 diners sat down to dinner in the Lebreton gallery of the Canadian War Museum and paid tribute to surviving veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic and the Korean War. In addition to these honoured guests, we were also joined by the Hon **Harjit Sajjan**, Minister of National Defence, Senators, Members of Parliament and senior government officials from National Defence and the Canadian Coast Guard. I would be extremely remiss if I did not acknowledge the strong financial support of our sponsors, support which is so essential in making the evening happen.

Our Annual General Meeting was held in June, with another strong turnout of members. The Branch Annual Report has been published on the NAC Ottawa website at <https://nac-o.wildapricot.org/Annual-General-Meetings>.

The membership received the reports from the board of directors, and approved the financial reports for 2017-2018. I am pleased to report that the board of directors received an infusion of new enthusiasm with the election of **Ray Coutu**, and that **Nick Leak** has graciously agreed to act as the Branch Secretary.

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Your Board of Directors 2018-2019:

Barry Walker	President	Alan Kerr	Director - Program
Tim Addison	Vice President	Paul Baiden	Director - Member Support
Alain Garceau	Vice President	Dave Forestell	Director - Entertainment
Gerry Powell	Vice President	Ray Coutu	Director
Nick Leak	Secretary	Stephen King	Director
John Millar	Treasurer	Howard Smith	Past President
Richard Guitar	Director - Salty Dips & History		

Turning to the near future, our fall program of speakers is developing nicely, as we will take a look at what is happening with our partner organizations, in the Canadian Coast Guard and in allied navies.

You will also soon begin to see concrete results from the national Naval Affairs program. Two part-time staff members have been engaged to begin executing the plan adopted by the NAC National board. Dr. **Anne Griffiths** will be familiar to many from her role as editor of the Canadian Naval Review, and she will be the Coordinator of the Naval Affairs Program. Dr. **Adam Lajeunesse** holds the Irving Shipbuilding Chair of Canadian Arctic and Marine Security at St. Francis Xavier University and will lead all required research activities.

Both the Ottawa speakers' evenings and the national Naval Affairs are indicators of the strengths of NAC, but over the summer, the Quebec City Branch ceased to operate, and some others are in some level of difficulty. As you can imagine, the national board is focusing on how best to attract new members to the association. The personal touch seems to work well, and I would encourage you to invite friends and colleagues to come to a speaker's evening to find out about the benefits of joining NAC.

NAC National Awards

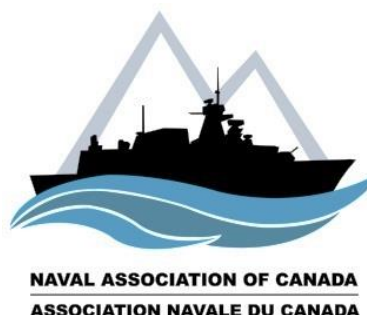
Finally, on behalf of your National President and NAC National Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce the following NAC Medallion Awards for 2018. Our sincere congratulations go out to all who have worked so hard to support NAC activities across the country.

NAC Silver Medallion

Howard Smith – NAC-Ottawa
William (Bill) Thomas – NAC Toronto

NAC Bronze Medallion

David Reece – NOABC
Peter Bey – NACVI
David Collins - NACVI
Mark Fletcher – NOABC
Wayne Ludlow – NLNAC **S**



Senate Award for Jim Carruthers

NAC-Ottawa's one time President and NAC's National Past-President **Jim Carruthers** was recently honoured with recognition by the Senate of Canada. He was awarded the Senate 150th Anniversary Medal. The citation reads: "On behalf of the Senate of Canada, the Senate Sesquicentennial Medal is hereby conferred upon you in commemoration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Senate of Canada and in recognition of your valuable service to the nation". See the citation and medallion on the next page. Congratulations Jim, and well-deserved! **S**





Capt (M) Jim Carruthers

On behalf of the Senate of Canada, the
Senate Sesquicentennial Medal
is hereby conferred upon you
in commemoration of the
one hundred and fiftieth anniversary
of the Senate of Canada
and in recognition of your
valuable service to the nation.

Au nom
la M

Speaker of the Senate of Canada

Président du

The Honourable Senator Joseph A. Day
(New Brunswick)

L'honorable sénateur Jo
(Nouveau-Brunswick)





Branch Membership Report

By Gerry Powell

While a wonderful social event last month kicked off the start of our Fall and Winter season, it also marked the end of our membership campaign for 2018, as well as our first year under the new online membership management system. Updates on both will be provided in this edition of *Soundings*.

2018 Membership

In the Spring report in the last *Soundings*, we had noted a strong return of 81% in the formal renewal campaign period ending in March, but 60 members remained outstanding and manual efforts would continue until June. As we entered the summer, however, we still had not yet heard back from a few to confirm their intentions. Some concern remained with regard to potentially unique challenges for some, particularly in our first year in an online environment. For such members, membership benefits were extended as we continued outreach efforts offline until September. The campaign and further efforts are now finished, and the membership numbers on record are largely complete, leading us now into the next season.

Branch membership for 2018 stands at 407 members. A more detailed breakdown of the membership over the last few years is provided in the table below. Overall, over 75% are regular members, just under 12% are Honorary/Life members, and almost 13% are Introductory (including the Naval Cadets). Sadly, four members have crossed the bar since the start of the year.

The final number for the end of this year will fluctuate a little as we accept new members and when we update the Naval Cadet numbers to replace this year's graduates into the fleet with those just commencing their studies at RMC. Still, the decline witnessed last year has continued, albeit to a smaller extent.

Declining membership is a challenge being faced by all Association branches across the country. We, fortunately, are in a better position than most. The Ottawa Branch continues to work on several options to improve our numbers, particularly by attracting more Serving Members and new Introductory Members who, it is hoped, will remain as Regular members in the future. The implementation of the online system last year serves that purpose as well. While the transition to an online environment and process included its own challenges to many current members, it has led to improved efficiency, outreach and connectivity that will serve our membership well and attract new members.

NAC-OTTAWA MEMBERSHIP DATA						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (as of 5 Oct)
Honourary/Life Paid Members	80	73	67	60	50	48
Regular (local)	173	197	208	228	226	214
Regular (Out of Town)	51	58	60	68	69	61
Regular (Serving)	22	20	28	38	34	28
Regular (Spouse)	7	7	6	5	5	4
Introductory Members	22	6	5	13	0	3
Naval Cadets (at RMC)		19	37	54	49	49
TOTALS	355	380	411	466	433	407





Wild Apricot Progress & Way Ahead

The transition into an online membership management environment using the “Wild Apricot” platform has been ongoing for just over a year. It has proven successful by most measures, and its use has been steadily increasing on all fronts. Over the next year, we hope to further develop its functionality to us.

The initial roll-out last year focussed on a quick, correct and effective transition from our existing internal membership database into a fuller online format of our own consistent with the Branch presence seen on the National site. As noted in the Spring edition of *Soundings*, while the anticipated advantages were being realized, there were some teething pains as the online procedures required to log-in, access information, register for events, or manage personal profiles and preferences were proving difficult for many to manage - especially with only occasional visits made to the site. So, several improvements were made to the content and structure of the pages to assist in moving through the site.

The transition is essentially now complete with about 95% connectivity for news and notifications, although many do not read their emails regularly. The remaining 5% do not have email and their memberships are supported manually. 87% of that number have also registered onto their online accounts and can make use of the many self-service features available.

Use of Wild Apricot continued to strengthen throughout the year. Information on all upcoming events is published and members notified as they near, seeking either an “RSVP” or a registration as appropriate so that they can be planned well. Responses have become the norm, and all events were well attended. The listings have also included a few outside events not run by the Branch but of interest to many. By the time of the BoA and Korean War Vets Gala in the Spring, we were able to use our system to advantage in very large and complex events with members, their guests, invited VIPs and support staff.

The membership renewal campaign was the first major test of the new system. It also facilitated progress in the transition. There were many challenges. 5% of the membership had already renewed before Wild Apricot was rolled out, and several continued to find and use older forms of payment during the initial stages of the campaign - despite efforts to close them. Still, several members had to, or simply preferred to, stay with the older manual renewal procedures this year. About 21% of the renewals were completed manually, many using the off-line renewal forms. This ratio will likely decrease with time as the system is used more.

The renewal campaign for 2019 will begin in mid-November this year and continue until March. Details of the renewal plan will be announced before it kicks off. While manual support will continue to be needed, it is anticipated that a greater proportion of the membership will make use of the online procedures this year and that it can be completed as planned.

There are other enhancements to the system that will happen. Members may already have noticed that old editions to *Soundings* are now available online to the public, and members will be encouraged to access the new edition online as well. Additionally, AMEX has been added to the list of credit cards that can be used for online payments. Looking ahead, an online store for Naval Association gifts and accessories will soon be developed. And lastly, there are internal adjustments to the format of our personal profiles under investigation to increase the flexibility of the system and our outreach for NAC memberships.

So, overall, the online membership management system using Wild Apricot has met our expectations and is seeing increased use by the membership as we get more experience with it. Over the next year we will continue to use it fully in support of our members and look to increasing its utility as a membership management and service delivery tool. Ideas for features to incorporate in it are always welcome!

If there are any questions or concerns with your membership support, on or off line, please send me a note to our mailing address or by email to me at naco.membership@gmail.com. **S**





Starshell – Where is(are) the target(s)?

By David Soule

NAC National Executive Director

Star shell: *a shell with an illuminating projectile.*

Over the past several months many of you have heard that the future of NAC's national magazine *Starshell* was under review. There are several reasons for this state of affairs. I would be negligent in my responsibilities if I did not state outright that the current funding model for the print version of the magazine makes it unaffordable. But this is not the only reason. The following is based on what I think is required for *Starshell* to continue to exist and evolve. I would like to thank **David Cooper** (NAC-VI) and **Richard Archer** (NAC-O) for their input. Most of what they say is reflected below, in particular in the options section.

