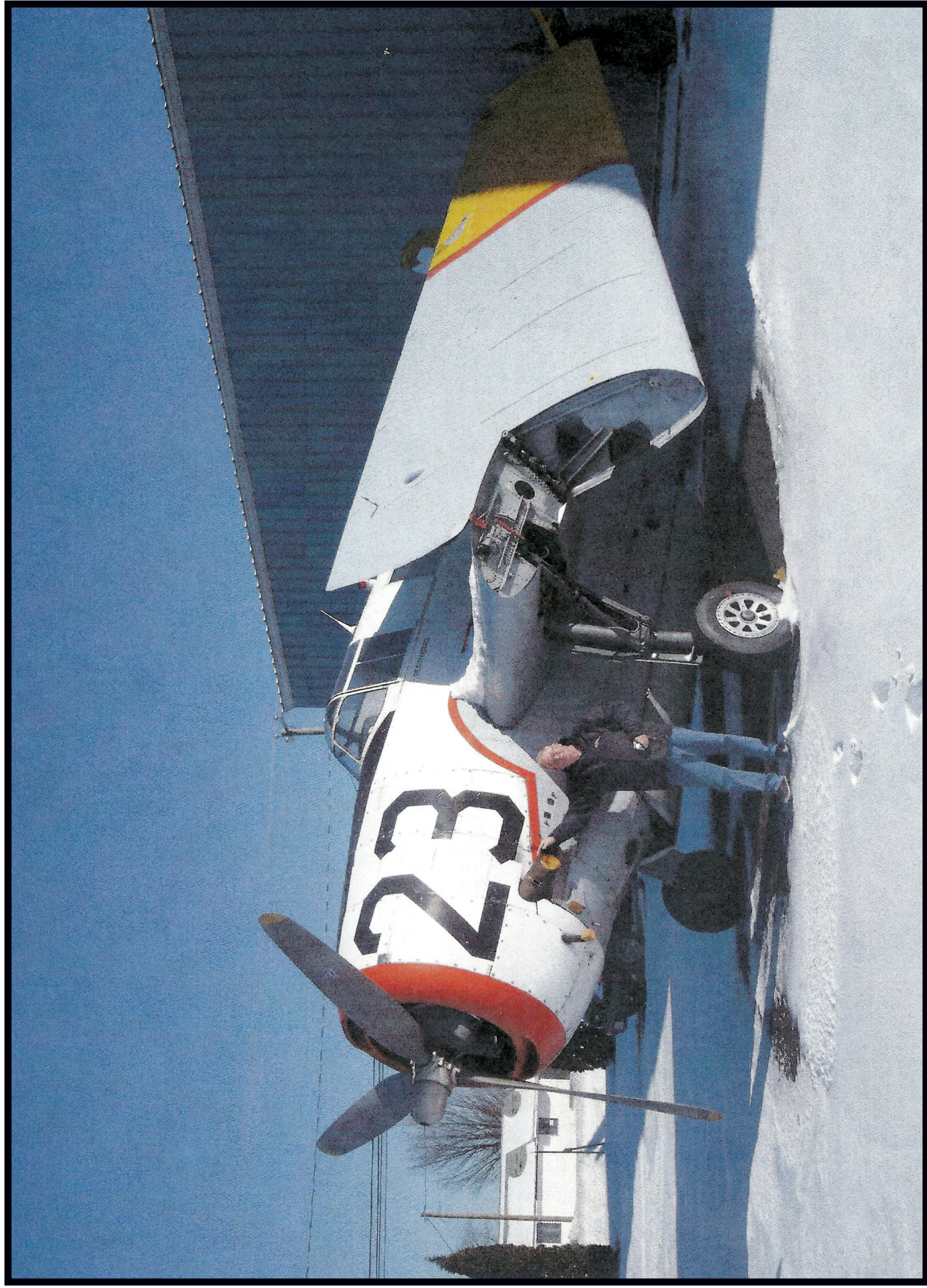


# WARRIOR

Spring 2012







**John Webber, SAM Engineer, getting to know the Old Warbird prior to purchase by SAMF**



***Some fields of human endeavour endure and become routine, while others are cut off before their time but live on in the memory to become legendary. Such was the fate of Canadian Carrier-borne Aviation. In 25 years, aircraft of the Royal Canadian Navy reached their peak of efficiency flying from HMCS BONAVENTURE. Their achievements were equaled by few, if any, Navies of the World.***

***Vice Admiral J. C. (Scruffy) O'Brien***

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**Submissions:** Text submissions can be either paper, email or electronically produced - Word Perfect (preferred) or Word. **We will format the text.** No need to centre headings, indent paras etc.

Graphics are best submitted electronically, they should be 300dpi and a .tif file. A jpg file at 300dpi is acceptable if no compression is used. We will attempt to use any pictures, whatever the format.

**NOTE WELL:** When sending mail of any kind, newsletter articles, letters, membership renewals, donations etc., please ensure the envelope is addressed correctly to:

**Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation or**

**SAM Foundation**  
PO Box 5000 Stn Main  
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

**Deadlines for receiving submissions are:**

Spring	1 March
Summer	1 July
Winter	15 October

**To contact us:**

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Photos are provided by several sources:  
DND, SAM Archives, 12 Wing Imaging, SAMF website and those sent in with individual's submissions.

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***Any opinions expressed herein are deemed to be those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation, its members, and/or the Shearwater Aviation Museum.***

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**

**SAMF website: [www.samfoundation.ca](http://www.samfoundation.ca)**





**Eugene 'Buck' Rogers**

***"Buck" was a gentle man, highly respected and humbly proud. Besides being a faithful community worker, a member of Scouts Canada for 25 years; he was a Life and 40***

***year member of the Canadian Naval Air Group; a Life member of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation for 17 years and President for the last 8 years; Founding member of HMCS Acadia Alumni Assoc; member of the local Navy League; member of RCNA and FSNA.***

***Thank you Buck for your contribution to your community and Military heritage. Editor***

## FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

by Christine Hines

We started 2012 hearing the news about Eugene "Buck"



Rogers, our SAM Foundation President; our thoughts and prayers go out to Minnie and the entire Rogers family as they deal with their loss. Buck was a true advocate of Naval Air, and our team will certainly miss him.

During the winter months, we've been busy working with two exhibit designers, in order to complete the two remaining

interactive displays for the Firefly and the Stranny. Given the success of the Swordfish interactive over these last few months, I am very excited about the improvement in exhibit quality that these projects will bring. Our new designer is helping us with graphic signage, labels and panels, especially in Soward Hall, where we so desperately require interpretation of the aircraft. You may also be interested to know we recently received a lovely donation to assist with fabrication of a replica Hawker Hurricane, representative of No. 1 (F) Sqn at RCAF Station Dartmouth, as part of a Battle of Britain exhibit currently being prepared with the help of the Air Force Association #111 MicMac Wing. While the main exhibit will be installed in the next few weeks, the replica Hurricane will more than likely take a little over a year to complete. I'll report on that project's progress in future issues.

Administratively, we've been audited all winter: a financial audit, general safety and a radiation safety program audit.

These audits have been labour intensive for the staff, but an audit of these day to day activities can, like a PER, tell you where you need to improve. I am happy to report each audit went well, and the staff has a whole lot more character!

Preparations for our biggest fund raiser of the year, the Annual Spring Hobby Show, are well in progress, and it looks to be another great show this year. The broadening of disciplines exhibiting in the show has truly improved the quality of the show, and brought many more visitors to the museum, perhaps that wouldn't necessarily have come for the subject matter. We get a chance to put our best foot forward to these folks, which is a great opportunity to expand our visitor base. The new Flight Sim Nova Scotia "Hangar" based at SAM will be officially launched at the Spring Hobby Show; if you can't make it in person, check out the group at <http://fsns.wordpress.com>.

Restoration projects have been moving right along, especially the Tracker 1501 project. We have improved on an already good relationship with the Nova Scotia Community College Aviation Institute: a team of volunteer maintainers and structures students have been coming in on Saturdays to work on the Tracker and Stranny projects. The students from NSCC also took on the task of replacing the windows on the Tracker, which were beyond repair after so long on display and stored outside in the Maritime weather. They have done a brilliant job for us, and we couldn't be more grateful to the support received.

Of course, the most exciting news is the Avenger!! With the enthusiastic support of the SAM Foundation, an ex-Shearwater Avenger will soon be making its way home to CYAW. Advised of the availability of the aircraft (the last of the fleet being sold off by Forest Protection Ltd. from New Brunswick) by members of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society Turnbull Chapter and the New Brunswick Military History Museum at CFB Gagetown, the SAM Foundation was able to secure the aircraft. At the risk of stealing the thunder of articles elsewhere in this issue, all I'll say is that the museum staff is delighted, and we are working to get all the required paperwork and insurance sorted before a ferry flight to Nova Scotia can happen, probably in the Spring.

As we get ready to get our season off to a great start with the Spring Hobby Show, I want to thank you for your continuing support of the SAM and SAM Foundation. The SAM team can't do its work without you, and we sincerely hope you come in from time to time, take a look around, have a chat and see how we're changing and growing.

All the best, Christine.





**John Knudsen**

### President's Report

This being my first report after the loss of our long time President Eugene (Buck) Rogers, I have been spending time trying to get up to speed on what we are and what we do. The following is taken from the: "MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF THE SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION"

1. The name of the Society is THE SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION
2. The objects of the Society are:
  - (a) to preserve the history of Maritime Military Aviation
  - (b) to provide financial and in kind support to the Shearwater Aviation Museum

So in short, we try to preserve Maritime Military Aviation history, in part by providing financial support to the Shearwater Aviation Museum. From the above it becomes apparent that fundraising is one of our most important undertakings.

#### Current fundraising activities:

- Donations
- Membership
- Wall of Honour (Tiles)
- Dinner/Auction
- Golf Tournament
- 50/50 Draw

#### Other current activities:

- Review of By-laws & Policies
- Purchase of Avenger
- Publication of Warrior (Newsletter)

Spring is the time for regrowth and renewal and so it must be for our fundraising activities, after the long winter it is time to take stock and say, where can I put that extra effort? Donations are always welcome, whether for a specific project or general support.

The MEMBER dues while the lifeblood of the Foundation barely cover the cost of the Warrior; in addition SUSTAINING pay \$100 annually, PATRON pay \$ 250 annually and LIFE MEMBERS pay a lump sum of \$500, these extra funds provide that extra boost required.

The WALL of HONOUR is the first thing noticed when visitors enter the museum, it not only looks impressive but continues to generate funds for the museum, a nice job by Ken Millar supported by Kay Collacutt, Ken Brown and Duncan.

The DINNER/AUCTION is a yearly event which gives members a chance to participate in 3 ways, 1. by donating

items for the Auction, 2. by attending a fun evening with a great meal and 3. by bidding on auction items, the dinner/auction will be headed up by Patti Gemmell and she can use lots of help. For those who like to help, while having a chance to win, the 50/50 DRAW is the answer, the second campaign headed up by Carol Shadbolt and Margaret Ferguson is scheduled for a draw 16 May 2012.

Chuck Coffen is heading up a committee, consisting of Lem Murphy, Ken Brown, Ed Smith, which is reviewing the By-laws & Policies and will make recommendations for changes if any at the AGM.

An airworthy Avenger has been purchased for SAM - much more info in this and future issues of Warrior.

The Warrior is widely recognized as the glue which binds the SAMF members together. Kay Collacutt is its fearless and hardworking Editor ably assisted by her Editorial Board consisting of Ken Brown, Bill Gillespie, Ron Beard, Jamie Archibald, Patti Gemmell. The other key component of the success of the Warrior is you, the members who provides the stories, photos articles etc. that is the lifeblood of the Warrior. A big THANK YOU to all.

As can be seen from the above the future looks both exciting and challenging so let us all meet the challenges together.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Former Base Commander Inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame



*from Ernie Cable, SAM Historian*

On 14 June 2012, at a gala dinner in Montreal a Nova Scotian, Air Marshal Harold (Gus) Edwards, will be inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame (CAHF). Edwards is being honoured for his outstanding contribution to the building of Canada's national air force, nurturing it from its very modest

uncertain beginnings, to its zenith as the fourth largest Allied air force at the end of the Second World War.

The CAHF is a prestigious organization dedicated to documenting, preserving and publicizing the achievements of Canadians whose contributions to aviation have significantly benefited our nation. Founded in 1973, the CAHF currently honours 200 individuals including bush pilots, airline pioneers, military aviators and astronauts. Edwards will join nine other members from Nova Scotia, notably J.A.D. McCurdy, renowned for piloting the first powered flight in the Commonwealth at Baddeck in 1909.



Air Marshal Edwards's life story has been well documented in two biographies by his daughter, Suzanne K. Edwards: *Gus - From Trapper Boy to Air Marshal*, and *The Adventures of a Trapper Boy* for young readers. Born in England in 1892, Edwards immigrated with his family to Glace Bay, NS in 1903. At age fourteen, he left school for work in the coal mines but also began a regimen of long hours of home-study following his shifts. Ten years later he had educated himself to a sufficiently high level that he was accepted into the Royal Naval Air Service and, as a Flight Sub Lieutenant, returned to England in 1916 to earn his pilot's wings. During the First World War he shot down one German aircraft, but was then himself shot down and captured. After two attempts to escape he was successful on the third attempt; only to be recaptured and returned to the miseries of prison and solitary confinement for the remainder of the war. After repatriation to England and still eager for action, Edwards volunteered to fly with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the fight against the Bolsheviks in the Russian revolutionary war.

In 1920, and during the war-weary times following the First World War, Air Marshal Edwards joined the Canadian Air Force and was given responsibility for recruiting personnel to build a national air force. By 1924, the Canadian Air Force was recognized as a national asset worthy of royal assent and was officially established as the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

Having been instrumental in creating our national air force, Edwards returned to flying duties in the mid 1920s and was a leader in pioneering air force roles that served to develop our nation. RCAF missions included photographing new sections of the interior, transporting officials to inaccessible regions, blazing new air routes, carrying treaty money to First Nation reservations, conducting forest fire patrols and flying sick and injured traders, trappers, farmers and indigenous people to places where medical attention was available, all of which served to foster an "air mindedness" in Canada and provided a blueprint for our nation's civilian aviation pioneers.

In 1934, Air Marshal Edwards was selected to command RCAF Station Dartmouth (now 12 Wing Shearwater) where he formed one of the RCAF's first post-depression squadrons. No.5 (Flying Boat) Squadron was created by amalgamating the five RCAF detachments at Dartmouth, Shediac, Gaspé, Sydney and Rimouski. Under his leadership, No.5 Squadron initiated air support to the RCMP by flying the first anti-smuggling patrols off the coast of Nova Scotia. During 1937 and 1938, he oversaw a Public Works program to expand Dartmouth's small seaplane base at Baker's Point into the largest and most important air station in Eastern Canada. He also supervised the purchase of land from neighbouring farmers and the construction of new hangars and runways; he is the father of the present day Shearwater air station. Under his command, RCAF Station Dartmouth and No.5 Squadron were the only RCAF units declared combat ready at the outbreak of the Second World War. Edwards had mentally

and materially prepared the station to play a pivotal role in the air defence of Halifax's strategic harbour, and the defeat of the ubiquitous U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Canada committed to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) which involved the construction of 107 flying schools and 184 other units at 231 sites across the country. As Air Member for Personnel at RCAF Headquarters in 1940-1941, Air Marshal Edwards was faced with the colossal challenge of recruiting instructors and trainees for this mammoth air training plan. To help meet the requirement for so many qualified flying instructors, he had to deal with the diplomatic complexities of the American Clayton Knight Committee, which was formed to circumvent United States neutrality pertaining to the recruitment of hundreds of American civilian flying instructors and staff pilots. Through Edwards's tireless efforts to build a gargantuan personnel organization to manage the massive influx of recruits, the BCATP was able to provide over 131,000 aircrew to Commonwealth air forces that were instrumental in winning the war. The spectacular achievement of the BCATP demonstrated to the Allies that Canada had the talent and resources to orchestrate such an enormous undertaking, and it is ranked as Canada's major contribution to victory in the Second World War. Although Edwards drew executives from all walks of life to help manage the RCAF's exponential growth, the enormity of the workload required long hours that had a predictable adverse effect on his health.

In January 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, Air Marshal Edwards was transferred to London, England as the "Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief RCAF Overseas", a position which placed him in command of all RCAF personnel overseas, not only in England but also in the Middle and Far East. Edwards was concerned that Canada's large contribution to the air war was obfuscated by the fact that most RCAF personnel were serving in Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons and Canada was not being justly recognized for its contribution; a contribution beyond all proportion to its small population. Edwards embarked on a program of "Canadianization" where Canadians would form distinct RCAF squadrons which would fight as Canadian units under Canadian command. Edwards's proposal received harsh criticism from the highest ranks of the RAF; he was unpopular around the Air Ministry, and the exhaustive fight for "Canadianization" was another blow to his health. However, his unimpeachable principles and tenacious perseverance won the battle for "Canadianization". RCAF squadrons formed six fighter wings that distinguished themselves in the liberation of occupied Europe and provided the largest Commonwealth contingent in the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force. Similarly, 15 squadrons in No.6 (RCAF) Bomber Group demonstrated that Canadian bomber crews were second to none, and earned recognition of Canada's major role in carrying the fight to the enemy in night skies over Nazi occupied Europe. By the end of the Second World War, RCAF squadrons overseas and at home constituted the fourth largest Allied



air force. The size and weight of the RCAF ranked it as one of the world's major air powers and its contribution to liberating occupied Europe won Canada international respect as a nation.

In the same vein that Canada came of age as a nation after the Canadian Corps victory at Vimy Ridge under the leadership of General Sir Arthur Currie, the Royal Canadian Air Force came of age as an independent national air force in the Second World War due in no small part to Air Marshal Edwards's tireless efforts to build it from its very modest beginnings in the 1920s.

For his role in directing the RCAF's contribution to the Allied victory in the Second World War, Air Marshal Edwards received awards of distinction from the United Kingdom, the United States, France and Czechoslovakia.

Exhausted from his relentless battle to have the RCAF recognized as an independent national air force, Air Marshal Edwards's failing health forced him to return to Canada on 31 December 1943. He retired from the RCAF on 29 September 1944 and died on 23 February 1952, at the age of 59. Canada buried its first Air Marshal with national honours in Ottawa's Beechwood Cemetery on 29 February 1952.

#### Annex A

#### 2012 Nominees inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame

Nils Christensen Aviation Manufacturing	Victoria BC
Harold Edwards RCAF Leadership	Gloucester Bay NS
Pierre Jeannot Montreal QC Airline Operations, Management	Q.C. C.Q.
Dr. David Williams Astronaut	Toronto ON

#### Nova Scotians previously inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame

William Archibald	Truro	1876-1949
Clarence R. Dunlap	Sydney Mines	1908-2003
Elmer G. Fullerton	Pictou	1891-1968
Gerald L. MacInnis	Amherst	1914-1991
J.A.D. McCurdy	Baddeck	1886-1961
Robert W. McNair	Springhill	1919-1971
Lindsay Rood	Berwick	1911-
Rolland B. West	Medford	1919-2001
Gerald G. Wright	Liverpool	1917-

## Do you hear there! All SAMF members!



You are now (but only for a little while) the proud co-owner of an airworthy Avenger aircraft. The aircraft was purchased by SAMF early in the new year from Forest Protection Limited (FLP) in Fredericton, NB. The aircraft will be inspected and prepared for flight by FLP, under the watchful eye of SAM's engineer John Webber. Sometime between late April and 1<sup>st</sup> July it will be flown to Shearwater and turned over to Shearwater Aviation Museum during a public ceremony. Later when the museum has restored the old warbird to her fighting colours (RCN), she will be re-introduced to the public by SAM.

