

## Canadian Naval Aces Over Vimy - January to May 1917

### A Bit of Background

During the First World War, fifty Canadians serving with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) achieved the military pilot stature of '**Ace**'. This is a rather amazing figure for a young Dominion that had sent 936 Aviators to fly with the British Navy -- for it meant that approximately one in every twenty had shot down five or more enemy aircraft. The growth in these numbers of Aces really took off with the Battle of Arras. This was the operation that opened on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1917 when Canadian troops captured Vimy Ridge. Prior to that point in the conflict only three Canadian naval pilots could claim the title of Ace, although to be clear, it was not a recognized term until later in the War.

### The First RNAS Ace

Two years previously the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) had taken a severe beating from the Germans with their Fokker Eindeckker, the first aircraft armed with a machine-gun synchronized to fire through a turning propeller, a technology that the Allies did not yet possess. This period, known as the 'Fokker Scourge', was finally countered and overcome by newer Allied flying machines. The RFC had employed pusher-type aircraft, the engine being mounted at the rear giving the pilot an unobstructed firing platform. The RNAS had assisted with the nimble French-built Nieuport 11 'Bebe', a tiny V-Strutted biplane that fired over the propeller arc from a single Lewis machine gun mounted above the top wing.



**Redford 'Red' Mulock** of Winnipeg flew the Nieuport during these early days of solo warbird missions and became not only Canada's but also the **First RNAS Ace**. Mulock achieved this double distinction on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1916.

Flying Nieuport 11 Number 3992, he drove down two enemy aircraft, sending them out of control. They were his fourth and fifth victories.

### A Change in the Air

By the time of the disastrous Somme ground battles in the summer of 1916, the RFC had regained control of the skies with a policy of Offensive Patrol - taking the fight to the enemy. The Germans then reorganized

themselves with the implementation of a strategy of *Jagdstaffeln* - that is 'Jastas' or hunter squadrons. The day of the solitary fighter pilot patrol was largely over and once more the future of the RFC appeared bleak. The casualties caused by carrying the fight behind enemy lines began to take a huge toll. Prevailing west winds and engine failures on the wrong side of 'No-Man's-Land' were as much a problem for Allied pilots as the Germans themselves. On top of all this, the RFC needed to expand in order to support a Spring Offensive planned for 1917. The demands in terms of both men and machinery could never be ready in time due to the continual attrition.

### The Navy Comes Alongside

The Army's War Office asked the Royal Navy's Admiralty for assistance. The RNAS had been growing in strength and numbers at their Dover-Dunkirk cross-channel command. Furthermore, the Navy had ordered a new 'scout' (the Great War term for 'fighter') aircraft, the Sopwith Pup, with a synchronized Vickers machine-gun and Canadian pilots were now beginning to arrive in greater numbers from the flying schools. Thus, Naval 8 Squadron, equipped with the Pup and staffed by British and Canadian pilots, was formed and immediately placed on loan to the beleaguered RFC in late 1916.

The primary work of scout aircraft was to provide cover for RFC machines that were reconnoitering the trenches and pinpointing German artillery guns for Allied counter battery fire. Dominance of the air was vital. Aerial spotting and photography would give the Canadian Corps crucial data for their part of the Spring Offensive -- an assault on the strategically important Vimy Ridge - with the ultimate objective of breaking the stalemate of the Western Front trenches once and for all. However, without the 'eyes' of the RFC, the Artillery, the supreme weapon of the Great War, would be firing blind.

Across the lines, a Jagdstaffeln headed by German Ace Manfred von Richthofen was waiting to pounce on the British observation machines. These enemy aircraft were colorfully painted and led by Richthofen in his personalized red machine. Allied aviators dubbed them the 'Red Baron' and his 'Flying Circus' but this was not a fun show. The German pilots were more experienced than both the newly minted Canadian Flight Sub-Lieutenants and recently graduated RFC 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants.

### Two Additional Canadian Naval Aces

This first RNAS squadron to fly support with the RFC, Naval 8, began scout operations in November 1916. By the end of that month, **Daniel Murray Bayne Galbraith** of Carleton Place Ontario had brought down

his fourth, fifth and sixth enemy aircraft, becoming Deadly combat losses also hit Naval 8, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1917 the Red Baron opened his new year's scorecard with a Canadian naval airman, Allan Switzer Todd (Georgetown ON). Richthofen reported, "...One of the English planes attacked us and we saw immediately that the enemy plane was superior to ours. Only because we were three against one did we detect the enemy's weak points. I managed to get behind him and shot him down. The plane broke apart whilst falling." Todd was victory number 16 for von Richthofen. Poignantly, a photograph of Richtofen's study shows a torn fabric remnant of Todd's aircraft registration, N5193, prominently displayed.



That same day, Todd's squadron mate **Edward Rochfort Grange** (Toronto) shot down three enemy aircraft and was an **Ace** by January 7<sup>th</sup>.

Unfortunately he sustained a shoulder wound in this last action and was effectively out of battle for what would soon follow. (Although a Canadian, Grange was born in Lansing, Michigan, and is in essence the first American Naval Ace).

### More Naval Scout Squadrons Brought Aboard

The aerial assistance of Naval 8 proved so successful that the Army urgently appealed to the Admiralty for additional help. In response the Royal Navy drew upon its strategic bombing unit, Number 3 Wing, as a main source of experienced pilots. Nearly four-dozen Canadian aviators had learned combat flying with the Wing.