While cost is certainly the over-riding factor in what follows, other aspects have an impact on the magazine's future. A major one is the role for *Starshell* in supporting NAC's naval affairs program, as this takes shape over the coming months. Some would argue that part of this transition is already met. The magazine does receive contributions that reflect the NAC goal of educating the public with respect to the need for a capable navy, and for an awareness of the maritime security and trade issues of importance to the security and economic well-being of Canada.

For many members, *Starshell* is a means to read articles about the Navy's past. One of the most popular segments lately, for example, has been the *Welland Papers*, as are the historical articles from a number of regular contributors. *Starshell* also provides member news that is more national in focus -- NAC awards, Endowment Fund grants and contributions, significant Branch activities and member obituaries, to name a few offerings. Members may not be aware that *Starshell* is also distributed to the RCN (Headquarters, Reserve Units and ships/submarines) and Government officials who sit on Government defence and security related committees. *Starshell* also provides the opportunity to express a personal or professional well-reasoned argument in regard some particular aspect of naval affairs, as a starting point for a debate. I know that the editor is looking for more such material from you, if you wish to contribute.

What about the future? I strongly believe that *Starshell*, in moving forward, needs to focus more on articles relating to the present, recent past and the future including those expressing personal, well-reasoned opinion on key issues in regard to Canadian maritime security and defence matters. This, in my view, is crucial for attracting new and younger members who have their more recent experiences to share and debate.

So where and how does this lead us forward? The cost of producing *Starshell* has reached the stage where tough decisions have been required. From now on only an electronic version will be produced, while we work out a way to produce a limited number of print copies for those members who do not have access to an electronic device in a manner that does not become a burden on our Branches. We also need to determine the best way to distribute *Starshell* to our diverse audience base. In addition, we need to look at how we finance the cost of *Starshell* without increasing membership dues or adding charges for paper delivery. But this only addresses some of the issues we have.

NAC is not only military-related organization in this situation. Most are facing the reality of declining membership, high costs for producing and distributing printed material and the challenge of new ways to distribute information with a significant portion of their members who are not used to working with electronic media, especially then reading of on-line magazines and books. I would also argue we live in an age where the prevalent attitude seems to be that producing a magazine like *Starshell* is free. I assure you it is not. Most are aware that for the past 20 years or so we were fortunate to have had an editor like George Moore, who in my opinion





acted as if this was a personal hobby. We did pay him, but he accepted very little for his services, preferring to donate his honorarium back to NAC. Our current editor provides editorial services at a competitive rate and this is what she does for a living. Magazines are expensive and not many understand the digging, nagging and effort required to solicit articles, let alone becoming ofay with the latest software and other technical requirements to produce these magazines. The Branch members who are editors for individual Branch newsletters will tell you the same. I also know that these newsletters are a significant cost to the Branches. This simply means that most of your membership fee is directed towards paying for a magazine subscription (and some are probably happy with that).

So what options do we have? Here are some questions and some possible solutions.

What is *Starshell*? Over the next 12 months or so, we will review and determine who are and who should be the focus *Starshell's* various audiences, determine *Starshell's* value to NAC members and identify its shortcomings...and then adjust.

How to rationalize distribution? We will determine the best way to distribute *Starshell* to its audiences, not only within NAC but also outside; and yes, cost is a primary driver.

Adjust the publication cycle? We will try to maintain a publication cycle of four issues a year. I am very aware that *Starshell* is one of those deliverables of our membership fee/dues "contract" with our members.

Improve the magazine content? The aim will be to provide a spectrum of articles/offerings from the NAC naval affairs program that are of interest to members and our audiences. A focus will be on articles that relate to the recent past, the present, and the future, including those expressing personal, well-reasoned opinion on issues of importance to Canadian maritime security and defence. Finally, Branches will be encouraged to submit material from other sources that could be better placed in *Starshell* vice in the local newsletter.

This latter point would allow for the various Branch editors to work with *Starshell's* editor to determine and supply articles which might have a broader interest, thus reducing the cost and effort burden on Branches.

Provide links to Branch-generated newsletters/publications? Options include the addition of a Branch news section in *Starshell*. This would allow those Branches without the resources to produce their own media with a means to do so, even if in a limited manner. It would also allow members across the country to get to know more about other Branches and their members. That being said, the provision of *Starshell* space for Branch news and administration would of course not preclude a Branch from sending out a newsletter/notice regarding local activities if wished.

Consider consolidation? I am very aware that replacing current Branch editors may be difficult when those editors hang up their spurs. In due course, we may wish to move toward the air force model, where I understand that the components of their association have consolidated their various publications into one.

To survey or not to survey? I am sure that most would jump to the conclusion that a survey is in order. Does a Branch need to be consulted regarding the future of its Branch newsletter? I am not of this opinion. I know those of you who are passionate about this subject will contact me and pass on your comments. I encourage you to do so.

In conclusion, *Starshell* remains a core service/deliverable to our NAC members. We can improve and continue to offer the "product", but the reality is that the cost of doing business as we have in the past is no longer an option. We need to think deeply as to how we can continue to deliver *Starshell* while doing this in an affordable and practical manner. I encourage all of you to contact me with your thoughts and recommendations on how best to do this. **S**





Risks in the Federal Government's Pension Reform

By Paul Baiden

In The Beginning

On April 24th, 2014 the Conservative Government quietly announced the launch of limited consultations on a new framework to implement voluntary Targeted-Benefit Pensions (TBPs). If approved, this proposed pension model would change the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act, and it could lead to significant changes in the existing pension landscape. TBPs would replace our current Defined-Benefit Pensions (DBPs).

On September 3rd, 2014 as President of the Canadian Naval Air Group I received a letter from the National Association of Federal Retirees expressing its concern over this proposed change, and inquiring if I and other like-minded veterans, public service organizations and so on would wish to meet and discuss the ramifications of these potential changes.

Many organizations shared concern over these developments, and on September 29th, 2014 we held the first of what would become many meetings. To carry the fight, we formed the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security, comprising 21 associations and chaired by the National Association of Federal Retirees. The specific goal of these meetings was to ensure that our current defined-benefit pensions remained intact.

What are TBPs and Why the Concern?

Simply put, TBPs are a unique type of pension plan that blends elements of defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans to provide a base monthly pension at retirement. The crucial point is that the payouts to pensioners may be allowed to vary, depending on the pension plan's investment performance, and there may be limited or conditional indexation for cost of living increases. The benefits paid in retirement are linked with how well the pension plan performs in the stock and other markets. Target benefit plans are similar to jointly-sponsored or multi-employer pension plans, where a number of employers (usually within the same industry) share a pension plan. The risk to retirees and veterans is clear: the pensions they have earned may become subject to reduction over the course of their retirements – that is, monthly pension payments would be subject to the financial acumen of the pension fund investment managers, and the amount proposed to a pensioner when he or she signs a contract would be only a “target”. That is why such plans are referred to as “shared risk”.

The Coalition's consultation with well-informed sources has confirmed that the real fear about the spread of TBPs is that employers will be allowed not only to convert plans for new employees on a going-forward basis, but also to switch existing defined-benefit plans to the new formula without the full understanding or consent of the pensioners.

What Has Transpired To Date

Prior to the last election the Coalition expressed its strong disagreement with the proposed changes. It concluded that we should all take action to protect the retirement income security that's already been earned by millions of Canadians in our DBPs. In light of this prior to the 2015 election, we sought and received a promise from all three main federal parties that they would not touch the current benefits.

After the election, unfortunately, Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Morneau decided to renege on that promise and brought forth Bill C-27 -- An Act to Amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act. This bill would permit federally-regulated industries, like railways, telecom providers and federal Crown corporations, to introduce TBPs. Under the new legislation, which has yet to be adopted, defined benefits would no longer be guaranteed.

The Coalition strongly opposed the broken promise and continued to pressure the Government to abandon Bill C-27, which as you may be aware became the subject of a potential





conflict of interest due to the Minister's association with a company that would oversee and bring the changes to fruition.

To date the federal government has given no indication that it plans to extend the target-benefit model to the core public service, RCMP and armed forces. However, the Canadian Coalition for Retirement Security, supported by the 6 million members of the numerous organizations in the coalition, are convinced that we must remain extremely vigilant until this bill and others like it are soundly quashed!

Jean-Guy Soulière, President of the National Association of Federal Retirees compares Bill C-27 to a cancer: "If you catch it early, you can stop it from spreading." What the Coalition fears most is a repeat of the New Brunswick experience, where provincial public servants and current retirees saw their plans turned into target plans without adequate consultation. We in the coalition remain adamant about the need to protect the pensions owed to those who joined the public service when a DBP was part of the package – in short, don't touch the acquired rights and benefits of employees and retired workers. While the core public service won't be affected by the current legislation, the advent of TBP in federally-regulated industry will surely be the edge of a slippery slope.

Based on what has transpired and reflecting the serious concerns of pensioners the Coalition's group decided to each send the Minister of Finance a letter outlining the concerns and seeking assurances that the current pensions will be sustained. The coalition continues to meet -- and will do so until the requirement no longer exists! **S**

Coast Guard Guest Speaker

By Howie Smith



On the 1st of October 2018, the Naval Association of Canada - Ottawa Branch kicked off the 2018/19 Speakers' Program at its monthly meeting. As the Branch Past-President, I presented the guest speaker, Rear-Admiral (retired) **Andy Smith**, Deputy Commissioner Canadian Coast Guard for Strategy and Shipbuilding, with a certificate and copy of Salty Dips in appreciation for his compelling address on the success and challenges with the Coast Guard's Fleet Renewal Program. The Deputy Commissioner was assisted by his Director General Major Projects, **Robert Wight. S**





Old Salts Remember a Tragedy of WW II

By Lou Howard and Liam Dwyer

On April 16th, 1945 as WW II and the Battle of the Atlantic came to a close, tragedy befell a Royal Canadian Navy vessel. The minesweeper HMCS *Esquimalt* was torpedoed and sunk just a few miles off Chebucto Head, Nova Scotia. The vessel sank with heavy loss of life within sight of the coast when it was hit by a torpedo from U-190, a German U-boat. Only 27 of the minesweeper's 71 crew members survived six hours in the frigid North Atlantic waters before rescue arrived. The *Esquimalt* had been in Halifax for a refit just prior to the tragedy. She was the last Canadian warship sunk in WW II.