She came into being as construction #3672, she was also assigned Bu No 35610, she was accepted into the RCN 22 July 1950 and was registered as CF- IMR, but known by the inventory card # 303, she served with both VS881 and VC920 squadrons until 30 Jan 1958, after which she retired from active military duty. From 6 Mar 1958 she was registered as C – FIMR and employed by Wheeler Northland Airways Ltd. St. Jean, Quebec until 1970 and from 1972 – 1976 with Evergreen Air Service Ltd. Roxboro, Quebec. Next move in 1976 was to Forest Protection Ltd, Fredericton NB. where she was known as "Tanker 23". She is the last of a fleet of Avengers employed by FLP and is looking forward to returning to Shearwater and to getting a new "sailor suit" and to be re-acquainted with old friends, aircrew and maintainers plus old and new admirers.

*(From John Knudsen - SAMF President)*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Watch for more articles on the Avenger in our next issue.  
Ed*

\*\*\*\*\*



## I Was a Sailor Once

*Author Unknown*

I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe. I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswain's pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, harsh, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I liked Navy vessels — plodding fleet auxiliaries and sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers. I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Haida, Algonquin Athabaskan, Huron, Iroquois, Micmac, Fraser, and Restigouche; Tribal Class, Town Class, Bird Class; and City Class.

I liked the tempo of a Navy band. I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port. I even liked the never ending paperwork and all hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, and to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men, from all parts of the land, farms of Upper Canada, small towns of Nova Scotia, from the big cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me — for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: "Do you hear there - Hands to stations for leaving harbour", and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting on the jetty.

The work was hard and sometimes dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

I liked the fierce and dangerous activity on the flight deck of aircraft carriers - Warrior, Magnificent, and Bonaventure sadly scrapped.

I liked the names of the aircraft and helicopters; Sea King, Avenger, Sea Fury, Banshee, that bring to mind offensive and defensive orders of battle.

I liked the excitement of the almost daily at-sea replenishment as my ship slid in alongside an Oiler and the cry of "Standby to receive (Coston Gun Lines) shot lines" prefaced the hard work of rigging span wires and fuel hoses echoed across the narrow gap of water between the ships and welcomed the mail and fresh milk, fruit and vegetables that sometimes accompanied the fuel.

I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night. I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead.

I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

I liked quiet middle watches with the aroma of strong coffee — the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at full speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

I liked the sudden electricity of "Action Stations, Hands to Action Stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war — ready for anything.

I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by bright young sailors clad in dungarees wearing sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I liked the traditions of the Navy and those who made them.

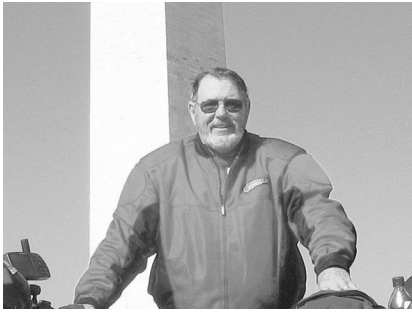
I liked the proud names of Navy Heroes: Officers - Mainguy, De-Wolfe, Piers, Budge, Landymore and the Lower Deck legends: Wolfpack Macleod, Gunboat Smith, Moose Book, and so many others.

A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, and mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood. In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, we will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. Then there will come again a faint whiff of funnel gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the Wardroom and Chief and Petty Officers messes and the sailors mess decks.



Once ashore for good, we grow humble about our Navy days, when the seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, we stand taller and say, "I WAS A SAILOR ONCE".



**J.J. Paquette**

**LIFE AFTER  
"SERVICE" 2  
Reflection on my life  
after I left the military**

As I left off, we had lost the Fisheries contract in Yarmouth and I was sort of unemployed.

**AIR AMBULANCE PILOT**

Though I didn't have a paying job, I was still heavily involved in The Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) that I had worked with in 413 SAR Squadron in '83 and helped to establish formally in '86. It was while returning from a CASARA meeting in Trenton that I got a call from Canadian Helicopters asking where I was as they wanted me to get my refresher training on the S-76 at Toronto Island. They were pretty certain that they were going to get the Air Ambulance contract that the province of Nova Scotia was going to award shortly and needed me with flying tickets up to date to take the job of Base manager. As it happened, I was just passing the Island Airport in my rental car and off I went.

Starting up a new contract is always tough. Inevitably the decision is made at the last minute, the company has promised to be off and running immediately but nothing is done UNTIL the contract is awarded. It was the same with the Fisheries job in Yarmouth ... but in Yarmouth I was operating in the same hangar, on the same role and with the same equipment.

With the Air Ambulance, everything was new ... well not everything. The helicopter was the same airframe (C-GIMN) we had flown away from Yarmouth to be converted into an Air Ambulance platform seven months earlier. The Air Ambulance base was the old VU-32 hangar that I had operated from as an instructor in 1968-70. Not only that but I was working alongside Paul Van der Basch, who had not only flown SEAKINGS at Shearwater and served with me on LABRADORS at 413 Squadron but had also been one of the pilots at Yarmouth on the Cougar Fisheries contract.

Shearwater however was no longer a user friendly base, especially in maritime weather. Air traffic control, including the only precision approach facility, GCA, shut down at midnight and for the weekend. They also turned off the runway lights. If we had to take off at night we had to call the Base Duty Officer, who stayed in the tower, to ask him to turn the taxiway and runway lights on, then we got our IFR clearance from Halifax.

On return in poor weather the Base allowed that if we had a patient then it was an emergency and radar could be called in to help us recover us. On our first night launch the

weather was 200 ft ceiling and ½ mile visibility and the GCA was going to be a blessing.

After start-up, we couldn't wake up the BDO so took off with the ramp lights on a clearance from Halifax. Unfortunately the patient expired before we got to the pick-up point (Bridgewater) so when we called for Radar for our recovery we were asked if we had a patient on board. When the answer was obviously "No" we were told that Radar would not be activated. We were forced to do a 100 /1/4 recovery into Halifax and stay the night in rooms at the FBO. My co-pilot, as were all the co-pilots, was new to this IFR stuff and I was beyond Bridgewater by the time I completed my very complete IFR briefing for his "below limits" Pilot Monitored Approach. This was going to be fun .....

The next 19 months were some of the toughest missions of my flying career. Setting up the air ambulance infrastructure, flying missions in low ceilings, winter weather, landing in fields and parking lots at night, no weather forecasting, not enough fuel for a proper alternate, neonatal infants in incubators, and Transport Canada rules on crew duty days were just some of the issues. I was also living in my daughter's basement in Halifax for the eleven days out of fifteen I was on call. I would drive back to Yarmouth for my four days off.

Things didn't improve on the base either. They refused to give us weather reports "after hours" then one night I noticed the current weather for Shearwater listed on the Weather Channel. When I asked where it came from they finally admitted that there actually was a Forecaster on duty but they could not respond to our requests.

We made a deal so that the person who refueled our helicopter could go to the tower, read the ceiling and visibility from the instruments in the Met Section and pass us the information on our pagers so that we could decide whether to try to land the patient at the downtown helipad, at Shearwater or at the Halifax Airport. An early decision was necessary as we had to direct the ambulance to the correct location to transfer our patient to the hospital.

In one case we let down in the ground fog over the lights of Antigonish to see if we could break out to fly to the hospital site. We got low enough to almost read the street signs but the fog went right to the ground.

In another case in daylight we flew at the level of back yards in the fog trying to get to the hospital in Amherst. In that case we landed in a school yard and let the hospital know where we were. Unfortunately we were parked next to a row of trees and comically watched the ambulance and its police escort zoom by without seeing us until an officer in the last car spotted us and spent five minutes getting the convoy turned around.

On lift off at night from the Sydney hospital parking lot we had just cleared the light standards when we entered fog



with nowhere to go but up. And there are many more.

The high points of this period were the medical crews with whom we flew. Whether it was the trauma team lugging a 300 pound patient out of the bush or the neo-natal team working intently on a pre-term infant, the dedication of these nurses and para-medics was amazing. Once again, however, the support system was lacking. The pre-natal crews who worked from the hospital had to share flight gear (suits, boots and helmets). When alerted to a call they went to the storage room to find appropriate flight gear. All this while we were supposed to be on ten minute alert.

Another issue was the requirement to pick the neo-natal crews up at the waterfront pad. We were forced to do all-up-weight departures over the water from sea level to avoid the twelve minute drive from the hospital to Shearwater. An engine failure would have meant ditching into the harbour rather than putting the helicopter down on the runway had we departed from Shearwater

Having to live in Halifax while I was “on-call” meant spending only four days out of fifteen at home and this was starting to be a drag. Moving to Halifax was not an option as Joan’s job was an important one and it was time for “moi” to follow her lead. I started to look for options.

In the International Division the schedule was “six weeks on” and “six weeks off” and I had heard that there was a new base opening up in Burma. I kept asking for a transfer but no one was taking me up on my offer. Apparently divisions refrain from raiding other divisions. The fix was to put in a letter of resignation. Sure enough, I was soon on my way to Burma ... sort of.

## INTERNATIONAL FLYING

I soon realized that while I was looking for a job as a line pilot, the company needed a SLJO ... remember that expression Sh%##@ little Jobs Officer. I was to be a line pilot, SAR Training Pilot, General Safety Person, First Aid Trainer, Hazardous Goods Person and WHMIS Trainer.

I was still excited, six weeks off, all that exotic travel ... but what about those long overseas flights, diseases, bugs, snakes, etc..

As it turned out 14 hours legs were bearable as long as your neighbor wasn’t 7 feet tall and built like a football player, or in another case, a small, old oriental gentleman who poked me every time he wanted water.

I only got lost once when there was no one to meet me at the airport and I had no idea where the base was. I found out that the “standard procedure” was that if no one was there to meet you, you took a room at the most expensive hotel and waited for them to find you. It took them a little longer as I was trying to save the company money by staying a cheaper hotel.

Disease, bugs and snakes ... I was generally healthier

when I was overseas, bugs were not a problem (well a tarantula the size of a dinner plate excepted) and the only snake I saw up close was a Coral snake that they caught and killed in our hangar in Ecuador ... before I saw it.

In my first six week tour I was in Yangon, Dewei and Kanbaw (all in Burma) to do hoist, First Aid and WHMIS training then Phuket and Songkhla, (both in Thailand) as a line pilot on the S-76.

For the hoist training I was responsible for purchasing the gear, writing the manual and training the pilots and the Hoist Operators. The latter were the Aircraft Engineers (same as our technicians but multi trade and often operating alone). These guys worked their butts off and even when the added workload of fitting the hoist then training as the Hoist Operator was put on their plate, they responded willingly. The only person who refused training did so because he didn’t want to ever be placed in an emergency position when he might have to guillotine the cable with a person on it.

In the Military this SAR training would take months. My compromise was to have the candidate conduct ten hoists, including three in the hangar on ground power, and graduate by hoisting me successfully into the helicopter.

Well I had gotten away from the stress of Air Ambulance flying and I was going to get more time at home but I really wondered about the wisdom of my decision when I got to a jungle site in Burma. We lived in a small barbed wire compound patrolled by ex Legionnaires and a sign on the wall of my battered ATCO trainer quarters read **“In case of an attack or explosions remain quiet, pack an emergency bag and wait for one of the security personnel to come and get you and lead you to safety”**. Safety ... the only thing outside the barbed wire was jungle and obviously the bad guys.

As it turned out, there was no threat and even here in the middle of Burma, the base manager was Tracey Tyndall, a former Forces Huey pilot with whom I had many friends in common.

In Thailand, I was introduced to the role I wanted in the first place, line pilot for off-shore oil and gas exploration. First we flew from Phuket to a deep water rig. This was it, staying in a resort hotel and flying to a large rig off shore ... I had arrived. ... but CRIPES it was 40 degrees out there and we were washing the helicopter by hand. And then there were the approaches to the rigs.

How to you land on a small platform but stay above Single-Engine Safety Speed (SESS) at 40 degrees? Well they do and once in awhile I did. It is a little bit like a perfect golf swing ... we know it when we see it or do it but few can call on the skill at will. Except most of these guys can and do.

As you approach the rig you allow your speed to reduce so

that as you have the rig “made” you have just slipped below that magical speed and you run out of speed at the landing site. Too fast and you have to execute a passenger terrifying, visibility reducing, tail lowering flare. Too slow and you virtually come to a stop before the rig risking at best a ditching if you lose an engine.

Take-off is another interesting proposition. You are expected to be able to recover to flight if you lose an engine on departure. If the rig is high off the water, you dive to SESS and fly away. If the rig / barge is low to the water you carry less weight and do a vertical take-off to a height at which you can recover to the deck or fly away.

The truth of the matter is that in Burma we taxied to the edge of the deck so that the rotors were over the water. We then checked our torque with a hover check and placed the helicopter back on the deck. Now for the take-off we simultaneously pulled maximum torque, temperature or N1 (whichever came first) as we lifted and nosed over to the open water. The reason you moved to the edge of the deck was so that your tail would clear the structure as you eased over to gain flying speed.

After six weeks of the steepest learning curve I have ever experienced it was time for the forty hour / twelve time zone flight home. If time changes bothered you, this was not the role for you.

Six weeks later I was on the road again, this time to Baku in Azerbaijan. Here the role was hoist training again with a flight check thrown in. Fortunately one of the engineers was a friend from the Fisheries contract. I say “fortunately” because the hoist training was to qualify the operators to conduct Boat Hoists and the Hoistee was going to be me.

Quarters were a former KGB resort and the airport was run by what looked like retired KGB personnel. Because of the distance to the airport, we all went out together in the morning and returned at the end of the day when flying was finished.

Anyone flying must have a medical exam that morning. This was comprised of entering a small room in the “hospital” where a woman with a white coat over her parka would take your pulse with no reference to a watch and note your name in her book. You were then off to file your flight plan before you were allowed to get your weather forecast. All of this was done in Russian by your Azerbaijani co-pilot with much shouting and hand waving. Finally you were entitled to take off and fly over the old anti-aircraft missile sites to the rig.

The imperative for the hoist training was because a helicopter from another company had crashed on take-off

from the rig killing all on board. The fact that the company’s helicopters had no emergency flotation, not escape windows and the passengers flew in leather topcoats without personal flotation might have had something to do with it. All the CHC Mil helicopters had been retro-fitted to modern standards of survivability. Interestingly, all the Azerbaijani pilots were very experienced Russian trained ex-military pilots who had flown against Georgia in the Nagorno-Karabakh War which ended in 1994.

Well my first two tours (12 weeks away) with International had been hectic and interesting, seven bases and six countries and half way around the world in each directing four times ... but I certainly didn’t feel like a line pilot yet. Well maybe next tour .....



A mixed crew for hoist training in Azerbaijan

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***If you haven't already renewed  
your  
membership in SAMF - now is the  
time to do so.***



## The Guns of August (1990)

*The following is a previously unpublished excerpt of entries from a journal kept by Col Larry McWha, Commanding Officer of 423 Squadron during Operation Friction*

### ***“Yep son, we have met the enemy ... and he is us” ~ Pogo Possum 1971***

A little after 2200 hrs on Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1990, Shearwater's Base Commander, Sandy Kerr, called me at home. I had already gone to bed but was still awake reading Pierre Berton's "Flames Across the Border" when the phone rang.

He said that something important had come up and that I was required to meet with him in the Maritime Air Group Commander's office in Halifax at 0700 hrs the following morning. I set the alarm clock to ring an hour earlier than usual and put Berton's book aside, not realizing that it would be several months before I would get back to it.

When I drove into the Navy Dockyard that morning at about 0645 hrs, there seemed to be an unusual amount of activity going on and parking was definitely not as easy to locate as it would normally be at that hour. HMCS PROTECTUR, berthed just south of the flag building, appeared to be swarming with dockyard workers and I could see the glow of welder's torches on her forecastle.

General Bowen's briefing to us a few minutes later revealed the reason for all of the early morning activity. At the request of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the USA, the Canadian government had tasked the Navy to deploy three ships to the Persian Gulf to be part of a US-led interdiction force in response to Iraq's August 2nd invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The three ships would be TERRA NOVA, ATHABASKAN and PROTECTEUR and the latter two were to embark Sea King detachments from 423 Squadron. The date of departure from Halifax would be 18 August. Iraq's enormous and well-equipped standing army had moved into Kuwait and was fortifying it for the long haul with no apparent intention to accede to UN demands for withdrawal, so we were to be prepared for an open-ended deployment of at least six months duration. In addition, the UN (with Canada's support) had just invoked Chapter VII of the Charter, so we were also going to have to be prepared for a fight should Iraq continue to ignore UN demands. This was going to require a rapid aircraft re-role and reconfiguration and it would be up to Shearwater, assisted by MAG and, potentially, NDHQ staffs, to get it done before departure. The "open-ended" nature of a deployment to the other side of the globe raised obvious concerns for me about support and sustainment. I therefore suggested (1) that we embark 3 aircraft in PROTECTEUR in lieu of the standard two; and, (2) that we consider a restructured or abbreviated periodic inspection that could be done in theatre. General Bowen immediately

agreed to the first and promised to have his staff study the second.

As soon as the General had completed his briefing, I called the 423 Squadron Operations Officer, Lt (USN) Greg Strole. I told him that I would not be able to be at the 0800 morning briefing but wanted him instead to schedule an all ranks briefing from the Base Commander and myself for 1030 hrs in the hangar. I also instructed him to initiate a general recall of all Squadron personnel on summer leave. I then proceeded to the MAG conference room with members of the MAG staff where we reviewed the potential threat and brain-stormed the aircraft modifications and personnel training requirements that would be needed to be effective in an opposed interdiction role. Although there were some skeptics in the room, we all settled quickly on a mission equipment list based upon our collective knowledge of what should be available and installable before the sailing deadline. My only doubt about the achievability of our list of mission modifications was when Major Chris Little of the MAG Equipment Requirements staff suggested that the aircraft should have a Forward Looking Infra-red (FLIR) sensor. My doubt was mainly because, with only a week to go, this seemed at the time to be one bridge too far, but I agreed that it should nevertheless stay on our list. (Chris, undaunted by the seemingly impossible schedule, took on the FLIR project as his pet, and made it happen).

After briefing the Squadron on the floor of F hangar at 1030 hrs, I met with the Squadron Department Heads and collectively we agreed on what needed to be done to get the detachments ready. They immediately started the balls rolling on everything from arranging passports, immunizations and wills to finding and organizing training sources and life support equipment. Within the hour, I was astonished to see technicians from CE who had arrived at Lieutenant Strole's request to install a hangar PA system (a CE work request that had been on the books for years) so that he could avoid the traditional use of time-consuming ground search parties and could instead issue orders and page personnel directly from his desk.