Four additional scout squadrons were thus raised and slated for operations under RFC control. By March 1917, three of these units were operating like Naval 8 'in the field'. A new 3 Naval, commanded by our first Ace, 'Red' Mulock, had relieved Naval 8 in February, taking over their Sopwith Pups. Newly constituted 1 Naval and a rested and re-equipped Naval 8, were operating the very latest fighter, the Sopwith Triplane, which boasted an incredible climbing agility. 6 Naval was flying the Nieuport 17, an upgraded version of the 'Bebe'. Finally, the fourth new fighter unit, 10 Naval, flying the Triplane, would enter the fray in April. (Any former RCN Air Branch type can truly appreciate the tremendous amount of administrative, training and equipping efforts necessary for this build-up of an effective fighting force).

Naval 3 had a sad initiation into battle on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March. In vicious aerial combat with four German

### Canada's **second naval Ace**.

Albatros scouts from Jasta 1 over Vis-en-Atrois, the Squadron's 'B' Flight lost two Canadians. Hank Wambolt (Dartmouth NS) fell out of his Sopwith Pup at 6,000 feet during the violent maneuvering; James Percy White (Winnipeg) was also killed in the action. On a positive side, the Squadron's

**John Joseph Malone** (Regina) shot down three enemy aircraft on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. These were his second, third and fourth kills. By the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, Malone became the **fourth Canadian Naval Ace**.

The month of April got off to a poor start for Naval 6 when they suffered their first casualty. FLt Robert Kenneth Slater (Ottawa), was shot down near Arras and taken prisoner of war. Of interest, Slater's Nieuport 17 was the same type flown by Canadian RFC pilot, Billy Bishop of Owen Sound, Ontario, who made Ace on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April. The first Canadian RFC Ace was Alan Duncan Bell-Irving of Vancouver, who had flown the Nieuport Bebe to this distinction on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1916.

### Vimy Ridge

On Easter Monday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1917, the Battle of Arras began in earnest. A four-day preamble of artillery concentration had taken out many of the targets pre-registered by the observation aircraft. As Canadian troops funneled out of tunnels and trenches in the dawn light they advanced through the cratered landscape left behind by the 'creeping barrage' of Allied shelling. Canadian Field Artillery gunners were executing a fire-plan carefully crafted from aerial photographs, keeping the German soldiers and machine-gunners pinned down until Canadian infantry overran the enemy



trenches. The uphill assault on Vimy Ridge was also obscured by sleet and snow. Flying conditions were deplorable but Naval 8 did manage to get airborne.



### **Joe Fall**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, Von Richthofen shot down and killed his second Canadian naval aviator and 52<sup>nd</sup> victim. Eddie Cuzner (Ottawa) was flying a Sopwith Triplane with Naval 8 and had been active over Vimy Ridge during the Canadian attack in

spite of the sticky weather. His Sopwith Triplane was the first and only one of this type to be brought down by the Red Baron. Richthofen was reported to have been very impressed by the altitude gaining ability of the three-winged 'Tripehound' and demanded a similar type machine from German industry. The Dutch aircraft designer Anthony Fokker would provide the famous DR1 Triplane in response. In a year's time, Richthofen, in his signature red Fokker, would be engaged by a third Canadian Naval airman and on that occasion would not emerge the victor.

Two days later Naval 3 was hard at work. While acting as escort to a bombing raid on Cambrai, **Lloyd 'Bread' Breadner** (Carleton Place ON) engaged 3 hostile machines in succession, bringing them all down; one in flames, one completely out of control, and the third in a spinning nose-dive with a wing broken off. Breadner's wingman, **Joe Fall** (Cobble Hill BC) also scored a triple victory in a running battle over the lines. He drove down one of several hostile machines attempting to attack the bombers. Then, becoming detached from the rest of the formation, he was set upon by three enemy aircraft. Sending one down in flames, he caused another to break off and limp back to its own lines. Fall then brought his gun to bear on the third and sent it crashing. The twenty-one year old Canadian managed to get back across the lines and land safely. His aircraft was riddled with bullet damage from aircraft, infantry and cavalry. In his own words: "When I landed, the wings dropped down to the ground like a hen over a brood of chicks". The cross-braced landing wires on his biplane had been shot apart. The wings had been held intact by the flying wires alone and on touchdown they collapsed. For this day's triple victory, Joe Fall won the first of three Distinguished Service Crosses. He was to become the only aviation holder of the DSC with two Bars in history.

Both of these Canadians **made Ace** on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.

Breadner spectacularly brought down a German Gotha bomber as one of his five. This was the first Gotha shot out of the sky over the Western Front -- no easy feat in a tiny Pup. During the Second World War, Breadner would rise to prominence as the Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Naval 10 was the fifth Squadron to enter battle. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, **Raymond Collishaw** (Nanaimo BC) joined the unit following a sick leave from frostbite and eye injury suffered when a bullet shattered his flying goggles. 'Collie' had already distinguished himself by shooting down four enemy machines; two while flying the Sopwith Strutter and two with the Sopwith Pup. His eyes were proven well healed as he scored his **fifth kill** on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. That same day, a German Leutnant, one Herman Goring of Jasta 26, also became an Ace over the Arras front.

Sadly, the last day of April brought death to 3 Naval. **JJ 'Jack' Malone** (Regina) by now a **10-victory Ace** was shot down and killed. Ltn Paul Billik of Jasta 12 claimed the score. Malone was awarded a posthumous DSO in May 1917. Like so many aviators whose bodies were never recovered, his name is engraved on the Arras Flying Services Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

**10 Victory Ace Malone, on the Right with hand in pocket has his arm around Calgary 'Nick' Carter who became an Ace in late May 1917.**

The German Billik went on to shoot down a total of 30 Allied aircraft before being captured in August 1918.