▲ *Esquimalt* sailors cling to debris before rescue.

The rescue operation was conducted by HMCS *Sarnia* which had been dispatched with *Esquimalt* by Halifax Operations to patrol the harbour approaches for a German submarine believed to be in the area. Battle of the Atlantic Veteran Lou Howard, MID, RCNVR who now lives in Ottawa, was a Sub-Lieutenant on board *Sarnia* at the end of the war. This past May Lou visited with his old friend Liam Dwyer, who was a PO ERA, RCNVR with Lou in *Sarnia*. Lou and Liam are the last two of the original crew of 78. During the visit, a lot of memories were awakened of their times together in *Sarnia*. Convoys escorted here and there, chipping ice, humorous events on board and ashore, and mostly, fellow shipmates now departed. They spent some time remembering that fateful day in April 1945, when *Sarnia* rescued 27 survivors and 13 dead from the sinking of the *Esquimalt*.

Liam has written eight books, mostly fiction, since he retired. The last of his works is based on fact and is titled, "A Full and Careful Investigation". The book is based on archival records and interviews with former *Sarnia* crew members, and follows the intense action on U-190, *Esquimalt* and *Sarnia*, leading up to the sinking of *Esquimalt*, the last Canadian ship lost to enemy action in WW II and the subsequent rescue drama. The intent of Liam's book is to shed light on the Board of Inquiry, which was conducted to determine the circumstances of *Esquimalt*'s sinking. Lou had the honour to proof read the book and the attached picture shows Liam and Lou holding the finished work.

As Lou and Liam remembered, the stories came tumbling out; they laughed and then were sombre. They had lived a short violent life together in *Sarnia*, interspersed with complete boredom. The tragedy of *Esquimalt*'s sinking was as clear to both of them as if it happened last week. Their ship had to come to a dead stop for 17 minutes to pick up the forty additional people. They were very frightened because they all knew that there was an enemy sub in the area and with no way on, they were the proverbial sitting duck, as *Sarnia* could take no evasive action.

Lou was *Sarnia*'s Navigating Officer and was the Officer-of-the-Watch and ASDIC Officer during the patrol from 08:00 – 12:00 and 20:00 – 24:00 every day at sea. He had the forenoon watch on the 16th of April. *Esquimalt* was to rendezvous with *Sarnia* at 08:00 that morning. Because this tragic event happened on his watch, he immediately made notes about the ships' actions in preparation for the Board of Inquiry. The following are Lou's recollections of the events of that day and the subsequent Board of Inquiry, some of which are reflected in Liam's book.





HMCS Sarnia Actions, April 16th, 1945.

During the evening of April 14th, Lt. Cdr Robert Macmillan, captain of *Esquimalt* came aboard *Sarnia* and discussed the assignment, commencing at 08:00 the next morning, of a search and destroy mission outside the gates to Halifax Harbour. Naval HQ suspected that a German submarine was out there somewhere. The job was to find it.

It was agreed that at 08:00 on the morning of April

▲ The rescue ship: *Bangor*-class minesweeper HMCS *Sarnia*.

16th, the two ships would rendezvous at "C" Buoy which was the marker at the base of two assigned search areas outside the Halifax gates. The two ships sailed the morning of April 15th as planned and were soon out of sight of each other.

In Lou's words...

07:45, April 16, 1945: *I reported to the Executive Officer, Lt. Morris Shonfield, who had the 04:00 – 08:00 bridge watch. I was briefed as to what had happened during his watch, the current course, speed, and state of the ships operating systems. Lt. Shonfield stated that he had not seen or heard from Esquimalt.*

08:00: *I took over from Lt. Shonfield and advised the captain, Lt. Robert Douty that Esquimalt was not at "C" buoy as expected. Captain Douty sent a radio message to Commander Ashe, RCN, Commander of the Port of Halifax, (CoP), advising that Esquimalt had not arrived at "C" Buoy, and that he was waiting for a reply. I was instructed by Douty to stay in sight of "C" Buoy. I did as instructed. The CoP was the officer controlling all ship movements within the Halifax Defence Force.*

What follows is a compilation of what I wrote in the ship's log and my comments as to what happened as time passed.

08:00: *Patrolling in immediate vicinity C Buoy". Douty tried to raise Esquimalt by radio telephone on 4172 KHz and signalled CoP of that fact.*

09:20: *Receiving no instructions from CoP, Douty signaled CoP again to advise that Sarnia was independently commencing the channel anti-submarine sweep assigned to the two ships the day before.*

09:40: *As Officer of the watch, the ASDIC operator reported to me that he had a solid contact. I heard the echoes and viewed the scan and confirmed a solid contact. Using the voice pipe I called the Captain. He arrived on the bridge immediately, reviewed the situation, and rang Action Stations. I moved into the ASDIC shack on the left side of the bridge and commenced the plot of the attack as the Captain took charge of the ship.*





09:40: Anti-Submarine (A/S) contact picked up at 3300 yards - good trace - fired 7-charge pattern, setting "D".

09:57: A/S contact range 2100 - broke up at 800 yards, left movement - did not fire.

10:20: A/S contact-range 2200 - right movement -7-charge pattern setting "G"- did not regain contact - carried out observant. Joined by HMCS Kentville, 284 degrees 2.14 mi. from D buoy.

11:14: Signal from CoP; "Report whether Esquimalt joined." Our response: "Negative".

11:25: CoP finally gave us the signal to go and look for Esquimalt.

11:40: CoP signalled that he was sending HMC Ships Burlington, Drummondville and Kentville to assist us.

11:27: Search completed - no results - carried out A/S patrol. 10:00 (Canadian Anti-Torpedo (CAT) gear streamed.

11:50 CAT gear brought in. Watch correct. A/S 80 – 80. Depth Charge set to safe. Dead Reckoning towards D Buoy and I signed off the Log.

12:15: An aircraft from naval air station HMCS Shearwater flew over and signalled by light "Survivors Ahead".

12:20: Full ahead to pick up survivors off Halifax Lt vessel - 2 Carley floats and 1 life boat. The life boat was from the light vessel and it was pulling a Carley float back to the vessel. Sarnia picked up two survivors in a sea boat as they approached the same light vessel.

Lou then left the bridge and went to the quarterdeck to help with picking up the survivors and the dead. He was on the scramble net with the Engineer SLt. Pat Salter.

Liam recalls he went to the Wardroom door and saw a survivor on the floor shivering from top to bottom. He took him into his arms and tried to transfer his body heat in to the survivor. He still remembers the smell of his hair of burnt crankcase oil.



▲An injured Esquimalt survivor is carried ashore in Halifax.





Meanwhile Lou applied artificial respiration to one crew member had been rescued; but when he reached the quarterdeck he just gave up and passed away in Lou's arms. The same result befell several others who expired on the quarterdeck after being helped aboard.

Sarnia picked up 27 survivors and 13 dead seamen that morning. The ship departed the Halifax East Light Vessel by 1350 at full speed for Halifax Gates on a zig-zag pattern, with CAT Gear streamed. The Algerine sweeper St. Boniface had now joined the other three ships that continued the A/S sweep. A Medical Party came on board Sarnia once the ship cleared the Halifax gates. At 1545 Sarnia secured alongside Jetty # 5. (This was the first time ever that the ship was close to a jetty and not the usual 5 or 6 ships out).

BOARD OF INQUIRY

The Board of Inquiry was convened in Halifax at 09:30 on the 19th of April 1945.

The President: Lt. Cdr **D.W. Piers** DSC, RCN, HMCS Algonquin

Members: LT. Cdr. **R.W. Draney**, DSC, RCNR, HMCS Prince Rupert

Act. Lt. Cdr. **G. Covinton**, RCNVR, HMCS Stadacona

Lieut. **J.R. Brown**, RCNVR, HMCS Nipigon

The Board concluded that HMCS Esquimalt was sunk by an enemy submarine around 06:30 on the morning of April 16th. Esquimalt's Captain, Lt Cdr. Robert Macmillan, DSC & bar, was a seasoned Captain who had survived having two minesweepers sunk in Tobruk. During the Board of Inquiry Lt Cdr. Macmillan realized that the dereliction of duty of the shore command was going to be completely swept under the carpet. Indeed, the Board of Inquiry chaired by Captain Desmond (Debbie) Piers placed the entire blame on the Captain. It stated he was not streaming his cat gear nor following a zigzag pattern contrary to very specific Halifax Patrol Orders. As well, routine inspections of the Carley Float equipment was not carried out, and many of the crew failed to wear adequate clothing twenty-four hours a day.

Epilogue

All these years later the decision of the Board of Inquiry still bothers Lou and his good friend Liam. Despite playing a key role in the actions of Sarnia that morning to prosecute the enemy submarine and rescue the Esquimalt survivors, Lou was never called as a witness.

Years later Lou met Terry Manuel in Ottawa. Terry was a Ships Writer and an Esquimalt survivor, who was on the quarterdeck watch that early the morning of 16th April. Terry told Lou he got off watch at 06:00. Before that he told Lou, Esquimalt was zigzagging as per standard procedures while on patrol. He also told him that during his watch as they approached the Halifax East Light Vessel he took the opportunity to focus his night glasses on the light ship. He had to wait until the zigzag pattern brought the ship into view. He could not see a single person on watch on the other vessel. Joe Wilson, ASDIC operator on duty at the time in Esquimalt also confirmed that they were zigzagging when the enemy torpedo hit the ship.