During the lunch hour I made several telephone calls to Washington DC, Jacksonville FL and North Island CA to speak with USN officers that I had known from my two previous USN exchange tours and was able to get the ball rolling on the acquisition of chaff and flare launchers (those items ended up in our hands by the following Tuesday).

At 1300, Colonel Kerr convened the first of what were to become daily OPERATION FRICTION action meetings in the Base Command Post. At this first meeting he briefed all of the Squadron and Department Heads and issued marching orders and actions to be reported upon by the next day. At that meeting he also placed the Base on a 24/7 work routine.

I was still in the Squadron at 1900 hrs when Colonel Kerr

called to say that General Bowen had just informed him that I was to sail with the ships as the Air Commander on the staff of Commodore Ken Summers, the designated Canadian Task Group Commander. Colonel Kerr told me that the General did not know what my exact title or terms of reference would be but that those details would be worked out by MAG HQ within the next few days.

Early the following morning I met with the Squadron Department Heads. They had made amazing progress. The Squadron Warfare Officer, Captain Zoo Marleau, had already arranged for training staff from the USMC and DCIEM to arrive on Monday for training in fighter avoidance maneuvers and biological/chemical warfare respectively. He had also located sources for body armour and cooling vests, the latter to be worn under aircrew NBCD suits in the hot climate of the Gulf. The Squadron Training Department had drawn up a detailed schedule to have all deployed aircrew qualifications renewed for a 6+-month deployment. Arrangements had also been made for C-9 machine gun, personal weapon and GPS training. Through his UK exchange contacts, my DCO, Major Mike Creighton, had identified a ready source for the door gun mounts and reported that the first one was already enroute to Shearwater.

At the 1300 Base Command Post meeting, LCol Bob Hardy identified the tail numbers of the five aircraft to be modified and stated that they were in the process of being stripped down for installation of the new modifications. Bob suggested that a sixth aircraft be modified as a spare and post-departure training vehicle (the sixth aircraft idea was subsequently approved by General Bowen without hesitation). He also reported that the necessary modification technical authorities, engineering staff and test and evaluation resources were in the process of being identified and would all be on the ground at Shearwater by Monday August the 13<sup>th</sup>. This wasn't going to leave us much time and, although we all knew it, nobody was ready to be the first on the team to say so.

At 1500 hrs that Saturday, along with Col Kerr and the Base Operations Officer, LCol Rodger Sorsdahl, I attended the first of many daily MAG OP FRICTION action meetings followed at 1600 hrs by the MARCOM OP FRICTION coordination meeting that was chaired daily by Commodore Summers in the large main conference room of the new MARCOM Flag building. The big room was packed to standing room only but I was privileged to have a reserved "wall flower" seat behind General Bowen.

During that 11 August meeting, Captain (N) Dave Morse, who had been put in charge of personnel accommodation arrangements for the deployment, reported that additional bunks were being installed in all three ships to accommodate the additional technical support staff, artillery BLOWPIPE crews, additional medical staff, Sea Training staff, CTG staff, etc. and, despite this additional personnel load there would be no bunk shortage. His favourable accommodation report prompted me to suggest to General

Bowen and Capt (N) Morse's assistant in a side meeting immediately afterwards that we might be able to augment the air detachments with a machinist and metal technician, shop trades that were vital to sustainment but which had never been deployed since BONAVENTURE days. This was immediately agreed to in principle and Capt (N) Morse's assistant requested that I provide him with a breakdown of the rank, and for PROTECTEUR, the gender, of the aviation technicians and augmentees because both aspects were important for his bunking plan.

At the 12 August meeting, I delivered the requested listing to Capt (N) Morse's assistant and took my seat. When it came time for Capt (N) Morse to speak he reported that everything was fine. I then saw him being nudged by his assistant who handed him a note and whispered in his ear. Suddenly, Capt (N) Morse blurted "Oh my God. We've forgotten to take the air department personnel for ATHABASKAN and PROTECTEUR into account. We now appear to be about 80 bunks short overall".

During the afternoon of Monday 13 August, Col Kerr informed me that I had been designated as the Project Director (i.e. operational sign-off authority) for the OP FRICTION aircraft modifications because the NDHQ staff officer who would normally fulfill that responsibility was unavailable. I requested that the Project Director responsibilities be transferred to 423 Squadron DCO Major Mike Creighton and, to my great relief, this was approved.

Later that day at 2230 hrs, a CF Boeing 707 arrived at Shearwater with all of the Ottawa and Cold Lake personnel needed to engineer, approve, test and certify the proposed aircraft modifications. LCol Hardy, Major Creighton and I briefed the new arrivals along with several IMP Aerospace design engineers and senior BAMEO staff in the 3 Hangar conference room at 2300 hrs. Bob Hardy dubbed them the "ICT" (Installation Control Team) and he set them to work immediately despite the very late hour.

On 15 August we received word that the ships would not be ready for the 18 August sailing date but would instead sail on 21 August for at-sea trials of their new equipment without the burden of embarked Sea Kings. Assuming no further unforeseen trouble, the new departure date from Halifax was to be Friday 24 August. This delay was a Godsend for us but did not result in any change in tempo for Shearwater's preparations. Each day began early and ended late and the ICT work continued around the clock.

The next few days were filled with training and administrative tasks for the aircrew and groundcrew ranging from small arms training at the firing range to being the targets for a cocktail of painful immunization shots.

Midday on 17 August I received a call from LCol Gordon Davis, one of General Bowen's senior staff officers, informing me that Commodore Summers was suddenly not agreeable to having me on his staff because differences had arisen over what my terms of reference should be. Despite the uncertainty, I



lined up with the others for the will signing, immunization shots, passport photos, and pre-deployment training, etc. just in case the situation changed.

To paraphrase my journal entries, the next few days went by like a blur. My decision to request that Major Creighton replace me as Project Director turned out to be a good one for my own sake. Between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of August, Mike's ICT duties kept him up and about for all but about 24 hours of sleep. His presence was crucial in undermining a number of technical and bureaucratic obstacles in the certification and approval process. The members of the ICT and the technicians who did the work really performed a miracle. Mike and his Technical Authority counterpart from NDHQ, Major Terry Robbins, opened all the gates for them.

Late in the day of 21 August, a large crowd of technicians and engineers walked across the tarmac separating 3 Hangar from F Hangar with Sea King 404 (later to be dubbed "The Persian Pig") in tow. They were led by a very tired-looking Terry Robbins who presented me with a large symbolic key to the aircraft. Gulf-modified Sea King 404 had just been certified as airworthy and ready for flight. I accepted the aircraft from the ICT and, after a few words of appreciation, I returned the key to Terry and his team as a memento of their tremendous dedication and victory over the odds.

After the crowd dispersed, Lieutenant Steve MacLean and I flashed her up and went for a 1.5 hour flight over the Atlantic, landing back at Shearwater well after sundown. We turned her over to the 423 Squadron maintenance crew that evening with no defects found... a rare end for most Sea King flights and a never-before-heard occurrence for one coming out of heavy maintenance.

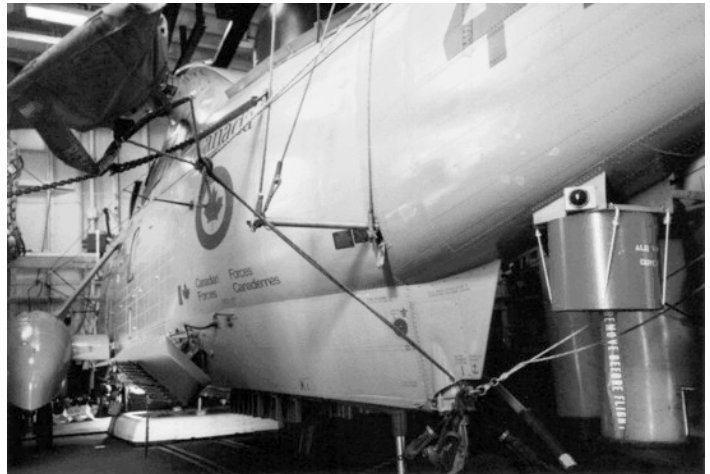
Late the next day, Wednesday 22 August, I received a call from Colonel Kerr reporting that there had been some unresolved disagreements between Commodore Summers and General Bowen over my terms of reference and there was a definite probability that the Commodore would refuse to have me on his Task Group staff unless the differences were resolved. He and I were directed to meet with General Bowen in his office the next morning to discuss the matter prior to all of us proceeding to a meeting with Commodore Summers at 0800 hrs.

At the meeting with General Bowen on 23 August, he briefed us on the situation, gave us his position and told us that he would do the talking during the meeting with Commodore Summers.

At the subsequent meeting, Commodore Summers did the talking. He verbally laid out what my duties, responsibilities and terms of reference and communication would be. The Commodore's demands did not seem very reasonable to me but

General Bowen said that he would agree to them.

Col Kerr and I returned with the General to his office where General Bowen proceeded to tell me to ignore everything that he had just agreed to. As he was winding up his instructions to me, the Commodore's Chief of Staff, Captain (N) Dusty Miller, walked into the General's office and welcomed me aboard his OP FRICTION staff.



*24 August 1990 ~ Day of Departure  
413 in ATHABASKAN's Starboard Hangar  
Sporting the IR Jammer Protective Cover  
Designed and Fabricated by Shearwater*

Assured that I was now actually going to sea the next day, I spent the remainder of the day packing. I moved my gear aboard ATHABASKAN that night.



*28 February 1991  
The author on the tarmac at Bahrain with Major Doug Foster and 417  
All smiles... the cease fire had just been announced an hour earlier*



## ALL THINGS SEA KING

*Stories from the Sea King world will be published under the Banner **ALL THINGS SEA KING**. Watch for them - they will all be wonderful - you can bet your last dime on that. We will start off with the following.*

### Get some rest will ya!!!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I could see the pilot hesitate slightly, as all the gears in his recently frozen brain were coming to full speed. He then quickly looked at me with eyes bigger than I thought possible (the "deer in the headlight" analogy does not even come close to give this one justice). The light gray color of



my face must have given him the answer to his unasked question: "Were you asleep too??", and I could see that the reality of what just happened dawned on him. As I gave him an almost imperceptible nod to confirm his worst fear, he slowly turned back forward undoubtedly trying hard to maintain sphincter control. Seconds later, with as much composure as humanly possible in such circumstances he proceeded to gently, almost fatherly, bring the co-pilot back from lala land.

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

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

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

*LCol (Ret) André Lévesque*

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

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*Here's a tidbit that sounded great, the second time around. Ed.*

## **A RETIREMENT REFLECTION**

When you retire you have time to reflect on your previous life and if you live in an area that becomes snowbound you have even more time to do just that.

I served for over forty-five years and have been posted to some great locations. I have flown some great aircraft but in the end my thoughts always go back to the Navy, 880 and "the Ship" as the best of times.

The other day I was lounging in my "I love me room" reflecting, when an incident which took place in VU32 some forty years ago came to mind I had recently completed a tour in 880 and had received the posting of my choice to VU32 thanks to Wally Sloan. There I was to fly the T-33 primarily and stay current on the Tracker. I was of course hoping to follow Monk and O'Brien into the 104 Programme but that's a different story. I was having a great time flying, having been checked out in the T-33 locally by Ferguson and Fischer. As if this wasn't good enough, I had been selected for the UICP course. Unfortunately that course required a formal RCAF checkout in the T-33, the checkout by the two Navy guys was not good enough for the RCAF.

To top it off, the checkout had to take place in January at RCAF Station Gimli (where?) if I was to attend the UICP course in February. Have you ever survived a January in Gimli followed by the UICP course in February in Winnipeg? Having now filled those x's, I said, "never again". What was my next posting? You guessed it, RCAF Station Gimli! Another story!

Now, having survived the checkout and the course I was back in Shearwater and life was good! Of course, with the good also comes some not so good. One of the not so good was the requirement to stand duty. There I was late on a Friday afternoon standing Squadron Duty while most of the other officers were off at beer call. I recall that Commander Rod Lyons was the only other officer in the hangar and he was quietly beaver away in his office. Therefore I was somewhat surprised when he poked his head into the crew room and said, "I just received a call from Ops about a Tracker beating up Bedford Basin. Find out about it; if it's ours have the pilots report to me". "Aye Aye Sir" I replied.

I started the investigation by calling Base Ops. I found out that no aircraft number had been reported even though the aircraft had made multiple passes (wrong) but the really interesting bit of information was that there was only one Tracker airborne in all of eastern Canada! "Should be easy" says I. Next, off to Sqn Ops to check the sign-out sheet to find out who the guilty bastards were. There it was in black and white, MacLean and Snowie. I heard the aircraft taxiing back into the line so I wandered out onto the ramp to watch. I wanted to confront the two wannabe "Nasal Radiators" before they disappeared for the weekend. The two of them appeared from behind the aircraft practically rolling on the ground obviously sharing a joke or more probably discussing their daring-do which they thought was going to be the highlight of their day. Then they saw me standing there! "Hi guys, how's it going" I asked? "Just great, why" they squawked in unison. "Well, an aircraft was reported beating up Bedford Basin and I was just wondering where you've been flying and what x's you accomplished"?

You could see the expression on their face's change as they decided to brazen it out. I cannot remember which one, but one of them piped up with, "Well it wasn't us, probably one of those jerks from 880." I thought about it for a minute and then said, "Ok here's the deal. Although there was no aircraft number reported, smiles broke on the two shiny faces, there was a type, and your aircraft was the only S2F on all of Shearwater that was airborne at the time!

The Commander is waiting for you in his office". I had never seen faces turn white before (night deck landings don't count) but these two young Subs' realized that they were scr---- and could see their careers going down the tube before they had even got started. One quickly asked, "What do you think we should do?" "Well," I said speaking with the lofty experience of a whole tour under my belt, "I'll tell you one thing. I have been told that the Commander is a fair guy but he is old school and if you walk-in there and try to bluff or lie your way out of this, he'll crucify you. Just go in tell him what you did, how you succumbed to stupidity and the thrill of the moment and take your lumps."

That's what they did. Probably being stared at by the Commander from under those bushy black eyebrows waiting for the axe to fall was punishment enough. I cannot remember the punishment but the final action could not have been all that severe as they both continued in the Service, one for a long time and both had successful careers in their chosen fields.

As a footnote, I worked on CFB Comox, 19 Wing, when BB was the Wing Commander and I was running the Air Cadet flying programme. He was very supportive of that programme and for that I will always be most appreciative. Late one evening after a cocktail party in BB and Mary's quarters, the hangers-on (mostly Navy) had gathered in the kitchen and were swapping stories(insert lies). BB and Bill Ainslie were having at each other, crew commander (Bill) and sprog co-pilot (BB) stories, when BB recounted the above anecdote remembering that I was SDO and everything about the interview with Commander Lyons. He acknowledged that he and Al (?) had dodged a bullet and was thankful for the old style senior officer who handled such incidents with common sense and fairness and without the interference of the NIS – the present military watch dog who now assists senior officers in making these kinds of decisions.

Cheers, **Tom Byrne**

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## HMCS BONAVENTURE

### This day in history: January 17, 1957

HMCS Bonaventure, Canada's last aircraft carrier, was commissioned 35 years ago in Belfast. The 213-metre, 19,900-tonne ship was named after Bonaventure Island, a bird sanctuary in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and was home to a crew of more than 1,200 and about 34 aircraft.

BY VANCOUVER SUN - JANUARY 17, 2012

HMCS Bonaventure, Canada's last aircraft carrier, was commissioned 35 years ago in Belfast. The 213-metre, 19,900-tonne ship was named after Bonaventure Island, a bird sanctuary in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and was home to a crew of more than 1,200 and about 34 aircraft.

It became the focus of controversy in 1966 after the cost of a refit ballooned to \$11 million - twice the original estimate. The ship was decommissioned four years later and sold for scrap to a Japanese company. Many believe that was her ultimate fate; others believe she was swapped for the INS Vikrant during a mid-ocean deal with the Indian Navy - a myth fuelled by the fact the tug towing her to Asia was out of contact for two weeks. The Vikrant has been anchored off the famous Gates of India monument in Mumbai and occasionally opened to visitors since it was decommissioned in 1997. While the Bonaventure was little more than a floating plate of steel before it was towed from Halifax in 1970, some still insist it had another 27 years of service and rests in Mumbai.

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## ....READERS RESPONSE

**Gord Foster** writes: Regarding your "E" mail of 27 Jan, and the Avenger, I had a look at my old records and find I was "QS" (qualified to sign) for the R2600-20 Pratt and Whitney engine which powered the Avenger, on January first 1951. It was during that preceding summer I believe, that a number of us attended the SNAM hangar, which we had all graduated from in the Engine and Air Frame Trades; previously, to be given a familiarization course on the Avenger TBM3, by a detachment of USN personnel from Memphis Tennessee.

I recall a number us were standing outside the old SNAM hangar class rooms when a grey USN semi trailer pulled up in front on the tarmac and proceeded to unload training aids. If memory serves, one item was an R2600 engine. Prior to that, and this on a very warm summer day, the first items carried off by the dungaree clad instructors, was a few sets of ski's. This of course raised the usual humorous remarks from the onlookers!

I cannot, after all the years, remember who was there but I think John Hughes, who had recently seen the light and had transferred from the RCAF as a fitter was one. If this is seen by some of the other old timers they may remember others, but I think probably that "Knobby McNab", Bob Cornish, Rolly West, Bill Sopko and others were there. Yours aye..

**Col I. Lightbody – Wing Commander 12 Wing Shearwater** writes:

As part of the Sea King 50th Anniversary activities culminating in August 2013, we are planning to produce two books. Both will cover the 50 years of Canadian Sea King service - one a formal history while the other will be a less formal "souvenir" book. In order to produce both books we need people to tell their Sea King stories. These can be from anyone who has been in the Sea King community - military, civilian, serving, retired, ground crew, support personnel or aircrew. The Shearwater Aviation Museum has already started collecting some stories for the books, including the Barker Bar story as told by Col (ret) John Cody, the pilot of the aircraft Barker fell out of. The stories collected so far can be seen on the Sea King 50th website: <http://seaking50.ca/Stories/Stories.html>

While I can't guarantee that any specific stories will be published in either book, they will all be retained in the Sea King History Project database - a lasting account of an amazing period in Canadian Military Aviation History that will be retained at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. If you have a story, please "write" it down and email it to: [signalcharlie@seaking50.ca](mailto:signalcharlie@seaking50.ca)

Please forward this request to anybody who has been in the Sea King community who might have a story to tell. We want all your stories no matter how trivial or boring you think they may be.

Thanks in advance for any contributions you may make.  
*Ian*

**Jack Ouellette** writes: WARRIOR - In Memoriam

I am in receipt of my copy of Winter 2011 "Warrior" and impressed once again with the quality of the publication and the value of its content. It is, as always, a real tribute to the people of Canada's Naval Aviation and a terrific addition to anyone's library on the subject. I know that you work very hard on this mag and with much less support and assistance than you deserve. You are one of the Shearwater community's most valuable assets and the magazine is as much a tribute to your efforts as it is to that community.

Not to cast a shadow on that beautiful red cover, I must point out something that has really bothered me about lists of those who made the supreme sacrifice for Canada and Naval Aviation.