In the first week of May, the RNAS gained three more Ace pilots. **Hazel LeRoy Wallace** (Lethbridge AB) with 3 Naval; **Merril Samuel Taylor** (Regina) with 9 Naval and a tenth Canadian Ace, **Harold Spencer Kerby** (Calgary) of 3 Naval. Kerby, son of the Mayor of Calgary, had been the fourth Canadian to join the RNAS when he signed up in March 1915. He flew initially in the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli Campaign and was wounded and invalided back to England after several

months of service. Fully recovered, he would go on to bag total of 9 enemy machines including two Gotha bombers. Following the War, he was granted a permanent commission in the RAF and would retire as an Air Vice Marshal in 1945.

## Conclusion

The fourth month of 1917 became known in aviation history as 'Bloody April' due to the severity of the casualties suffered by the RFC and the RNAS. Two hundred and seventy-five aircraft were shot down J.Allan Snowie Bellingham WA

Photo Credits:

- Mulock is from the Yeovilton Fleet Air Arm Museum
- Malone (and Carter) from the Magazine 'Cross & cockade'
- Grange from the book "Chronology of Canadian Aviation"

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## THE CASE OF THE SPURIOUS SAWBONES

by Les Peate

In the fall of 1951, a lady glancing through her daily newspaper inadvertently unmasked one the most unusual deceptions in Canadian naval history.

She was the mother of a Doctor, Joseph Cyr, who was practicing medicine in Grand Falls, New Brunswick. To her astonishment, she read an account of an emergency operation performed on the deck of a Canadian destroyer off the coast of Korea—apparently by her son. She contacted Doctor Cyr, who, after reassuring his mother he was indeed still in civilian practice, called the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A bizarre story unfolded. Ferdinand Waldo ("Fred") Demara



It began in early 1951, when an American named Ferdinand Waldo ("Fred") Demara entered Canada and became a Novitiate monk in Grand Falls.

For more than a decade Demara had held positions in a number of religious orders, and as a psychologist, university lecturer, college department head, school teacher, and prison warden. Despite this impressive employment record, Demara—later to become famous as "The Great Imposter"—had obtained and held these posts on the basis of forged, stolen or nonexistent qualifications.

Demara became friendly with Doctor Cyr, and often

causing 421 casualties of who 207 died. The carnage to the new pilots gave rise to the truthful rumor that an aviator's life span on the Western Front was measured in days.

When the Battle of Arras ended in mid May, Canada could boast of having produced ten Naval Aces. By November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, this figure will have increased five fold.

visited the latter's offices. Eventually the visits ceased.

In March of 1951, a Doctor Cyr appeared at the Naval recruiting office in Saint John, N.B., and offered his pro-fessional services to the Royal Canadian Navy. He hinted that if the navy couldn't use him, the Army or RCAF would be glad to accept him. At this stage of the Korean War and with Canada's new NATO commitments, qualified medical officers were desperately needed by all three services, and no time was lost in processing this valuable recruit.

"Cyr's" credentials were accepted without verification, and three days after his visit to the recruiting centre, he was commissioned into the RCN as a Surgeon-Lieutenant. The normal two-month enlistment process took about one day.

Had a thorough background investigation been conducted, the authorities would no doubt have discovered that "Doctor Joseph Cyr" was none other than the ubiquitous Fred Demara, whose medical experience was limited to a few weeks as an unskilled hospital orderly in the United States.

The bogus doctor was assigned to the naval hospital at HMCS Stadacona in the Halifax area. Retired naval Captain "Mack" Lynch, who was a department head in Stadacona at the time, recalls "Cyr" appeared to be a fairly competent medical officer, and a pleasant enough individual, although not a great mixer. Captain Lynch remembers that Cyr showed a great deal of interest in adapting aircrew selection psycho physical test methods (which Lynch had taken in World War II) as a naval screening procedure.

"Cyr's" hospital patients apparently survived his ministrations by a combination of generous use of penicillin, referral or consultation with other medical officers and, no doubt, a combination of physical fitness and sheer luck!

This idyllic existence ended on 15th June, 1951 when "Cyr" joined HMCS Cayuga in Esquimalt, B.C—leaving three days later for the destroyer's second tour of duty in

Korean waters.

"Surgeon-Lieutenant Cyr" managed to cope effectively with the few minor injuries and ailments which occurred en route to the war zone. He was fortunate in that he had a capable Sick Berth Attendant, P.O. Bob Hotchin, who handled most of the routine cases. The Petty Officer was surprised, and indeed gratified, by the way in which he was allowed to work with a minimum of direction and interference from his medical officer.

"Cyr's" biggest challenge came when he was forced to act as a dentist. His patient was none other than the Cayuga's Commander, Captain James Plomer. In the rush to prepare his ship for her return to Korea, On arrival off the west coast of Korea, Cayuga and her crew became involved in operations that smacked more of the "gunboat diplomacy" of the nineteenth century than the traditional picture of naval warfare. Captain Don Saxon, who was a Lieutenant-Commander at the time, recalls that the Canadian vessels would take part in commando-type operations against enemy-occupied islands. Selected members of the ships' crews would accompany members of U.S. or Korean Marines ashore and with their weapons and demolition charges generally create "alarm and despondency" in enemy circles. While our own casualties were light, the amount of "hairiness" involved was evidenced by a number of gallantry awards, including a Distinguished Service Cross for Saxon.