Today Lou and Liam continue to ask themselves these questions...

First, three hours and forty minutes passed from the time Sarnia first signaled CoP that Esquimalt had not arrived at "C" buoy until an acknowledgement was received. Many other signals were sent back and forth on the radio telephone as Sarnia continued its patrol and progressed into the tragedy. Why was the CoP not challenged by the Board of Inquiry for its lack of action when Esquimalt failed to report its position at 0800 and when Sarnia reported that Esquimalt did not make the planned 08:00 rendezvous, and for the general lack of attention to the on-going operations that morning?

Second, why did Lt Cdr. Robert Macmillan, the brave, noble Captain of Esquimalt who was known for his professionalism, get tagged with the tragedy? If Sarnia had received permission to leave its assigned search area at 08:00, when the absence of Esquimalt was reported, perhaps





not all of the young men who made it into the sea, but who died from exposure that morning would have been lost.

The BOI decision must have had a severe impact on the Captain of *Esquimalt*, who was in three ships sunk by enemy action.

These questions will never be answered. The haunting spectre of the “might have been” for those of us who were there, never leaves our minds. **S**

Louis Howard

Lou was born January 2nd, 1924, in Selkirk, Manitoba of an Icelandic mother and English father. In 1942 he entered first year in Engineering at the University of Manitoba and joined the UNTD doing 4 weeks of training at HMCS *Naden* in Esquimalt. In 1943 he went active in the Navy as an enlisted man. In 1944 while doing his training as an ordinary seaman he was asked to challenge an Officers’ Board and was successful. He then started his training as an officer. He joined HMCS *Sarnia* on January 2nd, 1945 as a bridge watch officer-in-training and received his North Atlantic watch keeping certificate shortly thereafter. He then became Navigating Officer



and Asdic Officer. In 1945 he was discharged and went back to University as a married man with a child on the way. He graduated as a Civil Engineer in 1945 and joined the Manitoba Government as a Resident Engineer in the Highways Department. In 1950 he joined a large Insurance Company in the mortgage department. In 1970 he was hired by the Federal Department of Public Works. In 1993 he formed a consulting company and worked until he was 77. He is now 94 years young.

▲ Liam Dwyer (L) and Lou Howard hold a copy of Liam's book "A Full and Careful Investigation".

Liam Dwyer

Now in his 96th year, he was born in Eganville, Ontario, the youngest of 8 children. He joined the RCNVR in 1942 as a stoker second class rising to the rank of Petty Officer Engine Room Artificer. He served in HMCS *Sarnia*, mine sweeping off Newfoundland and in convoy duty on the North Atlantic. Not long after the war he joined the Malton, Ontario aircraft design and manufacturing company AV Roe Canada on the Arrow program. After the Arrow was cancelled the company was renamed Hawker Siddley Canada, and he remained with them for 39 years in senior management. He started to write when he was 80 and has written seven murder mysteries and two novels, with an 8th murder mystery that will be out by Christmas. He has sold total of 17,500 copies of books. **S**





Polish Navy Exchange

By Ernest Cable

In 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet introduced two policy initiatives, *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), that reoriented Soviet strategic aims, both of which contributed to ending the Cold War. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of the end of the Cold War was the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, which was completed in 1992. To demonstrate the West's commitment to ending the Cold War, NATO introduced the Partnership in Peace program in 1993. This was a program to further reduce tensions and to demonstrate that western nations had no hegemonic aspirations in Eastern Europe. Partnership for Peace nations participated in NATO meetings, with the intention of building trust among individuals by permitting members from Warsaw Pact countries to meet ordinary citizens of NATO countries face to face to gain confidence in the West's genuine desire for peace. This was a reciprocal program where members from the West also visited Warsaw Pact nations with the similar message of peaceful co-existence.

I was involved in two exchanges; the first was hosting a flotilla of the Russian Navy in Halifax in the summer of 1993; then in October 1994 I was involved in what was believed to be the first Canadian military exchange with Poland since the Second World War.

Tasking for our exchange trip to Poland originated in National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa and was originally planned as a Canadian-Polish naval exchange. However, the Canadian navy was in the throes of transition. The first of the *Halifax* class frigates were just being commissioned and the *St. Laurent* class DDH's were in the process of being paid off; therefore, there was no flexibility to alter ships' schedules to visit Poland in the planned timeframe. It was deemed that the exchange should occur in the near future to demonstrate strong Canadian support for the Polish Partnership in Peace exchange. Since a ship was unavailable, it was decided that Canada's newest maritime patrol aircraft, the Aurora, and crew would participate in the exchange. No. 405 Maritime Patrol Squadron from Greenwood, NS was selected to represent Canada with the Squadron C.O. selecting a deserving crew to represent Canada in Poland. As Deputy Commander of Maritime Air Group, I was asked to lead the exchange to provide Canadian representation at a rank level commensurate with our Polish hosts. The new Polish government selected the Maritime Operations Centre in Gdynia as the host site with host officers selected from the Gdynia Naval Aviation Brigade.

In 1990, labour leader and co-founder of the Solidarity trade union movement, Lech Walesa, had won the Polish general election leading to Poland gaining its independence from the Soviet Union. During the next five years Walesa presided over Poland's transition from Communism to a post-Communist state. In 1994 during the time of our exchange, Poland was still experiencing the turbulent throws of solidifying Polish sovereignty and establishing Poland's identity as an independent state. Visiting Poland in the midst of transition presented some interesting challenges. From a flight planning perspective it was not known to what extent the embryonic Polish government had dismantled the former military air traffic control system established during the Soviet era and instituted its own civilian airway structure. To deal with these unknowns the Aurora crew planned the trip using procedures followed by the international airlines, referring to commercial aeronautical flight publications to determine Polish enroute airway radio frequencies and navigation aids. For the one and only airport listed for Gdynia it was important to know the air traffic control frequencies, air terminal landing procedures, and length of runways, etc. Although, the Aurora could make the flight from Greenwood to Gdynia non-stop, it would require the aircraft to refuel in Gdynia before returning to Greenwood. However, there were several refuelling concerns at Gdynia. There was no documentation indicating the availability of western equivalent aviation fuel or standards for fuel quality controls concerning water and foreign particulate contamination, etc. To avoid the fuel uncertainties, which were critical to safety of flight it was decided to avoid refuelling in Gdynia by making an interim





enroute refuelling stop at RAF Station Leuchars in Scotland. The crew planned to fly directly to Leuchars, take on sufficient fuel to fly to Gdynia then conduct a couple demonstration flights for our Polish hosts during the four-day visit. At the end of the exchange it was planned to depart Gdynia for RAF Station Leuchars to refuel for the trans-Atlantic flight to Greenwood.

The degree of airport security such as controlled access to the ramp during the four-day stopover at the Gdynia civilian airport was another concern. Similarly, there was concern about the vulnerability of the Aurora's advanced technology to probes by Soviet intelligence, which we were cautioned continued to have a surreptitious presence in Poland. Therefore, it was decided to remove all classified materials and expendables, including sonobuoys, from the aircraft before leaving Greenwood. The standard 10-member Aurora crew was augmented with senior squadron members plus myself to provide depth of experience to deal with unforeseen eventualities in a non-NATO environment. The maintenance crew was included on our passenger manifest because it was essential to operate autonomously from Gdynia, as the Poles had no technical support capability for NATO aircraft. With the addition of our technicians, the Aurora was at its maximum seating capacity of 20 personnel. We were fortunate to have a technician who was fluent in Polish to help bridge any language barriers. My worst fear was the possibility of having to ship spare parts from Canada to Poland and fighting the bureaucratic difficulties of importing western military equipment into a non-NATO country.

The flight to RAF Station Leuchars was uneventful. The Station Commander met us on arrival and while refuelling I briefed him about our exchange visit to Poland and our intention to return to Leuchars after departing Gdynia. The continuation of the flight to Gdynia took us over Berlin, Germany where one of the crewmembers commented that the last time a 405 Squadron aircraft, a Lancaster bomber, flew over Berlin was during the Second World War. After entering Polish airspace the Polish air traffic controllers were helpful in answering our procedural and radio frequency questions, enabling us to land at Gdynia at our estimated time of arrival.

The Gdynia airport was very Spartan-looking. No hangars or buildings except for a single plain two story terminal building with the control tower on the roof were in evidence, and there was a massive concrete parking ramp in front of the terminal; the conspicuous total lack of other aircraft made the ramp seem even larger. Except for an armed guard in front of the terminal and two other armed guards patrolling the ramp area, no other people were in sight. The armed guards seemed totally oblivious to our presence and did not approach our aircraft. There appeared to be no one to greet us. Concerned about violating Polish immigration and customs regulations we followed international protocol and waited in the aircraft until customs officials arrived and cleared us to disembark. We waited and waited. Finally, we radioed the tower controller who confirmed that no Polish navy or customs officers were in the terminal to meet us. After explaining our predicament the tower controller suggested one of our crew go to the terminal building to telephone naval authorities. We motioned one of the patrolling guards over to the aircraft where our Polish-speaking technician explained that the tower had given her permission to go to the terminal to telephone the Polish navy base. After great difficulty using the telephone, she discovered, that as a carryover from the Soviet era, Poland had two separate telephone systems, one military and one civilian, and the two were not connected. After a lot of help she eventually talked to a Polish navy officer who told her to wait at the terminal until he and another officer would arrive in about 30 minutes.