I made my first solo carrier landing on USS Antietam in the T-28 Trojan on 29 September, 1959, without the knowledge that my roommate in Pensacola, S/Lt. R.A. (Bob) Clark had spun in during his first approach to the carrier that morning and was killed. I subsequently escorted his remains back to Brampton, Ontario, to face his family and mourn with them.

This is the third time I've had to write to the source of a list of aircrew lost in the RCN that excludes Bob Clark's name and it is a mystery to me as to why it happens. Was it because he was killed in training....or in the US? You will find him listed in some other places.....and he certainly comes to my mind often, as a Venture classmate, a friend and one who remains "in the delta" for us who served with him.

Dear Jack: We work hard on WARRIOR and hope it pleases everyone. The list of those who made the 'supreme sacrifice for Canada and Naval Aviation' was copied from the WARRIOR newspaper that was prominent at Shearwater years ago and a list held on file in the SAM archives. I have no idea who produced the lists. Since this latest copy of the list went out in our WARRIOR I have had a few requests as to the criteria for names being on it. John Cody, for one, questioned it and offered to help sort the problem out. Again - what can I say - I have no idea. Also, since the printing of this latest edition, I have received two copies of such lists. I will be forwarding them along to John with the hope that this will be settled in the not too distant future. *Ed.*



**Ernie Cable, SAM Historian** writes: In his letter on page 29 in the Winter 2011 edition of the Warrior Ron Beard suggests that the history preserved by the Shearwater Museum should be "Naval Aviation". I believe this view is short sighted and would be a disservice to our nation's aviation heritage and unjustifiably dismiss a large segment of Shearwater's proud history. Undoubtedly, naval aviation played a significant role in Shearwater's history and every effort must be made to preserve its legacy. But to limit that preservation to naval aviation would ignore the history that occurred at 12 Wing Shearwater and its earlier incarnations. Many of these events transcend naval aviation because they are a part of our nation's aviation heritage and played a pivotal role in the growth and early development of our nation.

Our museum would be remiss if it ignored Shearwater's historical beginning when in 1919 it became one of Canada's seven founding air stations. The Dartmouth air station is second only to Borden as Canada's oldest air station and it has supported active flying operations longer than any other air base in Canada. Aircraft based at Dartmouth contributed to our nation's early development by photographing new sections of the interior, transporting officials to inaccessible regions, blazing new air routes, carrying treaty money to First Nation reservations, conducting forest fire patrols and flying sick and injured traders, trappers, farmers and indigenous people to places where medical attention was available. This, too, is part of Shearwater's heritage which must be preserved.

Dartmouth was the launching site for our nation's first Trans-Canada flight in 1920. In the late 1930's, Shearwater became the largest and most important air base in Eastern Canada. During the Second World War it was one of the few bases in Canada from which the enemy was confronted eye to eye. Stranraer flying boats from Dartmouth-based No.5 Bomber-Reconnaissance Squadron provided the very first convoy escort and anti-submarine patrols to protect the approaches to Halifax harbour. In 1939, the RCAF's No.3 Bomber Squadron made the RCAF's first trans-continental flight from Calgary to Halifax. Is this a part of Shearwater's tumultuous history we want to ignore?

In Nov 1939, the RCAF's No.1 Fighter squadron was hastily sent from Rockcliffe to Dartmouth to provide the air defence for Halifax's strategic harbour. The squadron was subsequently dispatched to England to fight in the Battle of Britain as the only Canadian squadron to fight in that epic battle. Is this part of Shearwater's proud history we should deny our youth?

Ron correctly observes that the Shearwater Aviation Museum was initially started by a couple of far-sighted naval aviation personnel to preserve naval aviation artefacts. As the museum grew researchers discovered that the base had a long history unlike any other in Canada. The museum's curators rightfully committed the museum

to preserve all of the base's history, not just its naval segment.

Despite the base's long RCAF history Ron asks, where are the RCAF contributions? Shearwater ceased to be a RCAF base in 1948. A young man or woman who was then 25 years old would now be 89. Needless to say, most have passed away so we do not see a large presence of former RCAF people and artefacts from that era in our museum. RCAF members remembered that wartime Dartmouth was a grotty old seaport, accommodations were Spartan, flying conditions could be atrocious, and too many friends never returned from their patrols. Notwithstanding that unsavoury period, the pre-war and wartime RCAF years are a big part of Shearwater's history and our curators have attempted to expand the number of RCAF artefacts to represent Shearwater's earlier history.

Ron laments that he sees no Air Force efforts to recognize that Canadian naval aviation ever existed. I recommend that he visit the list of "Historical Aircraft" at the RCAF website <http://www.rcf-arc.forces.gc.ca>. After the formation of Air Command in 1975, naval aircraft became part of the Air Force's heritage. The RCAF website includes naval aircraft such as Seafire, Firefly, Sea Fury, Banshee and Sea King. Also, the current class of RCAF student AERE officers training at 16 Wing Borden have been given a course graduation project to document the history of naval aircraft maintenance in Canada. The RCAF not only recognizes naval aviation but promotes it as part of its heritage.

**John O'Neill** offers us a name for the photo on page 35 of the Summer 2011 WARRIOR. The front row centre sailor (not the dog) is Red (Leonard) Bough of Vancouver, BC.

Red and I both started our naval lives as Air Fitters. After New Entry Training in 1946 we went to England for training with the RN. We parted service together when we returned to what was to become HMCS SHEARWATER, and Red left the Navy after his five year hitch we finished.

**Murray Mundle, Surgeon LCDR (P)** writes: Dear Editor. I look back sixty years to when I got my "Wings" under the instruction of Eddie Myers. This brings to mind the guidance and example of many others that would later affect my life and my medical practice — such as Gary Wright, Pat Whitby, Bob Cocks, Ferd Linquist, Bill Gourley, Dave Etchells, Don Knox, Alex Fox, Fred Townsend, Bill Sabey, Jackie Lambert, Ken Jessome and others.

**W.J.A. Black, LCdr RCN Ret'd** sends: I have just read the Christmas edition of WARRIOR and wish to advise you of an error with respect to the article on the HSLs.

When they were transferred from the RCAF in late 1951, the RCN was obliged to provide an HSL to RCAF Station Chatham for search and rescue operations during the ice free months on the Miramichi. Three HSLs had been transferred (208, 232 & 233). One was sailed to Chatham in March 1952, returning in December. This exchange took place in '53 and '54. I left Shearwater in 1954 and returned to Halifax in December '56 and saw the three HSLs secured to a buoy under the bridge I don't know the actual date when the HSLs were paid off, but they were still operating in late '54.

While one HSL was sailed to Chatham, the remaining two were operated out of Shearwater as search and rescue vessels. One acted as "Plane Guard" for MAGNIFICENT off the coast, on at least one occasion. One was sent to Cow Bay, under the air firing range as required. Interestingly, one was often used to transport pregnant SHEARWATER wives to the maternity hospital in Halifax, before the bridge was built.

Commodore Pullen was not in Command of ONTARIO when it went to Halifax in the Fall of 1951 (to prepare to escort HRH Princess Elizabeth). Capt E.P. Tisdall was in Command.

ONTARIO was a Monotaur Class light cruiser. And, we did not exercise with the USN. HMCS HURON was our escort all the way from Esquimalt. (She was on her way home to Halifax from Korea). I was serving on board at the time as a Midshipman and Commanders Doggy.

That 30 knot thing has been around a long time...and... if it did happen, I don't believe it was commodore Pullen who said it.

Oh yes, the only fleet we exercised with was with the RAN near Australia. We did witness USS Boxer conducting flight ops near Hawaii but that was it.

I visited shearwater in early September but the Museum was closed it being Sunday.



I enclose a photo of 208 on the Miramichi in Nov/Dec '55.

I hope you accept this letter in the spirit in which it was intended.

From **Cdr Bill Rikely RCN (Ret'd)**. I have many fond memories of my years in Naval Aviation dating back to 1945 and in the years that followed in the Atlantic command. My log book entries show that I first flew into Shearwater in a SeafireMK15 from the aircraft carrier WARRIOR, in April 1946. It makes me wonder where the years went up to this date.

I will always be proud of my service in Naval Aviation and in the Atlantic Fleet and to have been selected for Command of a frigate and destroyer during my long Naval career.

**Tony Cottingham** writes from down South: Enjoyed reading the latest WARRIOR. There is one inaccuracy though. It's with Joe Carver's Salty Dip on page 37.

**Kenneth 'KT' English WO (P1A74) Ret'd** writes:

Have received, read and enjoyed the winter issue of WARRIOR. It was full of interesting articles and stories as usual with thought provoking controversial opinions thrown in. I always enjoy the personal experience stories but Peter Bruner's series is exceptional.

Thank you so much for all your hard work in support of the Museum as Editor, Secretary, Receptionist, File Clerk, organizer etc etc of SAMF and particularly for being our most tenacious defender of the memory of Canadian Naval Aviation.

It was gratifying to read that both the Museum and Foundation are now mortgage free, though not for long I suppose with a new building in the planning stage. Hopefully it can be built soon while there is still support of the old guard available.

I regret that circumstances prevented me from living close to the Museum in retirement. It would have been my great pleasure to polish aircraft, sweep floors, wash windows, paint rocks or turn a wrench, all of which I became well qualified for during my career in Naval Aviation.

When you are looking for photos to use as fillers on a page in WARRIOR, I would like to see pictures of the tiles on the "Wall of Honour" It would be nice to be able to read the names represented there. **FLY NAVY KT**

**Dave Cramton** writes:

To all associated with SAM, SAMF and the WARRIOR

thank you for the wonderful job you do. I had a chance to visit the Museum a couple of years ago and wow!, it's terrific.

The WARRIOR arrives regularly and its always read cover to cover - thanks for that.

The recent Naval Aviators Mess Dinner in Victoria was, as I'm sure you have heard, a real success. George Plawski and his many assistants did a great job.

The two enclosed cheques cover my annual contribution plus a donation for the DVD of the VS880 Line Book. Thank you all who did what must have been a challenging task. Great results. Best to all in 2012.

From **Bill Paterson**: Please accept the enclosed cheque in memory of Guy Laramée. A fine gentleman and always a pleasure to be with. I recall working for him prior to his being Commissioned and admired his technical skills as well as his fair and warm personality.

When I attempted the Squadron Charge Board as well as the pre Commissioning technical board, Guy was at the table each time and made the trial that much more comfortable, and I think successful for me.

The list of those in the delta in the last few issues is very sobering. I visited Tom Ireland three days before he passed away. Eric Edgar will remember Tom. He had been in a rest home in Parksville suffering from a form of dementia. The day I was there, Tom was almost incoherent when he spoke but the few times I got up close he was apparently back in Shearwater talking to old friends, especially Ron (Dhobie) Wash (ex PO EA).

Then came Jim (Hamish) Hunter, I always thought he was indestructible, then Bill Howie, Buck (Bob) Rogers, a good personal friend Jack Moss, Ray Philco, Guy, and Hal Davis the first Chief I worked for '47/'48 in AMD/Z-2 of whatever it is called now. I will remember them. Best wishes to you all.

**Bruce Vibert** lets us know the following: I had no idea that what I said at the "Swordfish Dinner" in 2009 was recorded! Only two errors in what is printed; one due to mishearing, says patrols lasted '24' hours. Actually '2 ½' hours. Also, those boats fired '18' acoustic torpedoes, not '1'; hence '17 missed'.

I congratulate you and your fellow staff on the WARRIOR format and the overall quality of the contents.

**Bob Spicer** remembers: We were at a smoker and Vince Greco was regaling us with tales of his Maggie flight deck reign. He did not agree with a young Sea Fury Pilot's actions and climbed up on the aircraft wing to straighten out

this pink cheeked young fellow. During the process of shaking his fist in the pilot's face, Vince got his thumb bitten. The pink cheeked young Pilot was Dave Tate.

From **Paul Baiden**. The following presentation was given by Paul Baiden, at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, during a HGVC Chapter annual Wine & Cheese. The event was also utilized as a fund raiser for those that suffered so much during the recent earthquake/tsunami that devastated Japan in early 2011.

Good evening and welcome to all our special guests, and in particular, His Excellency, Kaoru Ishikawa, the Ambassador of Japan.

I feel that it's imperative that we take a moment to not only acknowledge "Hammy", and tonight's fund raising initiative, but also the history of CNAG, and more importantly that renowned group of land-locked "Canadian Fleet Air Arm", individuals that had the forethought to Found our organization in Edmonton, on January 23, 1970.

Their simple goal was to perpetuate the accomplishments of "Canadian Naval Aviation", and in particular, too ensure that the extremely difficult and far too often overlooked development of our proud Canadian aircraft technical and flying expertise is never forgotten. That expertise, developed while enduring the extreme conditions of the North Atlantic and the hardships offered by the early days in the Canadian Fleet Air Arm is still renowned within the world of aircraft carrier, and small ship, large helicopter operations.

It's difficult to accept and/or for that matter imagine that in the not too distant future these individuals that led the way in naval aviation history will no longer be available to enlighten the current generation about just how difficult some of the tasks they faced and/or accomplishments they made really were. However, the fact that forty plus years later we are still gathering together to celebrate our efforts, and/or just how difficult these seamlessly minuscule tasks were in comparison to those of the modern day sailors on huge aircraft carriers is indeed a testament to our enduring character.

It's that same enduring character that brings us out this evening, not only pay tribute to Hampton, but also to ensure that our friends from Japan understand that we share their concern for those that have suffered great losses due to the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami that devastated Japan and in particular the people around Onagwa Bay. As you know, tonight was dedicated to raising funds to assist those individuals. Perhaps now would be a good time for us all to take a moment to reflect on the thought that through adversity and hardship great things can be accomplished, but most importantly, that through friendships such as that shared here this evening even greater things are achievable!



**J. Weldon Paton** writes: Once again you did a wonderful job on the Christmas Issue of WARRIOR, particularly enjoyed the articles on the Bismark.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mess Dinner at HMCS NADEN organized by George Plawski in December was a great success and I'm sure you will have a write up in the WARRIOR. *(Yes, a small one. George is a gifted writer and his report was many, many pages long. The entire report is on our website. [www.samfoundation.ca](http://www.samfoundation.ca) Ed.)*

From **Bob Bailey**: Will be back in Nova Scotia for my annual visit home - this May and June - see you then.

NOTE: In the winter 2011 WARRIOR - pg 5 - I believe a correction is needed. P2AT Victor M. Poirer, RCN is listed as 7 Jan 65. As a child living at 2 Sea Fury, the Poirer family lived across the street from my house. I recall his passing in the 50's. I believe the year should be 1956 and not 1965.

*(Bob, thank you for this info. Our list was copied from the front page list of the WARRIOR newspaper of Nov 6, 1960 Vol 7 - headline - SHEARWATER REMEMBERS. I believe the only way to check the date would be for you to get in touch with NDHQ. Ed)*

### Previous article Queen Elizabeth was wartime Victoria's best kept 'secret'.

By Mr. T.W. Paterson, Special to the Citizen October 7, 2011

Hello Mr. Paterson. I've been trying to reach you on and off since our Magazine WARRIOR (from the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation) went to print in December.

I owe you and the newspaper a huge apology. I take full responsibility for errors - especially this one. I was so excited about the article that when I chose photos to go with the article I missed the one we published as RMS Queen Elizabeth was not her at all but RMS Queen Mary. If you've rec'd the magazine you will no doubt have picked this up yourself.

Hi: I just checked the magazine and see that, yes, the ship in NY Harbour has three stacks vis a vis RMS Queen Mary. The photo is so similar to a post-WW2 postcard of the QE that I used to illustrate my 'Citizen' column that I thought it was one and the same. Meaning that I didn't catch it at the time, either. Please don't punish yourself unduly. As the author of 20-plus books and a commercial printer for much of my career, I know all about typos, errors and omissions! As a printer I had a magazine cartoon framed on my desk for years. It showed a print shop with a large sign in the window: PROFREADER WANTED! Cheers, TW

**Peter N. Bourque** writes: I enclose with this note, my recollections of the events referred to in your winter 2011 edition of "WARRIOR" as noted at the top of page 16.

The attached photos were among my late mother's effects and I believe they are of the incident on Aug 20, 1948.



I could not help but notice the entry at the top of page 16 of the winter 2011 issue of "WARRIOR".

The entry reads:

*"Aug 20, 1948 – RCN Firefly IV aircraft VG 963 from magnificent ditched at sea. Lt.(P) Charles Bourque and Lt (O) Ronald "Dick" Quirt recovered."*

The reference to the pilot was my father, Charles A. Bourque. I have been maintaining my subscription to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation in his memory. He died in 1988.

*(Thank you for maintaining your subscription. Ed)*

I've attached 3 photographs, which I believe were records from that event. The first shows the splash from the aircraft hitting the water aft of the Magnificent. In the background is the trailing destroyer. It was the practice to have a destroyer or frigate always in tow for just this sort of eventuality.

In the second picture, you can see my father and the observer bobbing in the water.

In the third picture, you can see my father (the bearded one) in the back of the longboat.

My father told me that he was always mistrustful of the British liquid cooled engines in the naval aircraft. He would say that just a "spec of dust in the carburetor" would stop them cold. He had nothing but praise for the American radial air cooled engines in the Avengers and Trackers, noting that "they would always get you home".

This event occurred the day after my eldest sibling was born.



He described making a normal approach in the Firefly for a landing and several hundred yards off the stern of the Magnificent, the engine just stopped. I remember him remarking that the plane just dropped like a stone into the water, the immediate drop in speed caused it to stall. He also stated that upon hitting the water, he was stunned at how quickly the plane sank. He said that when the plane hit, the next thing he remembered was being surrounded in "darkness". He and the observer got themselves out of the aircraft and came up to the surface. He recalls little of his actions, in disembarking, simply remarking that he responded automatically to his training.

While I'm not entirely sure of the location of the event, I believe he said they were steaming in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at the time.

**Tim Kemp** writes:

I read with interest the recollection of 19 Sep 1969 regarding the loss of Tracker 1594 aboard Bonaventure, on page 16 of the Winter edition of the Warrior.

At the time of this accident I was an Assistant Flight Deck Officer (AFDO) and Bonnie's Flight Safety Officer (FSO). Lt Fred Sander was the pilot of 1594 and the approach and initial touch down was well controlled and normal. On the touch down the nose wheel nicked number one wire that set up a reverberation on that wire such that the bouncing wire snagged the port landing gear oleo, violently dragging and slewing the aircraft to the port side. Lt Sander in 1594 had also hooked number three wire on the center line. Very early in the investigation it was observed

that the port main wheel tire was fully deflated and initially believed that the deflated tire meant that the wheel was low enough to have snagged the wire. In reality the tire was ruptured as the wheel ran over the the deck edge and over a large steel "U" shaped hook that had been holding a heavy power cable used for starting and conducting maintenance on the aircraft. The broken hook was retrieved from the port catwalk in the immediate area - it was shown to have been a very fresh clean break.

I have attached a copy of a picture of 1594 on the day in question. Note that both props are feathered!

Kay, thank you and take care,

\*\*\*\*\*

KEEP YOUR COMMENTS COMING - THANK YOU!