One of these "commando" raids led to Demara's unmasking. Following a highly successful foray off the West coast of Korea, the only three seriously-wounded casualties—all South Korean guerillas—were brought back to Cayuga. One apparently had a bullet embedded in his lung. He was operated upon on the spot by the ship's medical officer, by all accounts successfully, although no one ever saw the bullet which was supposedly extracted. (Other reports indicate that "Cyr" also amputated a foot during those naval operations.)



Whatever his qualifications, it would appear that the patients survived the attentions of the bogus doctor.

Unfortunately for the masquerade, news from Korea was scarce at that time. A pair of war correspondents snapped up the story of the "open deck" surgery—the account found its way into Canadian papers, and the real Doctor Cyr began asking questions. He remembers that his medical credentials were missing, but attributed the fact to a recent move. He also recalled that "Brother John"—Demara—disappeared at the same time.

Captain Plomer had no time to obtain treatment for an infected tooth, which became a problem during the westward voyage. The bogus doctor, highly perturbed, feverishly studied his manuals and racked his brain to recall any dental surgery that he had witnessed in the past. He eventually gained the courage to collect his dental gear, a large supply of anesthetic and make his way to the captain's cabin.

After administering a hefty dose of local anesthetic, "Cyr" successfully removed the offending tooth, and by all reports, Captain Plomer had no further trouble with it. His confidence no doubt restored, the bogus doctor continued to handle routine shipboard injuries and minor ailments as Cayuga entered the war zone.

Eventually, in October 1951, Captain Plomer received a signal to the effect that his medical officer was an unqualified imposter. He found this hard to believe, as in the opinion of the ship's officers, "Cyr" was a capable and popular doctor. Another message received the following day removed all doubts, and "Dr. Cyr" was transferred to a British cruiser RMS Ceylon, for transfer to Japan and subsequently to Canada.

Lieutenant Commander Saxon, with another officer, was detailed to search the doctor's cabin, and found letters and other documents which confirmed the imposter, Demara—there was no question of his identity by this time—had apparently taken an overdose of drugs that day. Whether or not this was a suicidal attempt is questionable, although Captain Plomer felt that it was.

On arrival in Canada, Demara appeared before a naval board of enquiry. There appears to be no record of disciplinary proceedings, and service records indicate that "Cyr" was given an honourable release and several hundred dollars in back pay. He left Canada (some reports indicate that he was deported) and returned to the religious field, eventually becoming a bona-fide clergyman under his own name.

John Melady, author of *Korea, Canada's Forgotten War*, recalls a telephone interview in which Demara "Had good things to say about Canada, the Canadian Navy and the officers and men he knew on the Cayuga." Demara supposedly participated in a Cayuga reunion in Victoria in 1979. The Reverend Ferdinand Waldo Demara died in 1982.

One minor deception remained as a result of Demara's escapade. In 1961 Hollywood made a movie, *The Great Imposter*, starring Tony Curtis in the title role. "He was nothing like the real thing", chuckled Don Saxon. "Cyr", as we knew him, was a pretty chunky 200- pounder—nothing at all like Curtis. And Edmond O'Brien was just as much out of place in the role of

Captain Plomer."

Captain Plomer was listed in the film credits as "technical adviser" but Saxon feels that his "technical advice" was not always heeded. "I noted the incongruity of a Canadian naval board of enquiry consisting of a group of officers properly clad in RCN uniforms with every member sporting a black pencil moustache.

In one case, apparently, Commodore Plomer had his way. He was able to ensure that the correct hull number was used for his ship. This generated a deception which Demara would surely have enjoyed.

Cayuga (Hull number 218) was on the east coast—the film crew was working out of Esquimalt British Columbia. As George Guertin, a naval veteran of the Korean War, recalls, "In 1961, I was out west on HMCS Athabaskan. We got an unusual order to 'paint ship'. A bunch of us had to close up the '9' on our side number to make out '219' read '218'. We were told that it was something to do with a movie. When we saw *The Great Imposter* we realized that there were really two imposters, Demara and Athabaskan..

*Published courtesy of Esprit de Corps Magazine Les Peate served in the British Army during the Korean War, followed by 16 years in the Canadian Forces. He is the National Vice-President of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada as well as an Associate Editor, Esprit de Corps Magazine.*

## AURORA BEGINNINGS

by Ernie Cable

The Aurora maritime patrol aircraft had an uncertain beginning because the government had to overcome difficulties in arranging bridge financing with the banks before the billion plus dollar program could be approved. Also some government departments were reticent to lend their approval as this was the first program in DND's history to exceed a billion dollars and there was some doubt about the defence department's ability to manage such a large program. Under the guidance of the Aurora project's first Program Manager, Admiral Dudley Allen, the program was eventually approved and became the management model for succeeding major capital programs. More importantly, the Aurora was delivered on budget, on schedule and exceeded most of its performance goals. It was at this point, in 1976, that I joined the Aurora Program Office as the Operational Requirements Manager where I was responsible for developing the aircraft's operational requirements and coordinating with designers of the many other ground support systems to ensure they were compatible with the Aurora. This was very good planning by the career manager as I had just completed a three year exchange tour at the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Development Center (NADC) where as a member of the P-3C Update Project, I was involved in the design and testing the prototype aircraft and training the first U.S. Navy squadron to transition to the production P-3C Update aircraft. Since the Aurora was derived from the P-3C my experience was tailored to the needs of the



Aurora Program Office.