Before long, a Polish navy Lieutenant Commander and a Lieutenant, both of whom spoke English well, arrived at the Aurora and expressed relief at seeing us because they had been waiting for us for more than two hours at Pruszcz Gdanski, the Polish military airport near Gdansk about 25 miles (40 km) south of Gdynia. They had a welcoming party of senior officers and a band, but became quite concerned when absolutely nothing was heard from us. The Gdynia tower had no reason to contact anyone else having closed out our flight plan indicating to enroute authorities that we had landed safely at our destination. Even if the tower knew of our intended rendezvous with the Polish navy, the separate telephone systems prevented the civilian tower at Gdynia from directly telephoning the military tower at Pruszcz Gdanski. In short, we





landed at the wrong airport and nobody, except the Gdynia tower, knew where we were. We were unaware that the military airport even existed because, as a carryover from the Soviet era, military airports were not listed in civilian flight publications. I think this confusing situation could have been avoided if the Canadian air attaché in Warsaw had been more diligent in coordinating the arrival details with us and the Polish authorities.

As soon as the two Polish navy officers arrived they wanted us to take off immediately for the short flight to Pruszcz Gdanski, the military airport south of Gdansk. They appeared to be unfamiliar with the airway routing to the military airport and the air traffic control frequencies. They offered to visually point out the airport's location to the two pilots from the cockpit after taking off, then landing without contacting the tower as it was getting late and the controllers would be stood down for the day. Since there were no seats in the Aurora for the two Polish officers I selected two of the ground crew, the Polish-speaking technician and one of her colleagues, to go to the Pruszcz Gdanski military airport by taxi to avoid exceeding the Aurora's maximum 20-seat safety limit.

Using what would equate in Canada to visual flight regulations in uncontrolled airspace we landed at Pruszcz Gdanski at dusk without incident. Customs clearance consisted of a naval officer collecting our passports, which would be duly returned. Only a few buildings bordered the totally empty airport ramp. Several taxiways leading to the ramp were lined with rows of small hangars capable of housing one or two fighter aircraft. Each hangar resembled a bomb shelter with an arched grass-covered roof that blended into the long-grass spaces between each hangar. We were told that the camouflaged hangars housed Polish MIG 21 fighters and hid the airfield from NATO surveillance during the Soviet era.

We were bussed to the city of Gdansk where we were housed in a hotel, a plain large building with five or six stories overlooking Gdansk Bay. Apparently, the hotel once housed Soviet bureaucrats who oversaw Polish activities during the Soviet occupation. My room was small and austere furnished with an adjoining bathroom. Through the window I could see the Russian enclave on the Kaliningrad peninsula on the horizon across the bay. The reception lobby and a restaurant were located on the ground floor. The menus were printed in Polish with no English translation; however, the waiters who were quite nonchalant and not very attentive were able to explain the menu items with their very limited knowledge of English. All the menu choices were traditional Polish dishes and quite tasty. We paid for our meals with Polish currency, the Zloty; the meals cost between 300,000 to 400,000 Zlotys; the magnitude of the prices seemed staggering at first until realizing that the withdrawal of the Soviets devastated the Polish economy, reducing the value of one Zloty to less than one hundredth of one Canadian cent.

The next morning I was invited to meet the Polish Admiral who spoke English reasonably well. His office was very well-appointed with wood panelling, a large ornate wooden desk and a large polished conference table. Since the office's grandeur contrasted with the starkness of the other rooms I assumed he inherited the furnishings from the former Soviet incumbent. After words of welcome to Poland, he was curious to know why we landed at Gdynia and not at the military airfield. I apologised profusely for the confusion and our embarrassment for missing the official welcoming reception that we learned had been so graciously been planned for us. He accepted my explanation that the military airfield was totally unknown to us because it was not listed on any of the aeronautical charts or maps available in Canada. The Admiral related that the Polish navy had abandoned its primary Warsaw Pact role of sea control and amphibious warfare in the Baltic Sea and was attempting to restructure the navy to protect Polish interests in the Baltic with help from western nations. The Polish navy inherited a number of obsolescent warships and submarines from the Soviet era and that without Soviet money and parts they were difficult and costly to maintain. He added that the Polish navy never had an ASW capability, but realized the importance of ASW in a modern navy and were in the initial stages of establishing a naval air capability with Antonov AN-2 aircraft (a single-engine biplane similar in appearance to a very robust de Havilland Otter with the "Mark 1 eyeball" being the only ASW sensor). He and his officers were looking forward to learning more about naval air and ASW from our Canadian visit.





Following my meeting with the Admiral I gave a briefing about the Aurora to about 30 Polish naval officers. With my background in the Aurora program office, I was able to explain the Aurora acquisition process and the aircraft's various features using 35mm slides. The briefing would normally have lasted about one hour, but I had to speak in phrases so the translator could repeat my sentences to the audience. As a result, the length of my briefing to the very attentive group doubled to about two hours. Following the briefing, I explained that after lunch the Aurora crew was prepared to take 8 -10 officers at a time on two or three short demonstration flights. At this point the Lieutenant Commander who met us at the Gdynia airport stated that they had just sailed a Polish submarine, ex-Soviet Kilo class, from Gdynia harbour into the Baltic and wanted us to show them how to hunt for a submarine. I explained that we carried no sonobuoys; therefore, operating against a live submarine was out of the question. I further explained that we had a very good submarine tracking computer simulation program on the Aurora that we used to train our crews and it would be more instructive. However, the officer insisted that we hunt for the Polish submarine. I finally brought the discussion to a close by firmly stating we had no capability to hunt for submarines and that they should recall their submarine to port. So it was a fortuitous decision to leave our advanced technology sonobuoys in Greenwood. With the advantage of hindsight I wondered if the Poles insistence that we hunt a live submarine was an attempt to recover our sonobuoys from the sea to copy the technology, or perhaps even act as surrogates for the Soviets.

After lunch the Polish Officers gathered around the Aurora and the crew walked them around the aircraft pointing out some of the external features. Then the first group of officers boarded the aircraft and took off on the first demonstration flight. Meanwhile, the Poles had set up a small static display near the Aurora to show the Canadians who remained on the ground their AN-2 and MIG-21 aircraft.

After a half hour the Aurora returned to the airfield from the first demonstration flight as planned. I had assembled the next group of Poles to be ready to board the second flight during a quick turn-around, a procedure in which only the two port engines were shut down to provide safe deplaning and boarding through the port side door. The first group deplaned apparently ecstatic with the demonstration. However, the captain of the aircraft explained to me that the nose wheel steering chain had broken during landing and we needed to reassess our plans. According to our maintenance regulations a broken steering chain would ground the aircraft until it was replaced. This meant a replacement chain had to be shipped from Greenwood: my worst fear! The senior flight engineer said that the steering chain was similar to a bicycle chain and he could make an, albeit, unauthorized temporary repair to get us home. Both he and the captain of the aircraft were happy with the temporary repair from a safety perspective. So I made the decision that we would cancel the second and third demonstration flights but still return to Greenwood as originally scheduled. I would be responsible for any fallout from the unorthodox maintenance action and absolve the crew captain and maintainers of any responsibility. The Polish groups anticipating the second and third flights were naturally disappointed that they would not get airborne.

That evening the Canadian officers were invited to attend a Polish navy mess dinner in the officer's mess. White tablecloths and best silverware were the dress of the day. All of the proceedings were conducted in Polish and my Lieutenant Commander host who was seated beside me explained the Polish navy customs and traditions. All of the meal courses were typically Polish and delicious. Similar to the Russian navy mess dinner I had attended the previous year; nothing was exempt from being toasted with a jigger of vodka: our heads of state, our countries, our navies, our ships, our men, our families, our friends, and more.... My host warned me that the only way to survive the multitude of toasts was to chase each shot of vodka with a glass of water. It was good advice.

The next day our Polish hosts took us on a one hour bus ride to Malbork Castle about 60 km southeast of Gdansk. Malbork Castle is the largest brick building in Europe, the largest castle in the world by land area and a UNESCO world heritage site. The castle was originally





constructed by the Teutonic Knights in 1406 and has played a significant role in Polish-Prussian history. In 1945 towards the end of the Second World War, fighting between the Russians and the Germans destroyed more than half the castle. Restoration was finally completed in 2016.

After our return from Malbork Castle the Canadian Air Attaché from Warsaw took me on driving tour of Gdansk. He explained that withdrawal of the Soviets left the Polish economy in very dire straits and that the Polish government under Lech Walesa had taken draconian steps to restore Poland's solvency. There simply was no money for social programs. All pensions were cancelled; those receiving a pension or anticipating a future pension had to find other means of financial support. Similarly, there was no money for infrastructure. We saw many partially built buildings, bridges and piers where construction had abruptly ceased. On a positive note, Poland is one of the world's largest sources of amber, which is mined along the shores of the Baltic Sea and significant source of revenue. Because amber was so plentiful I was able to buy amber necklaces and earrings in a jewellery store at astonishingly low prices by Canadian standards for my wife and daughters. At an outdoor market, locally produced farm products seemed plentiful.

The next day we departed Pruszcz Gdanski and set course for Greenwood via a refuelling stop at RAF Station Leuchars as planned. The return flight to Greenwood was uneventful; even the ad hoc nose wheel steering repair survived.

I believe the exchange with the Polish navy was very successful. The informal exposure of individuals to each other's militaries and the sharing of meals, cultures, histories and even the impromptu gatherings and banter around a table with jugs of beer convinced the Poles that they had more in common with Canadians than differences. Certainly, the Poles were convinced that Canadians were sincere friends who were sympathetic to rebuilding a sovereign and prosperous Poland. In 1999, Poland became a member of NATO. **S**



▲ The Canadian crew members leave their mark on a display Polish MIG-21. Col Cable is in the front row on the far right.





Day-by-Day RCN History in January

Researched and Compiled by Roger Litwiller

By the Editor: This is a first of a series. Look for subsequent months of history in follow-on Soundings.