\*\*\*\*\*

**DID YOU KNOW.....**

***That although the 'Bonnie' was named after the Island in the Gulf, that a 'bonaventure' was also one of a ships mast on early sailing ships. (see late 15th c.) Indeed it was the 'After Mizzen.'***

***Bonaventure - On older sailing ships, an additional lateen shaped mizzen sail carried on the fourth mast, known as a bonaventure mizzen.***

\*\*\*\*\*



## **Airborne Operations in the Mediterranean, Sea King Style**

*By: MCpl Terrance Chenard,  
Lead AES Op, Vancouver Det*

It was Sunday July 10th, 2011. Just an ordinary day for most but for the families and crew of the HMCS Vancouver it was a sombre one chocked full of emotion. I was part of the newly minted air detachment ready to set sail for Operation Mobile, Canada's contribution to Operation Unified Protector; the United Nations authorized NATO-led mission enforcing an arms embargo and no-fly zone off Libya.

Our helicopter, tail number 412 (aka "TROJAN 12") was from 443 Squadron in Patricia Bay, British Columbia. Named for the large wooden horse that allowed the Greeks to enter the city of Troy and end the Trojan War, this "horse" had a prototype system known as ASP, or Augmented Surface Plot, to refine the helicopter's radar returns and allow the tracking of small contacts such as fishing boats, which are plentiful in the Mediterranean Sea. Vancouver's helicopter was also equipped with the latest version of the Self Defence Suite (SDS), a system that detects incoming missile threats and dispenses flares to increase survivability. The ASP system, combined with the SDS, made TROJAN 12 the most technologically-advanced Canadian Sea King ever to deploy.

As this was my 3rd deployment overseas, I was familiar with shipboard life. We slipped lines and exited Esquimalt harbour, waving goodbye to our family members who were now fading away in the distance. The ship was brought to Emergency Flying Stations (EFS) to recover our helicopter TROJAN 12 to exercise the ship's emergency organization as we were immediately starting our mission work ups (MWUPS). After EFS was secured and TROJAN 12 was on deck, it was time to get my junior AESOP Private John Gerlach introduced to shipboard life. With one glance at his

dazed and confused face after his first landing on a ship, on his first deployment (on MWUPS to boot), I was taken back to my first sail as an Ordinary Seaman a fair number of years ago. Now, as I think back to his first day on ship in July, the expression "hit the ground running" fails to suggest the level of immersion into Naval combat as experienced by the young private: I think the ship must have been destroyed about 10 times that night and probably about 100 times over again in the days that followed.

Weeks later, MWUPs complete, we stopped in San Diego for a quick fuel stop before heading to Panama directly. Following another "gas-and-go" on the West side of the Canal, Vancouver then prepared to join the "Order of the Locks". As the canal transit was in the middle of the night, everyone in the Det was wide awake to take in the atmosphere of going through the Panama Canal. For most of us it was the first time ever going by way of the Panama Canal to the Atlantic.

Being that we were down south, our missions were flown in support of Operation Carribe searching for drug smugglers in the Caribbean Sea. Capitalizing on this operational tasking, we refined our skills using the newly installed prototype Augment Surface Plot (ASP) system to search for small go fast boats; a skill that would become very useful when we were to "chop" into the Area of operations (AOO) in the Mediterranean.

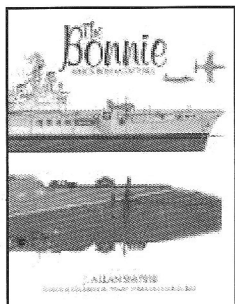
A few weeks later, after a few more port visits, we were on our first patrol off Libya. Our sorties were flown in support of a NATO Task Group enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973, conducting maritime operations to protect the civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack in Libya, aiding in the maintenance of the no-fly zone, and enforcing an arms embargo. TROJAN also remained ready to conduct humanitarian assistance and search-and-rescue operations as required.

During our patrols, TROJAN 12 was noted by our allies as being instrumental in building the "recognized maritime picture," or RMP, by using the ASP system. The RMP is a snapshot of everything that is happening in our assigned area and provides crucial information for the ship and for our NATO partners. Not bad for the oldest helicopter in the Task group. By building the RMP, Vancouver was able to determine the "pattern of life" in the areas she patrolled. Understanding what constitutes the norm allowed the ship and the helicopter to identify vessels that are not behaving in accordance with established traffic patterns.

For an almost 50 year old gal, she was always able to fly when called upon. We had an almost perfect serviceability rate even with an engine change and blade change. Our serviceability is credit to the excellent technicians that we have on this Detachment. One incident of note was when the traverse cable snapped and the entire Det had to



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- Option D:** The "Buddy" Tile - sold only as a full tile. This tile is divided into 4 quarters - each 6" X 6". Each quarter can accommodate up to 6 rows of 1/2" letters for a maximum of 48 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 12 letters and spaces with the remaining rows decreasing as the tile edge dictates.

Option A



**\$300**

Option B & C



**\$600**

Option D



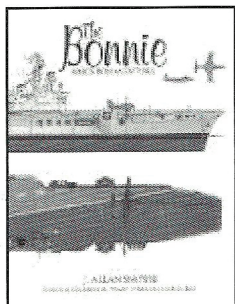
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Option B & C



**\$600**

Option D



**\$600**

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(Wall Tiles (continued))

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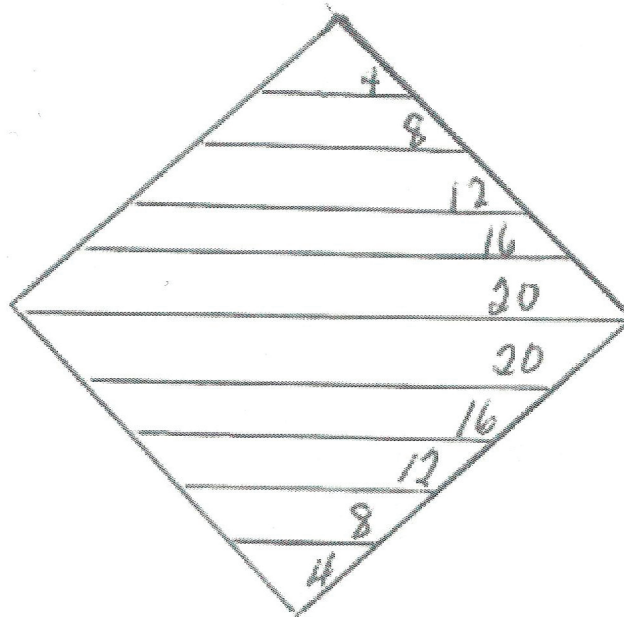
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TYPICAL OPTION 'C' above

CIRCLE CHOICE: OPTION 'A'    OPTION 'B'    OPTION 'C'    OPTION 'D'

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In the City of \_\_\_\_\_ Province of \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

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*Signature of Testator*

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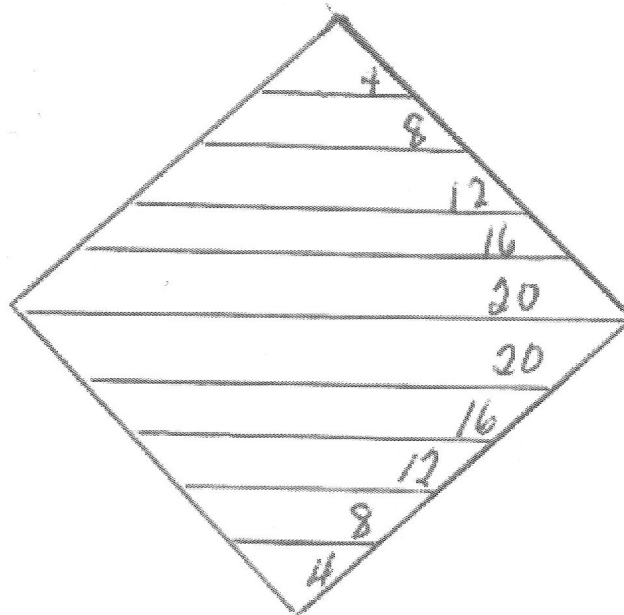
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TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



TYPICAL OPTION 'C' above

CIRCLE CHOICE: OPTION 'A'    OPTION 'B'    OPTION 'C'    OPTION 'D'

REQUEST

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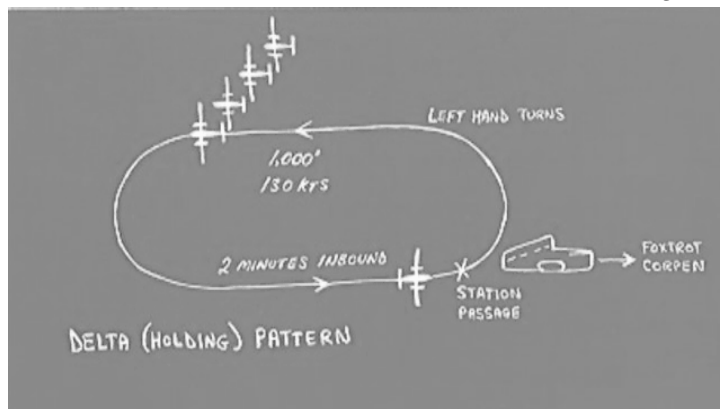
manually traverse the helicopter to and from the hanger for almost an entire month until the cable could be replaced. The sight of all of us pushing the helicopter into and out of the hanger looked like something you might have seen with the building of the pyramids in ancient Egypt, but we managed to make it work and make all our timings.

On the 20th of October while Vancouver was alongside in Valletta, Malta, it was announced all over the news channels that Moammar Gadhafi was killed by rebels in a crossfire. This left the members of the Air Det to wonder what was coming next. It wasn't much later that it was announced that the mission in Libya was to end on October 31st and we would continue to be at sea for Operation Sirius, which is Canada's contribution to Operation Active Endeavour, a mission charged with protecting the Mediterranean from terrorism since being stood up in the wake of September 11th 2001.

As we are still at sea for Operation Sirius, the story continues. I must say that the entire detachment has come together into a pretty tightly knit group. At the end of the day, we are all proud to have taken the Sea King out on deployment on the sunset of her career in the Royal Canadian Air Force.



***Mcpl Terrance Chenard***  
***Lead AES Op***  
***VANCOUVER Det***



## IN THE DELTA

**BEATON, Laura**

**BRADLEY, Earl William**

**CARL, Robert 'Bobby'**

**CARTER, Barbara**

**CASWELL, George**

**CHAULK, Cliff**

**EASTWOOD, Willard**

**FIANDER, Robert**

**GIBSON, Douglas 'Gibby'**

**GREEN, Charles**

**HENNESSY, David J.**

**KJELLSTROM, K.J.**

**MACKEY, Phillip E.**

**McCLUNG, William**

**MILLAR, Fred**

**MILLMAN, Ken**

**MOSS, Jack**

**PETERS, Mrs Iris**

**PHILCO, Ray**

**RAWDING, Dean (Red)**

**ROGERS, Eugene 'Buck'**

**ROGERS, Robert 'Buck'**

**SHWEDYK, Michael**

\*\*\*\*\*

## INTRODUCTION OF THE CH148 CYCLONE HELICOPTER: A MAINTENANCE PERSPECTIVE

By 2Lt Sarah Donaghy – AERE



The CH124 Sea King was originally procured in the mid-1960s to perform anti-submarine warfare operations, but has expanded its role to include Search and Rescue (SAR), disaster relief, counter-narcotic operations and maritime fisheries and pollution patrol. The CH148 Cyclones will replace the CH124, significantly improving the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) ability to fulfill these operational requirements.

On 30 Nov 2004, the RCAF awarded a contract to Sikorsky International Operations Inc. to replace the CH124 Sea King Maritime Helicopter fleet with 28 CH148 Cyclones. The contract includes numerous deliverables in addition to the 28 Cyclones, including modifications to 12 HALIFAX Class Frigates, a Maritime Helicopter Training Center with training simulators, aircrew and technician initial cadre and conversion training, and long term in-service support.

There are a number of parallels associated with the introduction of the CH124 and CH148. Both in their time, each represents a significant leap in technology, capability and a change in the way of doing business. The introduction of the CH148 from a maintenance support perspective will usher in a quantum leap in cutting edge technology. The combination of advances in engineering design, test and evaluation for improved reliability and maintainability with the stringent airworthiness frameworks employed by the RCAF, will ensure that the introduction of the Cyclone is safe and airworthy.

### AIRWORTHINESS FRAMEWORK

Since the introduction of the CH124 Sea King in the early 1960's, the Federal Aviation Authority, Transport Canada as well as the RCAF have significantly evolved by implementing airworthiness policies that ensure the continued safe and airworthy operation of aircraft. The conduct of aircraft maintenance falls under these airworthiness policies. In order for an aircraft to be airworthy, it must be fit and safe for flight, conform to its approved type design, manufacturing and maintenance standards, and operate within its design limits. The introduction of the Sea King required it to meet airworthiness policies using the engineering analysis available at that time. It should be noted that the original airworthiness basis of the CH124 has evolved with current standards, where the RCAF continues to ensure that the CH124 remains compliant to these airworthiness standards as modifications are introduced to the Sea King. In comparison, the CH148 has been designed to meet much more stringent airworthiness requirements in place than were available for the introduction of the CH124, thus providing even greater rigour to ensure the Cyclone meets technical and operational airworthiness requirements before it may be released to service.



*Cyclone in 12 AMS Hangar in Shearwater*

Within this airworthiness framework, 12 Wing Cyclone maintenance organizations must also be accredited to conduct maintenance by demonstrating their conformance to airworthiness policy and standards. Before 12 Wing Shearwater can undertake any Cyclone maintenance operations, the 12 Wing maintenance support organization must undergo a comprehensive evaluation audit of its airworthiness management framework and quality system, which is similar to the commercial ISO 9000 standard. The desktop and on site audit conducted by the Directorate Technical Airworthiness Engineering Support Ottawa and the 1 Canadian Air Division A4 Maintenance Winnipeg on the CH148 Quality System

will ensure essential processes are in place leading to the subsequent granting of Provisional Airworthiness Accreditation.

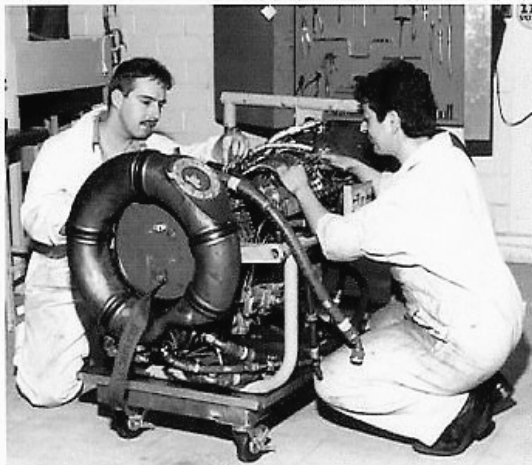
## CH148 MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Since the CH148 Cyclone is an entirely new fleet, it requires the creation of a distinct maintenance program that abides by RCAF airworthiness policies. The maintenance program is required to document maintenance procedures including airworthiness limitations, component safe life limits and preventive maintenance schedules. In comparison to the introduction of the Sea King, significant advances have been made in aircraft design related to the use of state of the art engineering analysis, including computer modelling backed up by component fatigue testing. From an airworthiness perspective, these tools will provide even greater certainty in developing a maintenance program to ensure the Cyclone is safely maintained within the required technical airworthiness limitations.



***CH148 Interactive Electronic Technical Manual***

While the CH124 utilizes paper based Canadian Forces Technical Orders, the CH148 will introduce computer based interactive electronic technical manuals that hyperlink maintenance instructions to the required parts, drawings and tools as well as wiring diagrams that allow the technician to highlight and trace all aircraft wiring and current/voltages. The development of the Interactive Electronic Technical Manual (IETM) represents a significant leap forward in technology that will improve the technician's efficiency in maintaining the Cyclone.



***Technicians working on a Sea king GE T-58 engine versus maintenance demonstration on the Cyclone GE CT7-8A-1 Engine***

While Engineering has played a large part in the development of the CH148, 12 Wing technicians responsible for Cyclone maintenance have also played a key role in the advancement of the maintenance program. 12 Wing Technicians have performed comprehensive

desktop reviews of the manuals to verify their technical accuracy and have further validated the procedures by performing hands on maintenance demonstrations on a Cyclone using the prescribed tools, test equipment and maintenance management software. These pre-delivery maintenance demonstrations are ensuring that any maintainability issues with the Cyclone are being addressed while the aircraft is still in early production. These demonstrations are some of if not the most arduous pre-delivery tests employed by the RCAF and have already resulted in numerous improvements to both the maintenance instructions and associated test and support equipment. Compared to the introduction of the CH124, the up front and direct involvement of 12 Wing technicians with the maintenance program validation will significantly reduce their learning curve and facilitate the smooth transition to maintenance operations.

New maintenance support software programs have also been developed specifically for the Cyclone community. This software has a far greater application than currently used on the Sea King, in that an Integrated Information Environment (IIE) is used. The IIE covers a wide spectrum of software tools and enabling systems that have the ability to interface in an integrated manner. For example, faults can be downloaded from the Cyclone health and usage monitoring system, automatically generate a maintenance action to be carried out by the technician, while linking to the Interactive Electronic Technical Manual for the required procedure and placing an order for the required part. The IIE will significantly improve 12 Wing technicians' efficiency and effectiveness in the conduct of maintenance for the Cyclone.

## TECHNICIAN TRAINING

As part of the MH contract, Sikorsky is to provide initial cadre training (ICT) and conversion training for 12 Wing technicians. To date, technicians have undertaken their first phase of training where they have received theoretical and practical instruction. A key component of the training is the emphasis on practical exercises where the technician must demonstrate their ability to troubleshoot and remove/repair components on an actual CH148 or specially built CH148 aircraft maintenance trainers. This environment replicates the actual maintenance support organization in that technicians are evaluated in their ability to follow the technical manuals, while using the maintenance recording software and tools/test equipment, and ensuring that the maintenance is completed in accordance with RCAF maintenance policies. The use of practical tests to support the theoretical training at the school will allow technicians to be readily qualified and authorized to work on the Cyclone as soon as they graduate from the Maritime Helicopter Training Center.

## CONCLUSION

Advances in technology have played a key role in the introduction of the CH148 Cyclone to the RCAF. Airworthiness policies have significantly evolved in the years since the introduction of the CH124 Sea King, making the introduction of a new, state of the art, helicopter more challenging, but the increased rigour will pay significant dividends in ensuring the CH148 is safe and airworthy. Engineering technology has allowed a more informed development of the Cyclone maintenance program than that of the Sea King, almost 50 years ago. Likewise, advances in technology have given technician training a new edge that allows for a smooth transition from the Sea King maintenance program to that of the Cyclone. While the Cyclone is still in its transitional phase, the RCAF looks forward to its new Maritime Helicopter fleet.

*2Lt Donaghy is an Aerospace Engineering (AERE) Phase 4 student employed at 12 Wing Shearwater. She joined the RCAF in 2010 and has completed a BASc in Chemical Engineering in 2009. Upon completion of AERE her training in May 2012, she hopes to be posted back to Shearwater working with the Sea King or Cyclone fleet.*

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Budworm Birds in Chatham:**

As unqualified OM's on Course #15, we completed all of our flying training in Avengers with VU-32 Squadron. It was a pretty unique experience and I still have memories of some of the stunts we

pulled as OD OM's in training.