A DND fleet sizing study determined that 24 Auroras would be required to perform all of the tasks the government required. However, the Trudeau government unilaterally reduced the number to 18. Furthermore, the operating costs including spares, repair and overhaul, could not exceed those of the Argus, the aircraft the Aurora was replacing. But, with the Aurora being able to fly higher and faster we planned to be able to spend more time at sea with the same operating budget as the Argus. We planned to maximize the operational availability of the Aurora by off-loading as much training as possible from the aircraft. Much more

Another major component of the Aurora program was the Data Interpretation and Analysis Center (DIAC). The DIAC tailored all of the Aurora operational program tapes to each mission and had the

of the aircrew training would be performed in two high fidelity flight simulators, one for the pilots and flight engineers and the other for the navigators and sensor operators. A more innovative approach to reduce demands on aircraft availability was the use of maintenance training devices (simulators for engines, propellers, flight controls, fuel systems etc.) to train the technicians which previously had been carried out almost exclusively on the aircraft.

The Aurora was the Air Force's first heavily computerized aircraft with extensive software support requirements. We made the decision to maintain the Aurora software within the Air Force as all of the Aurora's operational doctrine, tactics and procedures were imbedded in its software. More importantly, software changes would not be limited by unaffordable costs if contracted out to industry, especially if there were a sole source contractor; this was a lesson learned from the U.S. Navy. The Aurora Software Development Unit was formed to support all software related to the Aurora, including aircraft simulators, maintenance training devices and other ground support systems. One of the hurdles of introducing software into a major weapon system was educating the higher echelons about software and the costs of supporting it. In the mid-1970's it was necessary to explain the new software paradigm; software, unlike hardware, didn't rust, shake, rattle or roll and when it broke it had to be restored to something other than the original configuration.

To establish the Aurora maintenance policy a "Maintenance Appraisal Team" was established. The team analyzed every component of the Aurora and determined whether it would be a throw-away part or be maintained at first, second or third level. Once the maintenance concept was formulated the maintenance manuals had to be written and the training program for each of the aircraft maintenance trades established. Similarly, the "Aircraft Operating Instructions" had to be written for the aircrew trades to stipulate the procedures to fly the Aurora and delineate the operation of all of the aircraft's systems, including the hardware and software functions of the avionic and sensor systems. For both the maintenance manuals and operating instructions there was pressure to just use the U.S. Navy publications to save time and money. However, the Canadian Air Force has different operating and maintenance philosophies from the U.S. Navy. It was important to maintain the well established Canadian ethos so that as personnel transitioned from a previous aircraft to the Aurora there would be no change in Air Force training, operating and maintenance concepts.

capability to retrieve and catalogue the data amassed from each sortie so that each mission could be replayed and analyzed minute by minute. Succeeding flights were planned on the intelligence gained from previous

missions. The DIAC not only supported Aurora missions but also the training missions flown in the operational simulators. Also, the Aurora operational programs had to be compatible with the U.S. Navy's and the RAF's maritime operations centers so that the Aurora would be interoperable with our NATO allies. Similarly, the DIAC had to be capable of playing mission tapes from our allies' aircraft.

The career managers were very cooperative in pre-positioning people. They arranged for the aircrew and maintenance instructors on 404 Training Squadron to be sent to Lockheed, the Aurora's manufacturer, to train on the Aurora; they would in turn train the remaining Argus squadrons on the Aurora and its systems. It was at this point that I learned that I was to be the C.O. of 405 Squadron the first operational squadron to transition to the Aurora. BGen Pickering, the Deputy Program Manager and the designate Commander of Maritime Air Group, told me that since I had headed up defining the Aurora's requirements my job was to take the aircraft into the field and make it work. I consulted with the career managers to ensure that the most experienced Argus aircrew were posted to 405 Squadron. I was concerned that our crews flying the new



Aurora would be flying an aircraft that was very different from the Argus; the Aurora flew faster and higher in a very different flight regime than the Argus and I wanted to have experienced

aircrew to ameliorate potential transition difficulties.

Although, I knew the Aurora's technical aspects as well as anyone I still wanted to lead my first four crews from 405 Squadron, through the first 404 Squadron Aurora conversion course. This not only allowed me to validate the course that we in the Program Office had established but also to get to know my crews and refresh my tactical knowledge. Although, everyone was enthusiastic about learning to fly a new aircraft there were always comments such as, "Why did they ever design it this way?" Having been involved in the development of the aircraft I was able to explain the design and cost constraints and everyone seemed happy to know that their questions had at least been considered by the designers. The pilots found the Aurora a delight to fly, fast and manoeuvrable like sports car and its four T-56 Allison turboprop engines provided lots of power. The navigators and airborne electronic sensors operators were really impressed with their new found capabilities and the computer centric, state-of-the-art avionics and sensors which represented

a two generation leap in technology over the Argus.

After the squadron crews had about 3,000 flying hours under their collective belts I felt comfortable that our aircrews' experience levels had avoided any safety issues that might have been related to transitioning to a new aircraft. I had the opportunity to fly as the tactical coordinator with one my crews on the squadron's first mission to track a Soviet submarine in the Labrador Sea. It was a very complex tactical situation, successfully converting a convergence zone detection to direct path tracking. This was a tailor made situation to establish the credibility of a new C.O.; having the technical knowledge to introduce a new aircraft to the squadron and then demonstrating how the aircraft should be used tactically. Indeed, all of the squadron crews continued to experience unprecedented success during their ASW missions. The U.S. Navy and the RAF also noticed our successes; this opened intelligence doors that had been closed and we were invited to participate in national operations in which "non-nationals" had previously been prohibited. The sterling performance of the Auroras and their crews signalled to our NATO partners that Canada was intent on making a first class contribution to the alliance.