- **1/1/1943** - HMCS *Woodstock* sinks MTB 105, 250 miles northwest of the Azores, after the merchant ship ferrying the MTB across the Atlantic was sunk.
- **1/1/1943** - Commander Adelaide Sinclair, WRCNS, receives the Order of the British Empire (OBE). Citation reads as follows; "Commander Sinclair has shown untiring zeal and outstanding ability, tact and judgment in organizing the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service into a most efficient and well-disciplined unit."
- **1/1/1946** - Originally established in 1923, the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve (RCNR) & Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) are officially merged and become the Royal Canadian Navy (Reserve) RCN(R).
- **4/1/1951** - HMCS *Cayuga* is the last UN ship to leave Inchon Harbour following the total evacuation of the Korean port city, as Chinese forces advanced.
- **5/1/1955** - The Canadian Naval Air Service (CANAS) takes delivery of four T-33 Jet Trainers and are the first jet-powered aircraft operated by the RCN, used to transition RCN pilots from the Sea Fury to the Banshee.
- **8/1/1940** - HMCS *Stone Frigate* opens at Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, as the newly commissioned RCNVR Officer's Training establishment.
- **9/1/44** - HMCS *Lockeport* successfully travels 190 miles under improvised sails when her engine breaks down while in route to Baltimore for refit.
- **10/1/1951** - HMCS *Cayuga* sets a UN record for longest continuous patrol during the Korean War, with 50 days at sea, earning the nickname, "The Galloping Ghost of the Korean Coast."
- **11/1/1911** - Officer Candidates report for first class at the Royal Naval College of Canada located in the Halifax dockyard hospital. See also 19 January 1911.
- **11/1/1957** - HMCS *Magnificent* arrives in Port Said, Egypt carrying 500 Canadian Peacekeeping personnel, vehicles, stores and four Otter aircraft to aid United Nations with the Suez Crisis in Operation RAPIDSTEP II.
- **12/1/1910** - Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier introduces the Naval Service Bill into the House of Commons, proposing a Canadian Naval Force of eleven ships, and the bill is passed on the third reading, gaining royal assent.
- **12/1/1942** - SS *Cyclops* (British) is torpedoed by U-123 off Cape Sable, 88 are killed. HMCS *Red Deer* rescues 93 survivors. This is the first U-Boat attack in Op DRUMBEAT.
- **13/1/1943** - HMCS *Ville De Quebec*, in a lightning attack west of Algiers, sinks U-224 in just 10 minutes, using depth charges, machine guns and finally ramming.
- **14/1/1945** - HMCS *Trillium* while escorting a convoy from Milford Haven, Wales is damaged when she collides with a coaster. The coaster sinks from the collision and *Trillium* requires five weeks of repairs.
- **14/1/1952** - RCN Cruiser HMCS *Uganda* is renamed HMCS *Quebec*.
- **14/1/2010** - HMC Ships *Athabaskan* and *Halifax* depart for Haiti on Op HESTIA, providing humanitarian relief following the island's devastating earthquake.
- **15/1/1923** - Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (RCNR) is created with nine divisions, soon reduced to five located at Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal and Vancouver, replacing the existing Royal Navy Canadian Reserve.
- **15/1/1945** - HMC Ships *Comox* and *Fundy* rescue 66 survivors from SS *Martin Van Buren*, torpedoed by U-1232 off Halifax.





- **17/1/1946** - The Canadian Naval Air Service (CANAS) receives approval for roundel for RCN aircraft. Uniquely for the RCN the roundel consists of a red maple leaf on white disk, surrounded by a wide blue ring with an outside yellow border.
- **17/1/1957** - HMCS *Bonaventure* commissioned into the RCN. "Bonnie" is the third aircraft carrier to serve in Canada's Navy and will be the last.
- **18/1/1942** - HMCS LYNX rescues crew of SS *Empire Kingfisher*, badly holed after grounding off Cape Sable. The merchant ship is moved to anchorage at Bantam Rocks where U-109 fires five torpedoes at the ship, all missing. Ironically, *Empire Kingfisher* sinks next day from the damage received during the grounding.
- **19/1/1911** - Classes begin for first RCN midshipmen at Royal Naval College of Canada in Halifax. Many of these officers would lead & shape the future of Canada's Navy.
- **19/1/1943** - HMCS *Port Arthur* while escorting Convoy MKS-6, attacks and sinks Italian submarine *Tritone* off Bougie, Algeria in the Mediterranean during Op TORCH. Her ship's company share a \$1000 prize given by namesake city Port Arthur, Ontario.
- **21/1/1975** - HMCS *Assiniboine* rescues the crew of MV *Barma*, when the latter began sinking 185 miles off Boston.
- **22/1/1945** - The corvette HMCS *Lindsay* is severely damaged in collision with destroyer HMS *Brilliant* off the Isle of Wight. The corvette does not return to RCN service.
- **24/1/1932** - HMC Ships *Skeena* and *Vancouver* land armed parties at Acajutla, El Salvador, to protect British nationals threatened by revolution.
- **24/1/1946** - HMCS *Warrior* commissioned in Belfast. She is the first aircraft carrier to enter service with the RCN.
- **26/1/1944** - SS *Fort Bellingham* (Canadian Government) is torpedoed by U-360 and U-957 while in convoy JW-56A in the Barents Sea. Of her crew of 75, 26 sailors are killed.
- **26/1/1955** - Cabinet approves entry of female members of the Royal Canadian Navy (Reserve) into the Royal Canadian Navy as Regular members, but not yet at sea.
- **26/1/1981** - HMCS *Algonquin* has a class A fire in the forward decontamination compartment due to improperly stowed toilet paper next to a steam radiator.
- **26/1/2018** - The last flight of an East Coast Sea King Helicopter from the RCAF 423 Maritime Helicopter Squadron.
- **29/1/1943** - HMCS *Goderich* rescues 44 survivors from the aft section of US tanker *Brilliant*, when she broke in half during a storm. She was under tow from St. John's for repair, after being torpedoed by U-43 on 18/11/42.
- **29/1/1944** - HMCS *Mahone* is rammed by the freighter SS *Fort Townshend* off Louisburg, NS, requiring four months of repairs.
- **29/1/1973** - With only three days to prepare, HMCS *Terra Nova* sails for Vietnam to aid 290 Canadian members of the International Commission of Control & Supervision (ICCS), if they require emergency evacuation in Op WESTPLOY.
- **30/1/1911** - King George V gives consent for adding "Royal" to the fledgling Canadian Navy.
- **31/1/1923** - The Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) is created. Fourteen Companies are established and recruitment is capped at a maximum of 70 officers & 930 ratings.
- **31/1/1953** - HMCS *Cape Breton II* (ex-HMS *Flamborough Head*) commissioned into the RCN. She is the first of two Cape Class escort maintenance ships based on wartime liberty ships. **S**





Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund

By Bob Cleroux

The Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund is incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act, and it commenced operations in 1942. For 76 years, the Fund has assisted over 40,000 people and has given out over 17 million dollars to relieve distress and promote the well-being of serving and former members of the Naval Forces of Canada and Merchant Marine War veterans and their dependents. These objectives are achieved by means of assistance in the form of grants including minor disbursements, non-interest bearing loans, and education bursaries. In trying times, we are the last resort, and without our help the applicant's situation would be dire.

The Fund makes every effort to reach out to those in need. Our presence on social media, using computer-based networking, our Web Page (**RCNBF.ca**) and Facebook site have spread the word about what we do and how we can help. We partner and receive referrals from the Royal Canadian Legion, Veterans Affairs, Naval Association of Canada, Support Our Troops, ANAVETS and other helping agencies. In addition, we publicize the Fund's capabilities and activities through word of mouth, placing advertisements, and the conduct briefings and seminars in likeminded organizations. A key example is the way the fund connects with serving members, both Regular and Reserve, along with RCN sponsorship through the Navy Bike Ride fundraiser.

The RCNBF could not operate without volunteers. In addition to myself as President and our Directors, members serve on the financial committee and adjudicate routinely on committees (East, West and Central). The Fund is always looking for new board members. They meet routinely and adjudicate on requests for assistance. There is no more rewarding way to give back to the Navy Family.

A key priority for the RCNBF is to reduce the overall cost of doing business by reducing paid staff and minimizing Administrative expenditures. Over the past five years, the annual overhead administrative costs have gone from round \$370K to approximately \$170K, a more than 50% reduction. This trend will continue in the coming year and will accomplish our goal of focusing our spending on helping those in need. This will ensure that most of our donated money goes to providing direct assistance.

For the most part, the Fund derives its revenues from investments. However, its continued existence will mostly depend on charitable donations from people like you, who are serving or have served, and their families. Although the RCNBF has tried to get donations from the general public this is indeed a very difficult task with so many other charities needing help. The RCNBF is a registered charity and is so recognized by Revenue Canada. Any donation, legacy or bequest, is gratefully accepted and an official receipt for income tax purposes is issued. This past year, we have been the recipients of \$7,704 in donations. But, this is clearly not enough to sustain our efforts to help those in need. We are keen and eager to develop further friendships with the Naval Association of Canada membership, so our legacy can continue well into the future.



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DIRECT FINANCIAL HELP TO THOSE IN NEED
IN THE NAVY FAMILY. **S**





12 Wing Shearwater

100 Years of Maritime Air Operations

By Ernest Cable, Maritime Aviation Historian

Founded in 1918, 12 Wing Shearwater will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year. 12 Wing Shearwater is one of the oldest military airfields in Canada, second only to 16 Wing Borden. Shearwater's varied and colourful history reflects the evolution of flying in Canada, and indeed the growth of Canada's Air Force. Shearwater was originally created as a seaplane base in August 1918, when the small promontory in Halifax harbour's Eastern Passage, known as Baker Point, became U.S. Naval Air Station Halifax. It subsequently became an air station for the Canadian Air Force, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) known as HMCS *Shearwater*. With the integration of the armed forces in 1968, *Shearwater* was designated a Canadian Forces Base (CFB), and re-named 12 Wing Shearwater following Air Force restructuring in 1993. "12 Wing Shearwater" preserves both RCAF and RCN heritage. "12" reflects 12 Group of the RCAF's Eastern Air Command in Halifax during the Second World War, and Shearwater reflects the station's RCN name dating back to 1 December 1948. Shearwater has been a home for Canada's air squadrons for the past 100 years, continuously supporting flying operations longer than any other Canadian military air base. By virtue of its coastal location, 12 Wing Shearwater has been inextricably linked to the defence of the air and sea approaches to Atlantic Canada. In fact, it was the threat by sea that provided the original *raison d'être* for the Wing. Today, Shearwater provides RCAF maritime helicopter detachments to RCN ships in support of UN and NATO naval operations around the world.