Roaming around in the 'well' was quite an experience and having to crawl to the Mid-upper, fully suited in 'poopy suit' and parachute harness, for take-off and landing, could be a trying experience. (Funny that we never hauled our chute with us!) The 'hump back' versions of the Avenger were really neat and one had a full view over the pilot's head of everything around. The regular Avengers had the mid-upper seat facing aft, and once the crawl up the tunnel was complete, you had to get turned around to get strapped in. Sometimes it was not an easy feat. But, 50+ years later, the experience of having almost 100 hours in Avengers is a pleasure and a real good memory.

In 1973, after I had been commissioned and completed my Air Navigator and CF101 Voodoo conversion courses at Winnipeg and Bagotville, I was posted to 416 Squadron in Chatham. Life in a big silver jet was a real change from

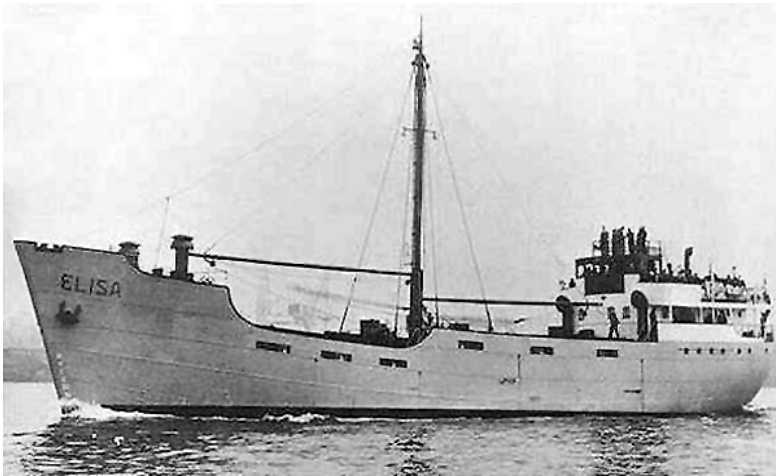
Avengers and Trackers. One spring day, myself and some squadron mates were gazing out the Ops room window and there, parked down at the end of the line were 5 Avengers, all rigged out for spraying. The budworm season was 'on' and Mr Dunphy, who owned the Avengers, and usually worked out of Doaktown, had moved his fleet up to Chatham for local area spraying operations.

Having an RCN background, I always took some good natured ribbing, being the only Navy guy on squadron, and was regularly referred to as 'Hey Sailor', or 'Yo, Anchor Clanker' by everyone, right up to the CO. It really was no bother, and I considered that was their way of 'adopting' me into the Air Force after Integration and Unification.

On this particular day I acknowledged that I had completed my OM training in Avengers, and was familiar with the aircraft, and I made the rather bold boast, that I had 'probably flown in one or two of those Avengers' parked down the line. It wasn't long before the bets were 'on' and we walked down to inspect the aircraft. Although there were many changes to the aft end, the cockpits were the same and after a look around, we logged the A/C serial number from the cockpit of each airplane. Back at the hangar I dug out my log book, went back to the earliest pages and found that I had indeed flown in 4 of the 5 Avengers parked at Chatham that day. Chalk one up for the Navy! At the Mess following work, I collected my bets and the wry comment from one of my younger 416 Squadron mates that, "You really are an old @\$%^&\*".

**Jon Main OM15.**





**BARMA under her former name ELISA**

## HORNETS TO THE RESCUE

*By Ross Beck*

Deep lines of worry creased the face of Captain Van Niman. Near hurricane force winds lashed spray over the bow of his ship while mountainous seas tossed her about like a rubber duck. To make matters worst, freezing water poured into the "Barma" faster than her pumps could pump it out. He knew she would eventually sink, taking the lives of himself, his wife and six crew members.

Across the pitch black sea, the lights of the USCGS Active appeared each time the Barma struggled to the crests of the waves only to snatched away again as she plunged into their troughs. Captain Van Niman knew the high winds and heavy seas made it impossible to get his crew off the ship safely. Swimming to the Coast Guard ship was out of the question. Life expectancy in the North Atlantic in winter is measured in minutes. He did not think flying away was an option.

But that was exactly what the Duty Officer at the Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 200 miles away was thinking. When Captain Van Niman radioed for help at eleven o'clock that blustery night on January 21, 1975, he immediately ordered HMCS Assiniboine to sea.



Once she cleared the harbour, a Sea King helicopter from 443 "Hornet" Squadron landed on her flight deck.

Throughout the night Assiniboine raced to the scene, ploughing through the towering waves while the Hornets prepared their Sea King for the rescue operation. At first light, the Active reported the Barma dead in the water with her starboard gunwales awash. Fifteen minutes later the Hornets took off from Assiniboine's pitching flight deck.

Captain Paul Bow slowed the Sea King to a hover over the wallowing freighter with the assistance of his co-pilot Captain Bob Henderson. Meanwhile Lieutenant Alan Welton and Sergeant Doug Bullerwell went aft to open the door where the rescue hoist was located. Captain Bow struggled to maintain a steady hover over the stricken vessel as the vicious wind buffeted the big helicopter like a marionette on a string. The rain pounded his windshield so hard it cut the forward visibility to zero. It also smeared the window at his right shoulder so he opened it to get a clear view of the ship.

Looking down from the rear door, Lieutenant Welton saw the crew of the Barma huddled in a sheltered area of the superstructure aft of the bridge. As the ship rolled wildly from side to side its mast whipped a few feet under the belly of the helicopter, nearly batting it out of the sky. The ship pitched and rolled so violently it was clear to Lieutenant Welton that a conventional rescue where a helicopter hovers over a ship and lowers a rescue net to the deck was a no go. The possibility of the rescue net getting tangled in the ship's rigging was almost a certainty. They had to try something different. Fortunately, the Hornets anticipated the problem. During their pre-flight preparations they decided to bring along a "horse collar" and one hundred and fifty feet of heavy rope, a "high line." Attaching a "high line" to the horse collar would allow the helicopter to move away from the ship's mast to a safe distance while someone on the deck pulled the collar to the ship when it is lowered and to steady it when someone was being raised to the helicopter.

Looking down at the exhausted crew of the Barma it was obvious that someone from the helicopter would have to go down to help them. Lieutenant Welton immediately volunteered to make the dangerous descent while Sergeant Bullerwell operated the hoist and gave instructions to Captain Bow.

By this time the slick wet deck of the Barma tilted at a forty five degree angle, making it impossible to stand upright. Sergeant Bullerwell planned to lower Lieutenant Welton to spot on the deck near the port guard rail where he could brace himself with one foot on the deck and the other against a drum used to coil the ship's mooring ropes. Lieutenant Welton put on the horse collar, Sergeant Bullerwell attached the high line and threw it to the Barma's

crew. On the first attempt the ship heaved as Lieutenant Welton approached the guard rail. He slammed into the ship's side and slid down into the ocean. Sergeant Bullerwell quickly raised the hoist and jerked him out of the sea like a flopping flounder. On the second attempt the ship rolled suddenly as Lieutenant Welton got close. The guard rail crashed into his thigh causing him to tumble over it to the deck, luckily at the chosen spot.

Once on deck, Lieutenant Welton motioned for the first person to come to him to be hoisted to the helicopter. The Captain told his wife to go but Mrs. Van Niman flatly refused to leave the ship shaking her head vigorously from side to side. Nevertheless, crew members dragged her to Lieutenant Welton, who managed to get the horse collar on her while he comforted her in his arms. One second he was embracing her on the deck and the next she was twenty feet in the air heading to the helicopter screaming all the way. The rest of the crew did not require coaxing. Twenty eight minutes later Lieutenant Welton leapt off the guard rail and was hoisted to safety.

After landing on board Assiniboine, Captain Van Niman learned his ship had rolled over and plunged to the bottom of the sea. The Hornets saved eight people from certain death.

#### (AUTHOR'S NOTE)

The next day Lieutenant Welton could barely walk because of the injuries he sustained reaching the ship. He recovered fully. For his act of bravery, Lieutenant Alan Welton received Canada's second highest decoration for bravery, the Star of Courage. The aircraft pilot, Captain Paul Bow, the Co-pilot, Captain Bob Henderson and Sergeant Doug Bullerwell each received the Medal of Bravery.

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*( I read the following on line. Ed: Renaming a boat is, of course, not something to be done lightly. Since the beginning of time, sailors have sworn that there are unlucky ships and the unluckiest ships of all are those who have defied the gods and changed their names. So, is there a way to change a name and not incur the wrath of those deities that rule the elements? Yes, Virginia, there is.)*

## CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATORS AND ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER RETIRES

*Information provided by Tom Copeland*

The final issue of the Canadian Naval Aviators and Associates (CNAA) Newsletter was published last year.



To mark the occasion and to show appreciation to the Newsletter's Authors from the readership, a plaque has been placed in the Shearwater Aviation Museum with photos of Rod Bays and Ted Cruddas. The plaque bears the following message:

#### **"APPRECIATION"**

***This plaque recognizes the voluntary work of Rod Bays (Founder) and Ted Cruddas who wrote and distributed for over 35 years the Canadian Naval Aviators and Associates newsletter, preserving the ties between those who served together in the Royal Canadian Navy's Air Branch - throughout its existence.***

The CNAA Newsletter was started by Rod Bays in the early 1970's as a means of keeping old flying chums in touch after retirement. It quickly expanded to include engineers, supply types, medical personnel and just about everybody who worked together in RCN Aircraft carriers and Shearwater. Readership at final count was about 700.

***(I will do my best to include in the WARRIOR, correspondence from former CNAA readers who may wish to keep in touch as before. We're all in the same family. It could go under the CNAA banner if you wish.)***

***Kay Collacutt, WARRIOR Editor)***

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## A BIZARRE BIT OF U.S. NAVAL HISTORY ABOUT WHICH MOST AMERICANS KNOW "ZILCH"

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer 'William D. Porter' was often hailed - whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships - with the greetings: "Don't shoot, we're Republicans!"



DD-579 William D. Porter at Delivery (July 1943)

For a half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice.

In 1943, the Willie D as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren't bad enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and all of the country's W.W.II military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill.

Had the Porter's torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different. The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track.

In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew.

The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa. The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa,

the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down the other ship's railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun.

Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy, consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers, the Willie D, and two other destroyers, was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. Since they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defence.

Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced antisubmarine manoeuvres. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become sidetracked.

Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man washed overboard and was never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers.

The Captain, at this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa about the Willie D's difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the President and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, the Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy.

Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J. King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean.

Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent his impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity.

Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away, seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among

those responsible for the torpedoes. Part of their job involved ensuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on a command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube.

Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2" and finally, "Fire 3." There was no Fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo.

Lt H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose. Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, 'Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?' Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history, although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within.

Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger.

First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated the torpedo was headed in another direction. Next, the Porter signalled that the torpedo was going reverse at full speed! They decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first. Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo.

Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive manoeuvres, all of her guns were trained on the William D. Porter. There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot.

Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it."

Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy.

The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened.

Torpedo man Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake. The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy.

Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labour.

President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident.

The destroyer William D. Porter was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her.

She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was reassigned to the Western Pacific. However, before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American Base Commander, thus rearranging his flower garden rather suddenly.

In December, 1944, the Porter joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft.

Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers.

In April, 1945, the destroyer Porter was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing.

But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire.

On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally)



attacked it from underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defence.

Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed alongside the unlucky destroyer.

There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible place.

Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.

*Written by Kit Bonner, a noted Naval Historian  
(Sent to us from Adm Keeler. Ed)*

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## NAVAL AIR MAINTAINERS ASSISTANCE WANTED

Three students from the Aerospace Engineering (AERE) Officer Basic Course at the Canadian Forces School of Aerospace Technology and Engineer (CFSATE) are working under the tutelage of Capt Mark Engelbrecht to complete the Naval Air Arm Maintenance' chapter from the unfinished memoirs of BGen 'Suds' Sutherland called, 'Saturdays' Children'. Suds had written 13 of the 19 Chapters of his memoirs about his experiences maintaining military aircraft during his career, but, unfortunately, he passed away due to cancer in 1994 before he could complete them.

If you served in the RCN or CF and helped maintain naval aircraft, either land based or shipborne, you may be able to assist the AERE students with the completion of the chapter about aircraft maintenance within the Naval Air Arm. Suds wanted his work to be both an historically accurate account about how Naval Aircraft were maintained on land and afloat as well as a reflective account by personnel who were there doing the job. The anecdotes from the Veterans should highlight what went well, what could and did go wrong if rules or orders were erroneous, misunderstood or not followed. Runs ashore, if they can be linked to an incident, may also be included. If you have some memories and wish to pass them on for

possible inclusion in the book, then contact Mark or the AOBC students at the following addresses:

E-mail: MARK.ENGELBRECHT@forces.gc.ca

Written correspondence:  
Commandant CFSATE  
P.O. Box 1000 Station Main  
Borden, ON L0M 1C0  
Attention: Capt Mark Engelbrecht, AERE Sqdn

Tel: 705-424-1200 Ext 3729

Please let them know:

- When and where did you serve?
- Did you do time at sea or were you land based, or both, working on Naval Aircraft?
- What type of aircraft did you maintain?
- What was your trade and position within the maintenance organization? and
- Do you have any log books or memories that you would be willing to share with AOBC for writing the chapter?

We are hoping to publish the book later in the fall and that your input will be invaluable. A copy of the published work will be available on line or through libraries on CF bases.



## AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE HISTORY CLUB

**2Lt Todd Anstey, 2Lt Pierre Maltais, Capt Mark Engelbrecht and 2Lt Raees Ahmed**

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### ***Bless 'em All, Bless 'em All'***

"Bless 'em all, Bless 'em all, The long and the short and the tall,..."

In the years following VE and VJ Day the words to this song and many others like it were sung in our household in rural Nova Scotia and rural Alberta, my dad having been with the Air Force for five years overseas, and my mum a woman who loved to sing.

I will be 67 next April and as I put together a book on my life for my daughter and grandsons, those words – "Bless 'em all..." come to mind when I think of my Navy time. My years in the R.C.N. were a turning point in my life.

At seventeen most boys don't have a lick of sense and are prone to getting into trouble. Some even end up in cells – permanently. If it had not been for the Navy and those people who actually made it function on a day-to-day basis, I would probably have been one of those. Why didn't I end up where some of the ODs and ABs I knew did? Simply put, I fell under the influence of a series of wise and capable men, ranging from ABs (one of whom was long in the tooth and, because he had two rows of ribbons and three badges, I made – only once – the mistake of addressing as "sergeant" ), killicks, POs, and Chiefs. It all started in *Cornwallis* and continued right up to the day I left the *Nootka* and headed to Release Centre at *Stadacona*.

There were those ratings in positions of authority over me who knew little or nothing at all about teaching and leading those of us who were very green, and who relied on cursing and shouting to frighten us into doing the job. Fortunately, they were outnumbered by men who remembered that, they, too, had once been young and inexperienced. Someone had taken the time to teach them and to bring them along in the ways of the Navy. I was fortunate to come across a number of them.

There was the P1 Bosn who saw me trying to splice a fairly large line and said in a low voice: "Jesus Christ, every finger a marlin spike and each thumb a fid." I expected heaps of abuse, but he took my tools and, hand over hand, showed me how to splice properly. Or the killick, Jake Bellrose, who took me under his wing and taught me my trade, all the while impressing upon me that lives depended on the jobs I was signing off.

Or C1 Clarence ("Hewey") Hewens, a soft spoken man who was never heard to raise his voice. Hewens would go from job to job, checking on the work, encouraging the new tradesmen, and checking with the killicks and POs on how things were coming along.

Or the instructor at the school, P2 Mick Owens, who would stay after 1600 to explain things covered that day or to

give you more time to practice on a certain job.

Or P1 Ron Theriault who taught me patiently and took an interest in me and my career.

Or the P1 RPO on the *Stadacona* Shore Patrol who, after putting me in the bun wagon and then cells for the night, came to me early the next morning, let me get shaved and cleaned up, and drove me down to the ship with a stern warning about never wanting me find me doing THAT again.

Or the Master on the *Bonnie* who got in between a rather hammered me and a puffed up subbie several years my junior very late at night and talked him out of putting me in cells and then taking me up before the Jimmy the next day based on the usual "Conduct contrary to the..." You know the rest of it.

I had some "issues" with some kippers in the Sea Gull Club and had come out some the worse for wear. My wingers said that the Master told the subbie: "He's too stupid to know any better, sir. Let's let him get his head down and if he doesn't cause any more trouble we'll just forget about it." My wingers took care of the rest. The next day the subbie was ashore and the Master appears to have developed a case of amnesia. That was the closest I ever got to having a chat with the Jimmy, cap in hand.

All of these men contributed to my life. They taught me to exercise common sense and developed in me a sense of responsibility. They taught me loyalty; to my wingers, to my mess, to my ship; to the First Escort; and to the Navy. They taught me respect for others and their gear. They taught me two trades. They gave me a work ethic. They were positive role models who took an interest in seeing me make something out of myself.

When my time was up and I went home, people who had known me years before could see that the Navy had taken a seventeen year old and turned him into a motivated adult with life goals and a sense of what it was to be a good citizen. Jake and Hewey are dealing with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, and I visit them regularly, because I owe them.

As for the rest of you out there, all I can say is: "Bless 'em all" and "Thank you?" **B.A.(Sandy) Gow**



## A Cadet's First Flight - 56 Years ago, in 1956

The summer of 1956 found sea cadets from across the country being sent by train to sea cadet camps on the East Coast. PO Cadet Les East of RCSCC Kalamalka in Vernon, BC, had been selected to attend the Shearwater Aviation Cadet Course, a six week camp.

I boarded the train in Vernon BC, & cadets were added as we crossed the nation to the east. PO Cadet Ed Vishek (future RCN pilot) of St Catherines joined the group in Toronto as we proceeded to Nova Scotia.

We arrived at Shearwater & were billeted in an H-shaped hut across the street from the "New Gym". It was the last H-hut on the Base. Our RCN Divisional Officers - assigned to control our studies & keep our noses clean - were Pilot Gerry McMillen & then Navigator Whitey Williamson.

We took ground school at NAMS - below the road - learning all about the current aircraft: Avenger, Sea Fury, & the new Banshee. We were told we could get a flight at the hangar line, if we presented ourselves on a Saturday.

Some of us did. I did - with great trepidation - because I had never flown before. Our chances, we were told, were to fly either in a Harvard or an Avenger, probably with one of the reserve pilots who flew on weekends.

I sat quietly in one of the old hangars - probably B Hangar - when a pilot (wish I knew who) called for me, got me fitted with a chute & helmet, & instructed one of the line crew to get me oriented into the observer's seat in an Avenger resting on the tarmac. The seat is immediately behind the pilot and featured a swivel seat allowing the occupant to crank himself around 360 degrees for effective observation.

We took off on a nice day featuring sun & some cumulus clouds, climbing to altitude & overflying both land & ocean. I was nervous & uncomfortable for the first half hour but eventually started to relax and crank myself around in the seat as we flew about straight & level.