In 1981, I led our 405 Squadron contingent, representing Canada, to Adelaide, Australia to compete in the Fincastle competition which is emblematic of ASW supremacy among Commonwealth maritime air forces. In its first appearance with the Aurora our 405 Squadron crew won the competition, beating the top crews from England, Australia and New Zealand. I was very proud of our 405 aircrew as they had been flying the Aurora for only six months. However, I was especially proud of the ground crew as they had to maintain the Aurora away from home base for the first time and had some unusual and perplexing maintenance problems; it was only through their extraordinary dedication and innovation that the aircrew got airborne to win the competition. After winning Fincastle the Aurora was acknowledged as one the finest ASW aircraft in the world. I had the privilege of being part of the Aurora's development and proud of leading one its first crews to an international victory.

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SERVICES TO THE  
SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM  
NOSTALGIA**

From: **Bob McNish**

I was serving in HMCS Venture 1964 -1967.

One Sunday afternoon my wife and I were out for a stroll in Esquimalt and came upon the Veteran's Cemetery



quite by accident. I was not aware that Norm Odgen and Don Clarke were buried there, but it seemed we were destined to come upon their headstones. They were buried in adjacent plots. I took no photos then.

I served in HMCS Provider 1977 - 1980 (Provider was at that time operating USN Detachments consisting of Three Sea Kings and I was the 'Air Officer'). My



predecessors had been Dave Williams, and Nick Winchester. During that tour I visited the cemetery a couple of times to view the headstones.

**Hank, Darleen, Iona, and me.**

About five years ago or so on a visit to Esquimalt I visited that cemetery again. The evening before leaving

Tsawwassen, I spoke to Hank Bannister and told him I was going to the Veteran's Cemetery. Hank advised me that he, Darleen and Iona, Norm's widow were meeting for lunch on the day of my visit and I should join them. **Bob**

P.S. You may recall JFK was assassinated the day before on 22 Nov 63

P.P.S. Norm and I were Midshipmen together on #JAOTC in HMCS Cornwallis Jan 54 to Aug 54, HMCS Quebec Sep 54 to May 55, and we served together in VS880 Sqn

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**BILL FARRELL -**

It's been just over a year since Bill left us and not too much was said about his passing due to following his lead that Obit's etc would not be printed. However, I do believe you might be interested in the following few quotations from folks who knew him well. **Kay**.

Most of you will be aware of Bill's valiant efforts on behalf of Naval Aviation and many will have enjoyed his wit as editor of the Shearwater Aviation Museum's periodical. He will be missed. **Brother - Daniel**

A great and dedicated guy, God bless him. The stories about Bill are endless, especially those concerning him and another old warrior- **Duke Wardrop**.

He will certainly be missed and well remembered for all he did for Shearwater in particular and Naval Aviation in general. **Dave Tate**

Sir William was a great inspiration to all of us in Naval Air. Let us know if the Ouija Board works. **Bill Cody**

We have lost a great and dedicated person in Bill who we will truly miss. However, his legend will live on with the Firefly project which was his pride and joy. **Bud MacLean**

Bill was such a kindly and stalwart old war horse and always a Shearwater champion second to none. It won't

be the same around there without him. **Larry McWha**

Bill was not only one of the rare lovers of the classics with a good natured tolerance for lesser beings or "peasants" in the "fish head division".. He was above all, a genuine character and wit who contributed more than anyone else to the image of the Air Branch as an irreverent and inveterate party making, joke playing and hell raising bunch of mavericks. In this, he had plenty of company with such notables as Harry Swiggum, Bruce Oland, Hank Isaac, Bruce Tory, Bill Munro, Charlie Bourque, Eddie Myers and others. There should be enough to fill a book by survivors and material from Rod Bays and Stu Soward's collections. . To the very end, Bill remained true to his talent for tongue in cheek, self-deprecating humour. This was his final such gift to us, fittingly in writing his own death announcement. **Ralph Fisher**

A quote from Bill's Obit: ....he joined the Royal Canadian Navy, in which he served for 24 years. He served in Naval Aviation in the aircraft carriers WARRIOR and MAGNIFICENT and in several frigates and destroyers, none of which he had sent to the bottom. His last sea appointment was in the destroyer, IROQUOIS during the Korean War. While never decorated for bravery in combat, he was nonetheless frequently mention in Dispatches although not always desired. Bill, in his retirement years, chose to take up flying as a second career resulting in the loss of only several aircraft with no loss of life. Having learned what not to do, Bill moved into the area of flight instruction and it is believed most of his students still survive. Bill's last position was as C.F.I. for the Shearwater Flying Club. Bill was also a great supporter for improving the capabilities of Canada's military and spent many tireless hours championing for 21<sup>st</sup> century ships, supported by improvements to the Shearwater Naval Air Base.....