The Birth of Maritime Aviation in Canada

During the First World War, German submarines operated between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, particularly in the waters off the eastern and southern shores of Nova Scotia. War had increased the amount of shipping entering and leaving the Gulf of St. Lawrence and using the harbours of Nova Scotia, traffic that even before the war had been enormous. Wartime vessels sailing singly or banded together in convoys were departing in rapid succession from ports in eastern Canada, especially from Halifax and Sydney, laden with troops and supplies to support British and Canadian armies in Europe. Moreover, many transatlantic ships bound for or departing from the north-eastern United States passed through the outer fringes of these waters. Both the Canadian and American governments, therefore, were vitally interested in protecting these shipping lanes.

Until 1915, no German submarines operated in Canadian waters. The submarine threat wasn't taken seriously until 8 October 1916 when the German submarine U-53 sank five merchantmen off Nantucket. The appearance of U-53 prompted the British Admiralty to warn Canada that anti-submarine patrols off its coast should be strengthened. A subsequent Canadian proposal to base anti-submarine air patrols at Halifax and Cape Breton Island was welcomed by the Admiralty, and Commander Sneddon of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) was dispatched to Canada to investigate the feasibility of such patrols. Sneddon recommended that a small seaplane force, divided between Halifax and Sydney, NS be formed, and that required aircraft be built in Toronto by Canadian Aeroplanes Ltd. The Canadian Cabinet rejected Sneddon's report on the grounds of excessive costs (\$2.5 million), the diversion of skilled labour from other wartime priorities, and concern over seasonal weather changes limiting the effectiveness.

By 1917 the success of east-bound convoys sailing from Halifax and Sydney compelled the Germans to shift the focus of their operations. About the same time they had developed large ocean-going submarines, capable of staying at sea for three months or more and mounting 6-inch





deck guns. Suddenly the Canadian coast became a vulnerable target area. The Admiralty warned Ottawa of these latest developments and the Canadian Naval Service immediately attempted to strengthen its patrol force. However, no additional ships were available, and it was decided that aircraft operating from shore bases were the best means to protect merchant shipping in Canadian waters. But where were the aircraft to come from? The Admiralty had no surplus and the only possibility seemed to be the United States Navy (USN).

Meanwhile, the German threat was so acute that the Admiralty renewed its warning and offered a preliminary plan for aircraft patrols. Shortly thereafter, British and American Admirals convened a conference in Washington, which included Captain Walter Hose, the RCN's Captain of Patrols on the east coast. The conference settled two points: first, air stations should be established at Halifax and Sydney; secondly, that the United States would supply these stations with pilots, seaplanes, airships and kite balloons until the embryonic Royal Canadian Naval Air Service (RCNAS) was trained and ready to take over. On 23 April 1918, it was also agreed that the United States would take responsibility for coastal patrol and anti-submarine work as far east as western Nova Scotia and that assigned American forces would be placed under operational control of the RCN. Because Canada had no officers experienced in maritime air operations, the Admiralty appointed Lieutenant Colonel Cull, Royal Air Force (RAF) (formerly Wing Commander RNAS), to overall command of the air patrols. (On 1 April 1918, the RNAS and the Royal Flying Corps amalgamated to form the RAF).

On 5 June 1918, after following rather ineffectually in the wake of the Admiralty and the USN, Canadian authorities finally approved establishment of two air stations. Cull arrived from England in July and approved the seaplane base just south of Dartmouth, NS, but moved the Sydney seaplane base to the western side of North Sydney. Despite the lateness of the season, Cull persuaded the USN to implement the April agreement. The Canadian government was to furnish the site and buildings and all ground equipment, while the American government was to provide the aircraft and the personnel to operate them as well as the operating expenses. British and Canadian naval officers were ultimately responsible for control of the stations and for operations; however, supervision and direction of the officers was to be the responsibility of the U.S. Navy. The Americans created the office of Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Air Forces, Canada and detailed Lieutenant R.E. Byrd USN, later an Admiral renowned for his polar exploits, to the new command. Additionally, Lieutenant Byrd was ordered to assume direct command of U.S. Naval Air Station Halifax and to act as liaison officer between the American and Canadian governments in naval aviation matters.

Although progress up to this point in establishing the air patrols was gratifying, it was not rapid enough to meet the alarming situation that developed in the first week of August 1918 when U-156 sank six vessels southeast of Nova Scotia. The submarine also captured a large Canadian fishing

boat and mounted a gun on its deck that was used to wreak havoc among Canadian fishermen. At the same time, numerous mines were laid by the submarine. They were discovered along the Nova Scotia coast. It was crucial to commission the Canadian air stations into operation as soon

Curtiss HS-2L in USN livery being launched from Baker Point into Eastern Passage.





as possible. All haste was made in shipping the equipment and supplies to Halifax that were essential for operations. Lieutenant Byrd arrived at his new base 15 August 1918. Crates containing the first two Curtiss HS-2L seaplanes arrived in Halifax by train 17 August, and were barged across the harbour to the Dartmouth air station and then hauled up on the beach using logs for rollers. The first aircraft was assembled and successfully test flown two days later and the first operational patrol was flown 25 August 1918. Maritime patrol aviation in Canada was born.

During the first few weeks no bombs for the aircraft had yet reached Dartmouth; however, the submarine situation was so serious that depth charges were substituted for bombs with the intention of dropping them by hand on any hostile submarine. Lieutenant Byrd eventually established a detachment of six HS-2L flying boats and several kite balloons to conduct anti-submarine patrols off the approaches to Halifax harbour, along with a second detachment of six HS-2L's at North Sydney. In forming the general operating policy for the aerial patrols, it was agreed not to attempt routine patrols at either Halifax or North Sydney, but to keep two seaplanes solely for escort work and one seaplane at each station for emergency anti-submarine duty. Without interfering with this schedule, as many supplementary patrol flights as possible were also to be flown at each station at the times and locations deemed most likely to produce results. Operations began in earnest the week of 7 September 1918, during which seven escort flights and ten patrol and other flights were made. Emergency flights were made whenever circumstances demanded and all convoys were escorted for a distance of 60 to 75 miles (100 to 125 km) to sea. The force conducted a total of 200 patrol and other flights during the USN deployment, accumulating approximately 400 flying hours.

After the First World War ended in November 1918, the RCNAS was disbanded and the U.S. Navy personnel departed the bases at Dartmouth and North Sydney, returning home. Now promoted, Colonel Cull's final duty was to accompany the Deputy Minister of the Canadian Naval Service to Washington to settle the division of expenses between the two countries. The Canadian government agreed to purchase all American ground equipment at the two stations; in exchange, the United States donated to Canada 12 HS-2L flying boats, 26 Liberty aircraft engines and four kite balloons. Canada's first venture into maritime patrol aviation had cost a total of \$811,168 for bases, equipment and personnel. The American donation was valued at \$600,000 and the flying boats were to give much valuable service to Canada in the years to come.

This small fleet of maritime patrol aircraft and the few buildings which had been built by the Canadian government to support Lieutenant Byrd's detachment were the beginning of what became RCAF Station Dartmouth on 1 April 1924, a forerunner of today's 12 Wing Shearwater, and the onset of 100 years of service. **S**





REMEMBER

By Pat Barnhouse

Active Members



Capt Harry Hewat RICHARDSON, CD, RCN(Ret'd).** In Ottawa 01/07/18 at 88.

Cdr Joseph Anthony STACHON, CD*, RCN(Ret'd). In Osgoode, ON 16/09/18 at 91.

Others Known to Members

PO Charles Emile BEDDOE, RCNVR(Ret'd). In Ottawa 01/04/18 at 98.

LCdr Stephen COWELL, CD*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 05/05/18 at 93.

Surg LCdr Keith Richard FLEGG, CD, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 19/04/18 at 86.

A/Lt William Oliver HANSON, RCN(R)(Ret'd) In Ottawa 22/06/18 at 88.

Cdr Jeffrey Isaac KELLETT, CD*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 14/09/18 at 84.

Cdr Ronald Thomas MACE, CD*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 27/04/18 at 84.

CPO2 Ronald MacKINNON, CD*, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 13/09/18 at 76.

CPO1 William Richard MULOCK, CD, RCN(Ret'd).** In Ottawa 06/04/18 at 85.

CPO1 Beverley Charles POST, CD*, RCN(R)(Ret'd). In Ottawa 14/07/18 at 92.

CPO1 Robert Bernard SOLOMON, CD, RCN(Ret'd). In Ottawa 19/08/18. **S**





Nothing Ventured....

By Richard Archer



I know, I know, in the last *Soundings* I said I had run out of sea stories. But recently I received an invitation from my HMCS *Venture* classmate Eric Waal to participate in the annual *Venture* reunion in Victoria next year. This got me to thinking about some of my memorabilia from those times. I undertook some amateur palaeontology and came across this divisional photo, above, taken in September 1960, not long after my seventeenth birthday. The four



divisions in the cadet population were named after admirals, and I seem to remember that my division in this photo was “Grant”, presumably named after the eponymous post-war Chief of the Naval Staff. That’s me in the middle row second from the right. I know I look bleary-eyed. When I sent this picture home to my parents, my Mum wrote to me saying that she didn’t recognize me.... I believed it was due to the look on my face, but she said it was “because of that big hat you’re wearing”. Regardless, there’s a story attached to the bleary eyes.