As we entered the area over Peggy's Cove - known to me later as the low flying area - the pilot dropped the nose rather dramatically & descended to tree-top level. Unfortunately I was facing aft when he did so - and the action caught me & my stomach by surprise! He leveled off & beat up the area at good speed (the Avenger wasn't terribly fast) enduring what felt to me like driving on a bumpy gravel road in the backwoods of BC. I feared for our safety as the wings were flexing horribly up & down as we bumped along.

It was eventual & I suppose predictable that Cadet East wasn't going to survive this flight intact. Soon my hour-old lunch re-arrived on my flight suit and all over the aft location - much to the horror & consternation of my pilot. He immediately gained respectable altitude, pointed the aircraft to Shearwater, & called for landing instructions.

After taxiing to the hangar the pilot shut down, climbed quickly out of the cockpit & hollered "Clean it up, cadet!" as I remained glued to my seat in embarrassed silence.

Fortunately a considerate line crew guy helped me in my task of cleaning the back seat area of the Avenger. I found my sickly way back down the hill to the H-hut & went straight to bed.

I told myself I would never fly again - & certainly never come back to this forsaken RCN outpost on the wrong coast!!

As I lay on my bunk I reflected that a year prior I had been sea-sick on an uncle's tug boat in the Georgia Strait, on totally calm waters. Now I had been air-sick on my first flight ever...

But - never say never! I have enjoyed my 27 years of service life including many as a navy test pilot...

***Yours Aye, Les East***



***Les East receiving the 'Cadet of the Course Award'***



## BONAVENTURE - A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

23 April 1964: VS 880 Tracker a/c serno 1553 went over the port side of HMCS BONAVENTURE during a night landing.

Captain Bob Timbrell, Bonnie's skipper, described the situation thus: "We had recovered our first of six recoveries, I don't know why it is, but trouble always seems to happen in the early hours of the morning when it is pitch black. Here again, it was three or four in the morning. We recovered the first plane and he landed left of the angled deck and engaged a wire. But, as he stretched the wire to its maximum, the left undercarriage went over the side. Consequently, the aircraft started to twist and the weight of the engines resulted in the aircraft breaking its back. We ended up with a tail section on board engaged with the hook and the rest of the aircraft dropping into the ocean. We were moving through the water at a fair speed, 20-odd knots. This was fortunate, because as the wing hit the water, it caught and the aircraft righted itself.

Moving in to pick up the four crewmen who successfully got out of the aircraft, the plane guard destroyer started to lower her whaler. But something went wrong, the bow of the whaler went down into the ocean, the stern stayed up, and consequently the sailors were spilled out. So now we have four of my airmen in the water, plus the full whaler crew. The destroyer then started to throw heaving lines to pull out their whaler crew. They were still manoeuvring, and then the heaving lines got sucked up into the intakes and the circulating water pumps, which resulted in the destroyer then becoming immobile.

So, there I had four airmen in the water, a whaler's crew in the water, a dead destroyer, and I still had five Trackers overhead to recover. And, as I said, early hours in the morning.

I told the destroyer to have its second boat ready. We then circled that destroyer five times. Each time we got into wind, we recovered one Tracker. If there was a problem, it would be close to the destroyer. Fortunately there was none. That was the story of the only aircraft I lost." (From Allan Snowie's "The Bonnie", p.163)

The aircrew were all recovered safely. For the record, does anyone know their names?

(From Leo Pettipas)



### *Good night sweetheart*

*Good night, sweetheart,  
Till we meet tomorrow,  
Good night sweetheart,  
Sleep will banish sorrow.*

*Tears and parting  
May make us forlorn,  
But with the dawn  
A new day is born,*

*So I'll say  
Good night, sweetheart,  
Tho' I'm not beside you,  
Good night, sweetheart,  
Still my love will guide you*

*Dreams enfold you,  
In each one I'll hold you,  
Good night, sweetheart, good night.*

## TESTAMENT OF HONOUR

**Richard 'Dick' Bartlett**

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I was born in 1919 and raised in Saskatchewan in a little place called Fort Qu'Appelle. My dad was an Englishman who had come out in 1910 and still regularly received 'The London Times.' In the spring of 1938, I'd graduated high school and noticed a little ad in the Times advertising for pilots for the Fleet Air Arm. The RAF had supplied personnel to the Fleet Air Arm from about 1923 until 1938, when the Admiralty decided to take over, which is why they were advertising for pilots. And, of course, the war was in the offing. I'd always had a hankering to go to sea and thought I'd like flying as well, so I sent in my application. In the summer of 1938, I got an answer from England to come over for an interview, which I did and was accepted.

There were about 30 of us training as pilots. We were sent down to Portsmouth for 3 months of naval training and once we'd completed that, we started our flying.

I completed my training in early 1939 and was then moved under the training of the RAF to get my wings. The Netherhaven air station was a funny old place. It had grass runways, no control tower, and no radios so each day a pilot was selected for 'air traffic control.' If two aircraft were coming in for a landing at the same time and might collide, the pilot on duty had to get out on the runway and shine a Very light into the air. It was primitive, but a very pleasant life there through the spring and summer.

When war was declared in September, life changed entirely. We started working seven days a week, had airfield security patrols, and the planes and hangers were camouflaged, which had to be changed every other day. During this time, the Fleet Air Arm few such aircraft as Harts, Audaxes and a new monoplane, the Harvard, which I later flew. I was transferred onto Swordfish torpedo-bomber biplanes and took a torpedo attack course. With the Swordfish, you'd climb to ten thousand feet, then point the nose straight down at the sea. You'd haul back on the stick when you were about a hundred feet off the water and hope the aircraft would level out at about fifty feet. If it did, then you flew straight and level towards your target and dropped your torpedo about a thousand yards from the ship you were attacking. Despite its archaic appearance, it was a beautiful aircraft to fly. But I must confess I wanted to fly something more modern.

Operations in Norway started early in 1940 and very quickly they began to run short of pilots. The Admiralty phoned down to our squadron one night to ask if any of us could fly Skuas, which I'd had a few hours on. So the next day I was sent down with another chap to do a two-week fighter course flying Skuas and Gloucester Gladiators, which were a fighter with 2 front guns that fired through the wooden prop. On occasion, the guns would literally fire into the prop, but as long as you didn't get too many holes in it didn't seem to affect it too much.

After this course, I was sent as a fighter dive bomber pilot to 803 Squadron on the carrier HMS Ark Royal for operations off Norway to support the British Norwegian expeditionary force. When you went in on an attack from the

Ark Royal, the carrier hovered about 150 miles off the coast. We'd go off in flights of three Skuas carrying 500 lb. bombs, or two 150 lb. bombs. The aircraft had four front guns and an old Lewis gun in the back seat for the air gunner. The Skua was a very underpowered plane, so its best feature was that it went 'downhill' very fast. It was like flying a bathtub, but they could certainly take a lot of punishment. In fact, you were more or less expected to take some punishment. The captain of the Ark Royal thought you weren't pressing home your attacks properly unless you came back with some holes in your aircraft, which was fairly easy because the German flak always had a good whack at you.

When you returned to the Ark Royal after an attack, a screen of destroyers surrounded the carrier. We were on radio silence, so we had to use a Very light to identify ourselves, but this just seemed to make our destroyers angry. They'd see our lights and think they were being fired on, and they'd open up on us. Which meant we often had to fly through our own flak just to get back to the carrier. What's more, the closer you got, the more the destroyers thought you were attacking them. It's a good thing their accuracy wasn't any better than their aircraft recognition.

A lot of the English pilots surprised me when I first joined the Fleet Air Arm. Many had long hair, wore a bit of cologne and had handkerchiefs hanging out of their sleeves. I wondered what I'd gotten myself into. But these same types would come back from a rough attack saying, "Wasn't that fun! Let's go for a drink." Meanwhile I'd be thinking, "Geez, I'd better go change my underwear before I go for any drink."

The Ark Royal was operating at Narvik in the north of Norway in late spring 1940, and at that time of year it was pretty much daylight all the time. Operations were going 24 hours a day and we got tired very quickly. We were assigned to cover the evacuation of our army from Norway. Our job was to provide fighter patrols over the embarkation area. There would be two aircraft patrolling over the land area and two over the area where they were transferring troops from small boats onto larger ships. Each patrol lasted 2 hours and you had to stay up there for your patrol regardless. If you ran out of ammunition in the first ten minutes, you still carried on until the next two aircraft came to relieve you. We were fortunate, because there'd been some Hurricanes stationed at Narvik. If the German Bombers came over and we dove at them, the Huns thought we were Hurricanes and quite often, they split up and headed for home. Little did they know we often didn't have any ammunition in our front guns.

When that evacuation was complete, we heard that the RAF were going to blow up their Hurricanes, because they weren't equipped with arrestor hooks to land on a carrier. If they'd been left in Norway, the Germans would get them. I went with some other pilots to the CO and asked if we could try landing them on the Ark Royal, but the RAF pilots got wind of this and came back saying, "Nuts! If anyone's going to try and land them on deck, we're going to." So they flew them to HMS Glorious, which was cruising alongside of us and did a tremendous job on getting them down. The RAF was short of aircraft at that time, so the Glorious headed for Scapa Flow with the Hurricanes, while the Ark Royal stayed with the convoy. On the way home, the Glorious ran into the German battle cruisers Sharnhorst and Gneisenau. With only one destroyer escorting her, the Glorious



and her destroyer were quickly sunk, with maybe a half dozen survivors from both ships.

As soon as we got clearance that the convoy didn't need any more air protection, we were sent to hunt the Sharnhorst and Gneisenau. The ships and their destroyer escorts had been spotted in Trondheim harbour. We headed in, the Ark Royal with her two squadrons of Swordfish and Skuas at the ready. Trondheim harbour was ringed with hills and mountains, solid with German anti-aircraft guns, in addition to the battleships and destroyers in harbour. There were also squadrons of German ME-109s and ME-110s on the Trondheim airfield, so the outlook was pretty glum. As we approached Trondheim, we learned that the Swordfish wouldn't take part in the attack, which was a blessing because they would never have survived a torpedo attack into that harbour. I can safely say there were some mighty relieved pilots.

But around midnight on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1940, 15 Skuas were sent in to dive bomb the Sharnhorst and Gneisenau. I remember the date and the time all too well because I was one of them. The sun was just coming up as we approached land. We must have been a German fighter pilot's dream, because it was a beautiful, clear morning and you could see for miles. We were about 10 miles away when the flak opened up from the harbour. About the same time, two ME-109s attacked me from the rear. The anti-aircraft flak coming from the German ships looked like an inverted solid cone of hot metal being thrust up into the air. On the first attack, the 109s knocked away pieces of my port wing and then on the second attack, they put quite a few holes in my starboard wing. A shell from one of their cannons hit the fuel tank just behind my seat, but maybe because it was full, it didn't explode. Certainly an awfully close call.

Suddenly I felt like I'd been kicked in the side by a mule. When I looked down, I could see three bullet holes in my flying suit. The fighters came in for a third attack, but seemed to miss. I can't say for sure, because I started feeling woozy and my left side had gone numb. Blood was trickling down my leg and I thought I might pass out. I told my air gunner to get ready to bail out, but he'd taken off his parachute and said he didn't think he had time enough to get it back on. I knew I couldn't make it back to the Ark Royal, so I headed for land, attempting to manoeuvre around the fringes of the flak and tried to get a grip on myself.

I put the old plane into a dive to drop my bomb and it seemed pretty sluggish. I remember thinking, "I don't think I'll be able to pull out of this." A few more pieces snapped off the aircraft as we dove. I didn't see where our bomb fell, but I know I missed the target. I reminded myself that I'd been struggling too much with the aircraft to get in a good attack. After much shuddering and shaking, the aircraft pulled up level over the water and I headed for the rooftops over Trondheim, thinking that they wouldn't shoot at us once we were over the town. By the time I got there, the engine was shaking so badly that I could hardly read any of my instruments.

Another surprise was waiting for us here, though. The Germans had placed machine guns on the rooftops, so once again we took quite a strafing as we flew over. A few miles out of town when we were still at treetop level, the aircraft engine seized up. The Skua seemed to stand on its tail, then just fell out of the sky with a great shuddering jerk and slammed into a clearing in a farmer's field.

Both my air gunner and me made it out, but it's a dreadful feeling finding yourself wounded and on the ground in

enemy territory. I had trouble standing, and my head felt woozy, so I had to sit down. After a brief discussion, my air gunner decided to head for Sweden, which was only 12 miles away. But not much time seemed to pass before he came back with a German soldier holding a gun to his back. The next thing I remember was being in the hospital. I didn't realize it at the time, but I was very lucky. Only 3 out of the 15 aircraft from our attack made it back to the Ark Royal, and very few of us who'd been shot down turned up in PoW camps.

I spent some time in the hospital in Trondheim, then was moved to an air force PoW camp rather than an army or naval camp. The Germans weren't interested in me, or any information that I might have had, so I was quickly moved to Stalag Luft I on the Baltic near Stettin, where I spent the rest of 1940. My main memory of that camp is hunger. Our daily ration consisted of two slices of very dark, sour German bread, one small piece of sausage, and a watery bowl of soup. And so we wasted no time in trying to escape.

In early 1941, the Germans discovered our first tunnel. They moved 50 of us, whose rooms were closest to the tunnel, to another camp. When we got into the new hut, we were searched, with the ones who'd been searched lined up on one side of the room and the others waiting to be searched on the other side. The Germans had confiscated a pair of wire cutters from somebody and left them on the table. As I moved toward the table, I was accidentally jostled and my hand drifted across and those wire cutters found their way into my pocket. I then bumped into a guard and explained to him that I'd already been searched and had got on the wrong side. So he let me pass and I got away with the wire cutters.

That night there was an air raid and all the lights went out in the camp. It lasted about 45 minutes before the 'All Clear' was sounded. The next morning, the Germans told us that because of the raid, the boxcars we were to be transported in hadn't arrived and we'd have to spend another day in this camp. So I said to my friend, Joe Hill, "I've got these wire cutters, let's have a fling tonight. We'll be ready if there's another air raid tonight. We'll knock a hole in the floor, drop down to the ground [it was about 2 feet], then have a crack at the fence. I'll pinch a bed board and you hold the wire up while I cut the wire." Joe was from the prairies and used to barbed wire, so there was no problem.

That night, right on schedule came another air raid and off we went. At this stage of the game, we were new to PoW camps and pretty damned inexperienced at escaping. We hadn't anticipated that the Germans would triple the guards and have dogs, which slowed up our whole plan. But the camp was in complete darkness, and we made it to the fence.

Our first snip on the old wire sounded like a rifle shot. I heard footsteps approaching when I was about a third of the way through. Joe was holding the board up to keep the wire from snapping down on me. As I cut the last wire, the 'All Clear' was sounded. I kicked Joe. "Get the hell out of here before the lights come back on." "I'll wait for you."

He stayed and held the wire while I scrambled back inside. We both stood up just as the lights in the compound came on again. I think the Germans were more than a little surprised to see two guys standing there. There was a bunch of shouting but no shooting, and as the searchlights started playing on us we

dashed behind a brick garbage bin and ran to our hut. We'd pre-arranged that our guys would keep the shutters open as long as the windows were open so we could just dive through, is exactly what we did. By midnight I was back in my bunk, but I'd learned quite a bit about trying to escape.

Our next camp was Oflag 9 A/H. This was an old castle surrounded by a dry moat with three wild boars in it, and floodlights constantly lighted the moat. The darn guards with machine guns were posted on the outer side of the moat and the camp seemed to be almost escape proof. But this was just a temporary stop as the Germans organized their PoW camps.



We were moved from the old castle on a third class train to Poland, sitting on hard wooden seats not allowed to move except for one trip to the toilet per day. They were short of food, clothes, and water and it was generally miserable. I was sitting next to a window that was wired shut. I had a nail file and

whenever the guard wasn't looking, I'd file away at the wire. After 3 days, I'd nearly got through. The plan was to fling a window open and dive out if the train went up hill and slowed down. The chap sitting next to me was supposed to nudge me if the guards came my way, but when we were getting close to Poland and time was running out, I became oblivious to everything except getting through this wire. At some point, apparently, my pal gave me a warning nudge, but I didn't feel it. The train was slowing to a stop, and there was a lot of shouting going on. When I looked up, a German guard was standing over me and I thought he was going to pin me right to the wooden seat. But it was too late anyway; we'd reached our destination.

The train had stopped near a clearing surrounded by German troops and personnel carriers with their floodlights shining into the centre of the circle. It looked quite sobering, I must admit. We were bundled off the train and escorted to an underground fort, which looked like it had been built in Bismark's time. Big doors opened on the side of the hill and in we went.

Rotting potatoes had been stored inside, so the stench was awful. The rooms were like dungeons, cold and damp with no light, heat or windows. We were surprised to find quite a few British Tommies there whose duty was to cook, clean up and generally maintain the camp. They told us that they'd made the Germans believe they hated all British officers, which seemed to make the Germans treat them a bit better, and might help us as well. These Tommies called us SOBs while they served us dinner that night, but the stew they gave us was the best food I'd had in Germany. They'd actually gone without rations for 3 days to make it for us. And that was their attitude from then on; they were tremendous guys.

Early May 1941, the German attitude towards us seemed to change for the better. We were allowed to go on top

of the fort during daylight hours. To see the old sun again was a very pleasant experience. We had one sad sight that I can't forget. In front of the fort there was a line of old men, women and children and being made to dig a ditch. There was a German guard with a 15-foot bullwhip. He'd walk up and down the line and every now and again, would stop and lash somebody. If they dropped their shovel, he'd keep lashing them until they picked it up again. To go to the toilet, these prisoners were only allowed to step out of the line and pull down their trousers or hike up their skirts. This guard took great delight in waiting till these poor people were halfway through and then lash their bottoms with his whip and make them jump back into line.

From the top of the Fort, we could also see and hear the constant flow of men and equipment moving east. In early June 1941, the Germans told us they were about to attack Russia. They seemed to think that when this happened, Britain would make peace with Germany and become allies to fight Russia as a common enemy. Which likely accounted for their change of attitude towards us at that time.

In anticipation of this wishful amalgamation of England and Germany, we were moved to a huge camp where they had about 2,000 British army officers from all over Germany. They were going to hold us all in one camp until peace was declared in the following weeks. Most of these officers were from the 51st Highland Division and a finer crowd of people you couldn't wish to meet. They'd held the rear guard action at Dunkirk and had been ordered to stand and fight until they were overrun.

There were only about 200 of us air force officers, and we were allocated two barracks. One was only about 150 feet from the main fence. Our senior officer had a room in one of these barracks, so we approached him about digging a tunnel from his room, which he completely supported.

This tunnel went down for 5 or 6 feet, then moved out horizontally from there. It was about 2 feet high and 2 feet wide, just large enough for one man. When I was digging, I'd crawl along on my stomach, sometimes naked and sometimes in old clothes I could leave down in the hole when I came up. When you reached the face of the tunnel, you would push the dirt underneath yourself to someone behind you who, in turn, pushed it behind him or hauled it out, depending on how long the tunnel was at that stage.