Adding the above is probably going to be the one and only time I vary from Bill's rule that Obit's etc will not be printed. **Ed.**

No one can match Bill's wit, wisdom and his devotion to saving Shearwater. As I've mentioned before, he gave me a Ouija Board so we could keep in touch after he passed on. I think it must be working - his presence is always felt during Newsletter preparation time. **Kay**

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### **Sprinkling of Memories**

It was during the hockey season of 1952-3. The Shearwater Flyers were sent to Newfoundland on a recruiting gambit designed to lure young Newfoundlander's into the service of the Queen. Ask Junior Foote for a testimonial.

Stu Mingo was our no nonsense center and was good to be around as he could beat up anybody and therefore was left alone, most often he came up with the puck too. It seems his beautiful wife, Marlene wanted some bath towels and Stu was to gather up some and bring them home for her. We stayed overnight in Gander on our last night having come over from the Town of Buchans, after a boisterous game with the loggers. Junior Foote was their goalie and very good too. The hotels were "H " huts named for the planets, Saturn, Pluto etc. It was here that Stu excelled in his mission to bring home some bath towels. After allocating all his hockey gear to others with room in their bags he was to be seen throughout the night furtively casing the empty rooms and coming up with a volume of towels to be summarily stuffed in his otherwise empty kit. We loaded an Air Force DC 3 next morn and returned to Shearwater where Stu went happily home to his overjoyed wife, now the recipient of a deluge of bath towels.

But wait, the tale is not yet fully related, as it turns out the bath towels were not indeed bath towels but bath MATS! Nor were any of us present when this fact was revealed by Marlene and the subsequent disorder is not recorded. But as souvenirs they were priceless, each having the hotel name embossed on each mat thereby proclaiming their place of origin. What happened to them only Stu knows.

It was the winter of 1951 when I arrived in Shearwater after Cornwallis and I immediately became involved in hockey. Stu headed up the base team, he was much older of course. We played in every league available to us including the South Shore, APC, Industrial , Base and Ship teams. We had Shatford, Scotland, Veysey, Gommer, Knatchbell, Saleski, Darch, Briard Cole, Lyons, Oxholm, Dawson, Zimmer, Johnson and many others but to name a few.

Stu was the only married man I knew and we always got along. One of the treats of this association is we got to spend time visiting their home in PMQ where Marlene always had coffee going and it was consumed as we sat around in a quasi hot stove league mulling the hockey events of the day. The door to the Mingos was ever open and that endured long after I had left the scene. These were the first married people I had met since joining the RCN and they made us single guys quite envious.

Our contact was severed about the time Stu had a serious car accident and I had left the Navy in 1955. It was only four years ago that I learned Stu and Marlene were in Ontario. We subsequently hooked up again in

Lunenburg at the Tall Ships display in 2004. Eddie McSweeney also visited and we had some really good gams amongst old friends.

This is just a sprinkling of the memories of the good old times in the good old days. This is indeed a story of relationships begun in the teenage years which have endured over decades and is a unique testimonial to the men and women who formed the extended family of Naval Air. **Allan Browne, LSAR1**

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## COLD WAR VETERANS

*Ed Smith*

On a visit to Annapolis Royal on Canada Day 2005 Lieutenant Governor Freeman paid tribute to and met with veterans who were present at the veteran ceremonies in the Legion hall. When speaking with her regarding the recognition given to military participants and losses in World War 1 and 2, Korea and Peacekeeping, I lamented that on this day and many other such times, Cold War casualties are rarely acknowledged. During our very brief discussion I stated that with her permission I would send her some thoughts regarding this oversight that is so prevalent in our country.

In writing to her I explained, as a naval pilot during the Cold War, I was very much involved in that conflict and had first hand knowledge of some of the fatalities suffered by military personnel during that period.

At the risk of lecturing her on a subject with which she may be very familiar, I outlined some aspects of the Cold War particularly those regarding Canada's naval activities and personnel. The lack of recognition afforded this very dangerous period with the loss of life and the injuries that occurred is an affront to those and their families who were directly involved.

Possibly the term "Cold War" implied to many Canadians there was no shooting and therefore no risk involved. Didn't everyone just sit around and pick up their pay while the diplomats debated and the Strategic Air Command kept the "enemy" far away? That was far from the total reality.

Pointing out that from the partitioning of Europe after WW 2 to the collapse of the Soviet Union there was a heightened state of conflict between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies centered to a great extent on nuclear weapons potential. Much of the confrontation involved Intercontinental missiles as well as missiles of shorter range. Most were designed to carry nuclear warheads. That stand-off impinged greatly on our military.

Canadian and NATO navies were directly involved in countering the Soviet Navy's nuclear powered submarines operating off our shores. These submarines could launch missiles capable of reaching military and civilian targets well inside our country. As well there were, constantly, many large Soviet Bloc fishing fleets and, at times, naval surface ships off our coasts. Most were equipped to monitor our civilian and military communications, giving them much intelligence that could be significant in the event of situations leading to conflict.

These Soviet forces, particularly the submarines, had to

be located and tracked. Canada's defensive operations to these threats were carried out from shore air bases, listening stations and naval ships. Canadian manned aircraft carriers, Warrior, Magnificent and lastly, Bonaventure with escort and support ships, formed the backbone of Canada's naval reaction to the submarine and intelligence menace until Bonaventure was removed from fixed wing operations in 1969 and decommissioned in 1970. (Another aspect of the Unification story)

To illustrate this tense, little known and largely forgotten period of time one only has to read of or, for some of us, remember the Cuban crisis in 1962. While most recall it as a United States' affair, Canada's military and particularly naval and air forces were on high alert in every respect. Our country's naval concentration in the Halifax area and alliance with NATO made it one of the prime targets for Soviet strategists. How many recall the "Diefenbunkers" and the warning sirens that were installed and the population being advised, particularly on these Maritime coasts, to know their escape routes out of target areas such as Halifax? Who remembers households being told to establish tight, nuclear fallout-protected basements and stock up with food supplies to allow a chance of survival in the event of nuclear attack? This was the scenario in the Cold War which Maritime Naval and Air Force's were trying to prevent.