Not counting the Chief Cadet Captain, wearing the two callipers on his sleeves (and with an unfortunate puddle under his boots), the senior cadets are eight in number (I see that four of the seniors didn’t





hear the instruction to fold one's arms), while the juniors are sixteen. Two of the cadets are Belgian Navy, the senior in the front row, second from the right, and the junior next to me in the middle row, third from the right. Even so, the ratio between the number of juniors and seniors is telling, in that the first-year attrition rates in this era were around fifty per cent. And it is also telling that the seniors all look so much older than us – I even heard the staff remarking on this. We juniors were called “The lowest form of marine life, lower than even the amoeba”, and treated as such. Evident aging over the junior year was inevitable.

The majority of the cadets at *Venture* were headed for careers in naval aviation – pilots for the most part. Our divisional officer in the front row was the Banshee fighter pilot extraordinaire Lt Geoff Craven.

The photo was taken the morning a group of seven or eight of us in the division had just returned from what was called a “raid” against the perceived arch-enemy Royal Roads, “the boys of bitter homes and gardens”. We were encouraged to do this by our seniors, and since I had joined the Navy looking for adventure, I was all for it.

After curfew the evening before and close to midnight we had made our way down to Esquimalt Harbour and there we borrowed one of the whalers at the *Venture* boat shed. We rowed our way out of the harbour without being challenged, despite the ships being at a higher state of readiness in an exercise, made our way past Fisgard lighthouse and over to the Royal Roads Lagoon spit. We could see the castle sitting like something out of a fairy tale across the lagoon, but it was still a long way away. One cadet volunteered to stay with the whaler while the rest of us made our way across the bridge at the near end of the lagoon, and through the local married quarters to a side Royal Roads gate that was locked but not impassable. A long stumble down a pitch-black lane at last brought us to the grounds proper. I can't remember exactly what we did, but we left indications that we'd been there and liberated some items. We seemed to have the full run of the place, even inside the accommodation blocks – we saw no sign of any security. One cadet hurt himself jumping over what looked like a low wall, but which turned out to have a severe drop on the other side.

After a few hours on the grounds, and supporting the cadet who appeared to have a badly sprained ankle, we reversed our route and found our way back to the whaler – to the understandable and visible relief of the cadet who had remained behind on the spit.

In the dark we rowed our way back to the boat shed without incident. By then it was just getting daylight, and while a couple of cadets were detailed off to help the injured party back to the barracks, the rest of us took some pains to secure the whaler and its oars properly. Unfortunately, on our way back to *Venture* we were stopped by some elderly commissionaires. Now with hindsight, we should have just taken to our heels and left the commissionaires in our dust, but even at this early stage in our careers we had been inculcated with obedience to authority, and we meekly allowed ourselves to be presented to the *Venture* Officer-of-the-Day. While the injured raider and his aides had escaped punishment (“I slipped in the shower”), the rest of us were put on two week's punishment drill, which took place every day before breakfast. This wasn't as bad as it sounds, because it was just more of the same that the seniors had been meting out since the day we arrived.

This wasn't the only raid I was involved in. Occasionally, we would receive intelligence that the Royal Roads cadets were planning a retaliatory raid on *Venture*, and the preparations led by the seniors were extensive, including, for example, the borrowing of a couple of electric shears from the barber to shave the heads of any Roadents that were captured. My role once was to man the telephone in a small office in the barracks block, so as to act as a central clearance house for detected attacks and the countermeasures. Regrettably, nothing materialized. Another time I and my roommate found ourselves on the rocky bluff overlooking the harbour entrance. Our task was to give warning of an attack by sea (another false alarm), but we spent much of our time dodging commissionaire patrols in the dark -- I guess the extra patrols were in reaction to the same heads-up that we had heard. Whatever, I found that I certainly had a taste for adventure, and this was a taste that sustained me throughout my career.





Among the juniors in all four divisions left standing at the end of the first year, five of us were shipped off to Royal Roads and then RMC two years later. (Unusually, our seniors hadn't sent anyone on to Royal Roads.) But at Roads, attrition continued to dog us – one of the ex-*Ventures* was released due to a soccer injury that crushed a kneecap, and another failed academically – but that was okay, because the latter stayed in the Navy, aced his subsequent academics at Dalhousie, and in due course became a vice-admiral.

As a Roads cadet I was engaged in further raids, but only against *Venture*. On one raid I helped rent the car that took the raiders over to Esquimalt. Over the front entrance of the main block the raiders hoisted a bed sheet saying “Knit One, Purl Two, Venture Yoo Hoo! As a hostage, we stole the ship's bell clapper, which was nicely decorated with cord work. Nothing too dramatic happened, except to announce that we were there!

Roads also had a running battle with Victoria College (now the University of Victoria). On one memorable occasion the Vic College crowd drove a truck onto the Roads grounds and in broad daylight loaded and made off with the two brass cannons that guarded the entrance to one of the blocks. This, I understand, was considered by authorities as a prank too far, and after that the hatchet was more or less buried.

At RMC the rivalry was with Queen's University, naturally enough. On one occasion, some cadets crept at night onto the Queen's football pitch and dug the letters RMC into the grass at centre-field -- just in time for the Queen's homecoming game. This was not well-received by authorities on both sides, and it led to a round of hatchet-burying that included invitations to meet and lunch by student leaders.

But back to the *Venture* divisional photo. Just as we were getting organized for the shot, who should appear but the lanky, all knees and knuckles gunnery lieutenant who was the officer in charge of the parade staff. He unfolded himself from the little shed on the edge of the parade square that doubled both as a vault for parade square rifles and as an office, and made his way over to us. In his growling, resounding parade square voice he pronounced that, “The only thing you raiders did wrong was to get caught!”

Post Script. Yes, this is me in the Spring of 1961. It was the time – O heavenly bliss! -- that the seniors (along with all the Belgians from both classes) were away on a South Seas training cruise. I was still 17 years old. That calliper sewn onto my sleeve meant that I was the temporary cadet captain of my division of juniors while the seniors were absent. **S**





Venture Remembered

By Dick Duffield



Thanks for the memory, Richard. In the main photo in your memoir that's me in the second row behind the petty officer. Ah, we were all so young and (mainly) innocent! We started as a class of 63 members, if my memory serves, and at the end of the second year in 1962 we were down to 21 (not including the 5 lost to Royal Roads after the first year, nor the Belgians). *Venture* was a 7-year short-service program – 2 years getting educated to the high school senior matriculation level and indoctrinated as a cadet, and then 5 years of commissioned service, starting as an acting sub-lieutenant. After the 7 years both the individual and the Navy had to agree on any further service. Many of the graduates went on to the Fleet Air Arm, and thus ended up with very marketable skills that enabled them to find a second flying career outside the RCN. Others also found better things to do. Consequently, of the 21, only 6 including myself went on to complete a full career. Regarding attrition, I'm sad to relate that 5 of the graduating class of '62 have now crossed the bar. As for our seniors, the latest I've heard is that of the 28 members of the class of '61, 7 have now passed on. In my view the *Venture* legacy is very much worth remembering. **S**

The Venture Program

Extract from Dr. Wilf Lund's article on Venture published in The Signal, the newsletter of the Venture Association, in December 2000. (Dr Lund was class of '61 and my senior. R.A.)

The creation of *Venture* is part of the larger story in which the RCN struggled to produce sufficient officers and men to complement the massively expanding post-war fleet and its naval aviation component. The imperative for the "Venture Plan" was primarily the unprecedented expansion of the post-war RCN as a result of the Cold War.

The RCN was enormously over-committed, but there was no shortage of optimism. This was tooted as the dawning "Golden Age" of the new navy, equipped with Canadian-designed and built, "best in the world", *St. Laurent* Class ASW destroyer escorts (DDE's), and boasting a large naval aviation component comprising a modernized carrier with Banshee jet fighters and Tracker ASW aircraft embarked. But the RCN was in the order of 895 officers short in 1953.

Venture was conceived as part of the solution, an "emergency plan", for rapidly increasing officer production, and possibly the re-establishment of a naval college, a capability lost with the adaption of Royal Roads to a joint academy in 1947 and 1948.

The Naval Board gave its approval to the "Venture" Plan in October 1953, offering a seven-year short service appointment with the opportunity to transfer to the regular force. Commissioned in September 1954, the *Venture* model and concept of operations, down to white lanyards and fedoras, were a derivation from the old Royal Naval College of Canada (RNCC), established in 1910.

Even the name *Venture* was derived from a training sloop attached to the RNCC. HMCS *Ontario*, the cruiser, was designated to train *Venture* cadets, and HMCS *Oriole*, the RCN's sailing ketch, was assigned to the establishment. The first Commanding Officer was Captain Bob Welland, hero of both the Battle of the Atlantic and Korea. **S**





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Naval Association of Canada - Ottawa

Soundings

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A Directory is enclosed with each autumn issue as an aid to our membership. However, its accuracy depends on how up-to-date your membership profile is. With most members now on the Internet, communications within the Branch can be done quickly and easily - a magnificent medium for the rapid movement of information. Additionally, a current Membership Directory is now available to all members online. Please log-in to your membership account to update your profile, preferences, and options - most importantly your email address. When email messages are bounced, communications with you through the network you are automatically disabled. If not online, please

advise your Membership Director, **Gerry Powell** (see previous page), of any changes you need made to your profile.

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Submissions by email (preferred), telephone, mail, fax, CD or memory stick are welcome. Electronic document files should be converted to WORD format before transmission to the Editor. Images should be in jpeg format. Please remove all automatic formatting!

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