The many Soviet submarines operating off our coast in a clandestine manner were highly mobile and therefore it was difficult to pinpoint their locations and monitor their activities. Locating and tracking them demanded intense coordination between not only our and allied naval and air forces but also shore based listening stations, to ensure that the Soviet commanders were well aware that any overt action on their part was likely to be observed, reported and risky for them. This was not just military action; it was very much a part of international political Cold War stand-off strategy. Such operations led to perilous military confrontations in which neither side wanted to show any indication of backing away.

As only one personal example, in 1968 I was the flight leader of four anti-submarine carrier-borne aircraft due to land back aboard the aircraft carrier at night. We had been monitoring and were close to a mixed Soviet naval force. The Soviet surface units intentionally boxed in Bonaventure so she could not be turned into wind and therefore unable to land the aircraft. With no alternate landing facility, as we were far out in international oceans, we would have had to ditch in the sea. The Soviets continued the provocation but finally opened away when Bonaventure's Commanding officer turned Bonaventure into wind forcing the Soviet ships to give way or accept a collision. Sixteen aircrew members were very relieved that "Bonnie's" Captain won that

clash. Dangerous times with no weaponry directly involved.

Foul weather conditions in demanding low level operational and training roles along with the inherent high risk of aircraft carrier operations led to crashes and other incidents culminating in the loss of some 51 lives in carrier operations alone as well as some 50 lives in naval aviation shore-based activity. Many of these crew members I knew well, several were close friends.

This loss of human life and the remembrance of them are rarely acknowledged by media, governments, the public, or indeed the present day military. These lives were lost defending our country and should at least be recognized when memorial ceremonies take place.

Many fatalities occurred far off our shores and most Canadians were quite unaware of such activities working on their behalf. Naval activities did not have the general recognition of the Army and the Air Force simply because the other Services had and still have a much higher profile with their more visible presence throughout Canada. (Prime evidence of this is the Snowbird air display squadron.)

As a third generation Western Canadian living in Manitoba until I joined Naval Aviation, I know how little the 'Rest of Canada' is aware of or understands Maritime affairs, most particularly Defence. As well as Naval Aviation deaths, there were other Cold War Canadian military losses of life (other than Peacekeeping) such as the fighter pilots of the Royal Canadian Air Force stationed in Europe, the North American Air Defence all-weather intercept squadrons and long range maritime patrol crews, all involved in the Cold War standoff. Those fatalities also are little known or recognized by the Canadian public when tribute is paid to veterans in ceremonial honors or by the erection of monuments.

There is one Halifax memorial structure devoted to essentially Maritime Cold War fatalities. The Bonaventure Memorial in Point Pleasant Park is structured around one of the aircraft carrier's anchors. Listed on plaques are Naval and Air Force members who lost their lives with no known graves. It stands almost unnoticed. In one visit there I was somewhat taken aback with a young couples surprise and disbelief that so many military deaths occurred in peacetime. It was a bit of a challenge to try and explain to them the facts of the Cold War and why and how so many were lost. Their lack of knowledge was probably typical of most Canadians not actually involved in that conflict.

I stated that I knew of no medals created for those involved in that unseen but highly volatile and dangerous threat to our country.

After thanking the Lt. Governor for her visit to Annapolis Royal, I completed the letter with the hope that she

would find it informative and appreciate the slight felt by those who served in the "Cold War" and the lack of recognition of those lost. My letter was responded to with her thanks and the wish that I would be successful in furthering recognition of these veterans!

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### THE GOLDBERG BROTHERS

The four Goldberg brothers, Lowell, Norman, Hiram, and Max, invented and developed the first automobile air-conditioner.

On July 17, 1946, the temperature in Detroit was 97 degrees. The four brothers walked into old man Henry Ford's office and sweet-talked his secretary into telling him that four gentlemen were there with the most exciting innovation in the auto industry since the electric starter. Henry was curious and invited them into his office. They refused and instead asked that he come out to the parking lot to their car. They persuaded him to get into the car, which was about 130 degrees, turned on the air conditioner, and cooled the car off immediately. The old man got very excited and invited them back to the office, where he offered them \$3 million for the patent. The brothers refused, saying they would settle for \$2 million, but they wanted the recognition by having a label, 'The Goldberg Air-Conditioner,' on the dashboard of each car in which it was installed.

Now old man Ford was more than just a little anti-Semitic, and there was no way he was going to put the Goldberg's name on two million Fords. They haggled back and forth for about two hours, and finally agreed on \$4 million and that just their first names would be shown.

And so to this day, all Ford air conditioners show Lo, Norm, Hi, and Max on the controls. So, now you know. *From Bob Findlay*

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### SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION ANNUAL DINNER AUCTION

**WHEN:** SATURDAY JUNE 13, 2009

**TIME:** 7:00PM FOR 7:30PM

**WHERE:** WO'S & SGT'S MESS  
12 WING  
SHEARWATER

**DRESS:** CASUAL/DRESS

**COST:**                    **\$50 EACH** (Please note: An Income Tax  
Receipt for \$25 will be given for each ticket purchased.)