There was a tendency for the guy at the face to dig the slope upwards. I think it was a psychological need to get to the surface. I fought this by telling myself to keep digging down, so at least I stayed somewhat level. On a long tunnel, by the time I'd crawl to the face at the end, I'd feel exhausted and be in a cold sweat. It was a form of claustrophobia, especially rampant in those tunnels that had no shoring. The ground was frozen about 2 feet down, and you would hear a few plops behind you as bits and pieces of earth fell down from the top of the thing. If it collapsed, you would have been stuck down there. I'd have to talk myself down and into getting on with the work at hand.

For air, we'd bore holes the diameter of a broomstick up to the surface. This had a funnel effect and brought fresh air down, but as it turned out, it was also our downfall. On one very cold morning in the winter of 1941, a German was walking between the wire and the huts and noticed steam rising from the ground. The hot air was escaping through these holes and condensing into a whole bunch of little steam chutes. And with that, the Germans moved in and shut us down, which meant 8 months of hard work gone for naught.

In April 1942, I had the opportunity of taking part in an escape with five others from an interment cellblock just outside the camp perimeter. You'd get put in the 'cooler' for minor things like not saluting a German. In their methodical manner, the Germans would let you know on Friday that you'd start your cell time on Monday. To get six of us in the cooler at the same time, we changed names with 6 army officers who starting their cell time on the day we were going to head out. Every night, the Germans took each prisoner from each cellblock to the toilet, starting at one wing and working around to another wing. When everyone had gone to the toilet, the Germans locked the place up and went home.

The cells in the corridor were pretty dimly lit, so the first thing we had to do was create a diversion so that the guy who was returning from the toilet, was able to slip the bolt on his friend's door. That guy would hold the door closed tight until the guard had gone. For once, it all worked well, which was a pleasant and surprising change given my escape record to date. However, when we opened the cell door of the chap I was going with, his feet and legs were so swollen from fleabites that he couldn't get his boots on. He wished me the best of luck and I carried on by myself.

The building had one window that faced the compound and it was the only escape. I was the last one out, closed the window behind me then crept along the side of the building. It still surprises me that the Germans didn't see us. It was a bright moonlit night and with the odd searchlight reflection, I thought sure we would be easily seen against the building.

We'd been living on bread and water, two slices of bread per day and water. I hadn't eaten all day and was pretty hungry, but carried on and hoped I could raid a chicken house or find something. I would have eaten anything at that stage. There was still snow on the ground in places and in one place near a farm, I saw a big snow bank with running water and thought, "Oh, boy, something to drink." I stuck my hand in it and got part of a mouthful and realized that the snow pile was an old manure pile covered in snow. I choked and retched after that for quite a while.



I headed for a railway marshalling yard about ten miles away. It was about 2 o'clock in the morning and I didn't have much time cause I was after a train going towards Holland.

I didn't make it, and had to hide in some bushes before it got light outside. I had a close call that day about three p.m. I heard voices and saw three German soldiers coming with guns and a dog on a lead. I didn't have much cover, so I lay on my stomach perfectly still and hid my face as best I could. They walked within 30 feet of me and the dog looked at me, but kept going. I couldn't move until I couldn't hear their footsteps any more. Since my heart was pounding so loudly in my ears, I lost track of how long I lay there.

That night, I caught a train and hopped off about 3 am when it stopped. I'd had no food and was getting a bit desperate at this stage of the game. I approached a farmhouse, but the dogs started barking so I hid up for the day. Night came and I caught another train and stayed right on until dawn, when that train stopped. During the night I started to hallucinate. I kept thinking there was somebody with me and I'd turn to talk to them, then realize there was no one there. I knew if I didn't get to Holland pretty soon, I wouldn't make it at all.

I decided I'd better travel by day as well. I hid in the boxcar until I spotted another train going in the direction I wanted. I slipped out from around one end of the car and spotted a German guard with about 3 or 4 French workers working on the railroad not too far away. I hadn't gone more than 3 feet when he had his rifle leveled at me, so that was the end of it. I came close to ending up in the hands of the Gestapo at that time, but ended up being taken by heavy guard back to Stalag Luft III at Sagan.

I spent the summer of 1942 participating on the fringe of a number of escape plans, keeping track of goons and that kind of thing, but basically just coping with camp life waiting for the allies to arrive. There was always a crystal set wireless in the camp, which brought us the BBC news every night at eleven o'clock. Coded messages from England were also sent through these broadcasts. In the spring of 1943, I was asked with two others to guard this secret radio – the 'canary' – in anticipation of the large-scale escape that was being planned.

The Germans were suspicious that a radio was in the camp and kept trying to find it. If they suddenly broke into the compound, my job was to eat any messages, destroy the coils as

best I could, then hide the radio under the toilet and sit on the seat. Because of this, I wasn't able to help dig any of the tunnels [Tom, Dick and Harry] which were being built for a mass escape, but because of the work I was doing with the radio, my name was on the list as one of the ones who was to go out.

I was teamed up with a Norwegian fellow for the escape and learned to speak a bit of Norwegian so we could get to Norway together. Just before the tunnel was complete, however, another Norwegian arrived in camp and he was a friend of my partner. Because of my faltering Norwegian, we agreed that they should go together and I'd drop out of the escape roster. It was a strange twist of luck, because, sadly, these two men were both among the 50 who were shot by the Gestapo after the Escape in April 1944.

D-Day came and went and I lost enthusiasm for escaping and decided to just wait it out, since the Allies were obviously on their way in. We'd also been warned of severe repercussions for any further escape attempts. In January 1945, Russian guns could be heard in the distance. The Germans marched us west, away from the camp. They were starting to realize the game was up, and were stalling for time. But I think they knew their fate with the Russians would be a lot worse than with the Allies. On that march, there was about two feet of snow on the ground and it was one of the worst periods of my four and a half years of PoW life. Quite a few of the people didn't survive that forced mid-winter march.

After several weeks, we arrived at a former navy PoW camp outside of Bremen just before the British Army crossed the Rhine. When the Germans knew the Brits were approaching, they marched us northeast to just outside Lubeck. During that leg of the march, our columns was strafed a few times and we lost a few more of our guys. At Lubeck, we were living outside in the fields, sandwiched between the Russian and British armies. Fortunately, the British second army overran our camp first. By this time, we were a pretty scruffy looking lot and the British Colonel explained that he would have to hold us all for a couple of weeks while he documented us, one by one.

By nightfall of that day, I think the camp was almost empty. Nobody was sticking around for paperwork. I headed out with a group in a truck within about two hours of the British arrival. Within a day of leaving that camp, we made it to a British air base just south of Holland and the next morning at dawn, were bundled into a squadron of Lancasters headed back to England.

I'm sure my life has benefited and has been broadened by the various people and nationalities I served and lived with. Also my PoW experiences have left me with a tremendous sympathy for those who are short of food and the ordinary staples of life.

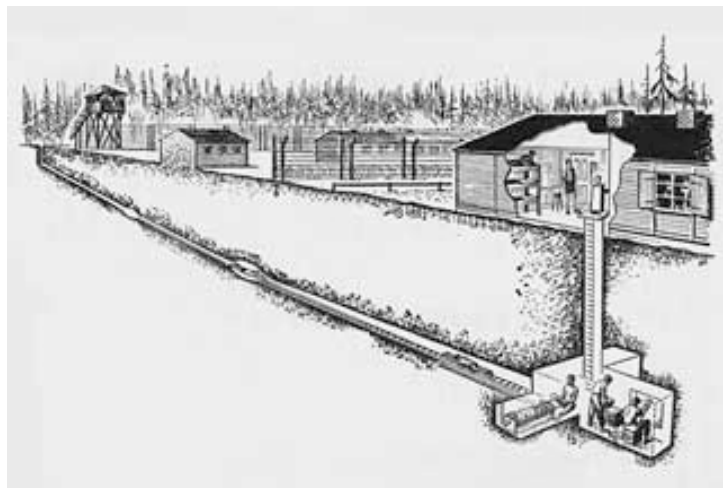
I feel I did the best I could under the circumstances. Of course, I suppose most of us would like to have accomplished more.

I would want my grandchildren's grandchildren to have a good understanding of the world situation at the time of WW II. For example: that Hitler and Germany meant to overrun, capture, and do away with freedom in all countries.

He had to be stopped, he was, and freedom has been maintained but a tremendous number of our young people gave their lives to accomplish the freedom we have today. In addition, the children should know that many young people lost their lives early in the war because our forces were ill-equipped and not prepared due to years of government cutbacks to the services.

Credit, "Testaments of Honour," and "[www.testaments.ca](http://www.testaments.ca)"

**An aside: Against incredible odds, the Allied airmen imprisoned at the Nazi POW camp Stalag Luft III secretly built three escape tunnels they named "Tom," "Dick," and "Harry." Through this interactive map, drawn after the war by POW Ley Kenyon, explore the remarkable story of Harry, the 300-foot tunnel that 76 men snuck through during their infamous getaway on the night of March 24-25, 1944**



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**SUPPORT THE  
SHEARWATER AVIATION MUSEUM  
FOUNDATION**



## Memories of a Backseat Naval Aviator

by Peter Bruner - Part 8

I was looking through my "Flying Log Book" and noted my last flight in a TBM Avenger was Feb 25, 1959 with "Mouse" Moffat as Pilot. My total time flown in Avengers was 1013.7 hrs.

One other thing to note was the number of hrs I had flown with LCDR Mike Langman as pilot in various types of aircraft. Expediter C45, Avenger, CS2F Tracker and Harvard. My first flight with Mike was in June 1955 (Avenger). The last in March 1962 (Tracker). Total hrs flown with Mike was approximately 1,046 hrs which is a fair amount of time for one pilot. There were many others who I also flew with but the next closest would have been Harry "Swig The Pig" Swiggum - March 25, 1955 to March 1957 for a total of 250 hrs, mostly in Avengers and Expediter C45s at VU33 Squadron.

In the fall of 1962 Si Green and I qualified as air traffic controllers at Shearwater. Our senior air traffic controller was Harry Swiggum. His number 2 was Ian (Goose) McLennan. Goose had been an Observer and lost a leg at the knee in an auto accident and thus was grounded. He persisted and convinced the powers that be that he would like to fly and he was granted his request. He returned from Pilot Training and fully qualified on Sea King helos. I had the privilege of flying with him on HS-50 Squadron in later years.

Jan 1963, Life at the Shearwater tower was rather hectic but kept the air traffic controller staff fully occupied with the responsibility for all aircraft in the air within a 5 mile radius and on the ground while taxiing. Positive control was the name of the game and all the staff adhered to rules without exception.

In late January 1963 as per the requirement to maintain aircrew proficiency and collect my flight pay (\$30 per month) I started flying in that time frame to earn my pay and proficiency. On a Round Robin flight, we approached Chatham NB air force base for a "Touch and Go" landing. The port undercarriage would not come down so we headed back to Shearwater to attempt a landing. The port landing gear would not indicate down and locked. After a series of Touch and Go landings it still would not show down and locked so after 4.6 hrs of flight time we decided to do a full stop landing. All the crash crew etc... were in position and all the spectators were located at "Goofing" stations. By the control tower on the hill. We touched down and rolled to a safe stop on the runway followed by the crash equipment. Once stopped a mechanic approached and inserted safety pins in the

undercarriage. We shut the Tracker down and they towed us back to the hangar.

In June a Similar situation with the nose gear which would not indicate down and locked, we landed and the gear did not collapse. The ground crew inserted the safety pins and once again we're towed to the hangar.

In July, after the completion of night flying at Shearwater and everything on the base was secure for the night my assistant "B Stand" John Cavanaugh and I were watching a late movie on the TV located in the control tower. Glancing out of the control position to the South toward "Hartlen Point" at approx 2am I observed a strange light in the air over Eastern Passage, just offshore. I advised John what I was observing and expressed that it was weird. He showed interest and concurred with me. It was a cigar shaped object stationary at the time. It's height was about 1000 to 2000 feet above ground level. It's length was approximately 150 feet and the middle portion about 50 feet through the girth. It was a pale blue colour which changed in an undulating movement to pale green then pink and on to a medium red and back to dark then pale blue. While this was going on, I asked the ground control unit if they had anything on their radar. They could not see any contacts, but came up to the tower and observed what was visible to the South. This continued for about 10 minutes then it commenced to move slowly to the South West proceeding out over McNab's Island. It then reversed direction and headed East along the shoreline when it was just off runway 16 right it started to climb and rapidly disappeared vertically out of sight at very high speed. The normal procedure would have been to call Moncton ATC and report what was observed. Our decision at the time was not to open a can of worms and let it go at that point.

10 Sept 1965 I was posted to HS50 Squadron flying in Sea King helicopters and at the same time promoted to "Chief Petty Officer". I attended the fleet school in Stadacona and trained to operate the "Dunking Sonar" which the Sea Kings were equipped with.

Jan 1966, I commenced flying as Senior Aircrewman on HS50 Squadron and posted to the Bonaventure. We sailed for South America in mid January and rendezvoused with our west coast group off of Panama in the Caribbean to sail to Trinidad. Our complement of ships equalled a total of 11. We were to show the new Canadian flag from the year before in South America. We arrived at Port of Spain, Trinidad and tied up alongside a large factory just outside of downtown. It was an easy walk to any downtown location so we spent the first day ashore viewing the sights. The second day was open ship for touring and viewing the Bonaventure by the locals. Most had never been that close to an aircraft carrier and were totally impressed.

The next day was Sunday and Church Parade was the order of the day. The entire ship's company was on parade on the flight deck when the new Canadian flag was



unveiled. An event to remember. The next day we set sail for Brazil. Our first stop was on the equator at Sao Luis. It was extremely hot and the air conditioning in the briefing room was out of order. This was our favourite place to lounge around as it became an oven during the day with temperatures in excess of 43 Celsius. We were totally pleased when we went to sea and the air conditioner became serviceable. Back to flying and exercising with the fleet as we sailed for Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.

We arrived in Rio and were berthed in the naval dockyard located will inland from the sea. When shore leave was piped we all gathered on the dock and split up to go touring around the city. Our first adventure was to catch the cable car to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain which gave us a fantastic view of Rio from the Harbour along to Copacabana Beach down and around to Ipanema Beach and inland to view the statue of "Christ The Redeemer". We had learned to travel in groups of four which was for safety reasons. IE theft, mugging's, assault, injury and possible murder for whatever we had of value. Our second day in port our group was approached by the head of what was then known as "The Light," short for Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Co. Ltd (now known today in 2012 as Brookfield Asset Management out of Toronto).

He was a Canadian who six months before assumed management of the company and moved from Toronto to Rio with his wife, who was a trained nurse. His name was Fred Coombs and he and his wife invited us out for dinner at their Town and Country Club which in effect was an exclusive golf club. It had all the bells and whistles and demonstrated nothing but wealth. The dinner was top notch and after we finished we were invited to their apartment on the seventh floor of a high rise on Ipanema Beach for a nightcap. As we drove out of the golf club in their limo, the driver directed our view to across the road. There we observed a "Flavia" or an area of abject poverty. Nothing but tin and cardboard shacks filled with people who were penniless, homeless, hungry and half starved. Our host explained that about 10% of the people were well off, 25% earned a reasonable living and lifestyle and the remainder 65% were at the bottom of the social spectrum and earned their living through theft etc... Education was minimal and the majority of these people had come into the city from the jungles to earn their fortune. Very few ever progressed up the ladder. Our host told us of how that the first week they were in Rio, they were driving on a major street and saw a car hit a pedestrian. It continued on leaving the casualty laying in the road. His driver swing the car around the scene and continued on. His wife (the nurse) told him to stop to see if she could help the injured person. Their driver completely ignored her directions to stop. They noticed no other persons or cars were lending any assistance when they reached their home they were made aware that if they had stopped to assist, the local police would hold anyone assisting responsible for all expenses that would be incurred by the victim. The only people who would assist were the police without being

liable.

At the end of their first month in their apartment the host explained how his wife and he were having their dinner in the dining room which was an "L" off of their living room. There was a noise from the living room but being on the seventh floor with the doors to the balcony open they ignored it as wind noise. After dinner they went into the living room and discovered their new console TV was missing. It had been stolen by thieves who had scaled up the exterior balconies then lowered their TV seven stories to the ground. Live and Learn was their conclusion.

The end of our trip to Rio was one of our Meteorologists on his own went to Copacabana beach for a swim. There were cubicles with locks where you could leave your clothes etc... while swimming. When he had finished his swim he returned to his cubicle, unlocked it and stripped off his swim suit and towelled himself off. He turned back to the cubicle to get his clothes and every article of clothing was gone, including his swimsuit. All he had left was his towel. He appeared on the beach again and one of my friends recognized him and gave him enough money to cover bus fare for the 6 mile trip back to the ship. The crew on the bow was quite surprised when he came up with only a towel covering him and asked to come aboard!

The next morning we set sail for Montevideo, Uruguay. But that's another tale.

To be continued... ***Yours Aye, Peaches***

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## **SAM FOUNDATION ANNUAL DINNER / AUCTION**

**At the WO/Sgts Mess Shearwater**

**16 June 2012**

**Dinner: 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm**

**Dress: smart casual**

**Tickets \$50.00 per person**

**(\$25.00 tax receipt issued for each ticket sold)**

**For ticket purchase or further information**

**Contact the SAMF secretary**

**Phone 461-0062 or Email**

**[samf@samfoundation.ca](mailto:samf@samfoundation.ca)**

## ALL THINGS SEA KING

### THE BARKER BAR STORY

*by Colonel (Ret'd) John Cody*

*(with input from Jav Stevenson and Ken Edmonds)*

It was Friday the 12th of June 1970. A lazy hot afternoon was unfolding on the flight line at HU 21. No students for the rest of the day and we were playing 'ukkers' when in came a distress call from the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) in Halifax. A Canadian fishing trawler out of the South Shore had been cut in two by a Russian fishing trawler the night before. We had all heard about this in the morning on the news on the way to work and we were wondering how the search out of Greenwood had gone.

It turned out that in his haste to push out their coordinates, the radio basher on the Canadian trawler had reversed his coordinates. The Greenwood SAR crowd was down off Yarmouth doing a search which had turned up nothing when one of the lads in RCC took the figures he had, reversed a couple of them and lo and behold they came up with a position 150 km due south of Halifax. They had dispatched a USAF Rescue C-130 out of Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire to this new position, and there they were: four Canadian fishermen who by this time had been in the water in life rafts for over 12 hours, surrounded by the debris of an obviously rather violent collision.

The call from RCC launched me in one aircraft with Captain Ken Edmonds as my co-pilot and Leading Seaman Gord Rowe and Able Seaman Barker as our crewmen. (You may recall that in those days it was commonplace to fly with a mixed crew on board. Rowe was a Safety Systems Tech and Barker was an Air Bos'n). The second aircraft had Major Jav Stevenson in command.

The two of us skedaddled as fast as we could go (and then some) to the site and as we approached, we could see a USAF Hercules circling overhead, a complete MA 1 life raft kit in the water with the fishermen on board, along with a USAF PJ (Para Jumper) by the name of Sgt. Beyerle who had jumped into the ocean to provide assistance. Jav was first in and he had picked up the four survivors when the Hercules radioed down: "Can you pick up any of the expensive kit that's in the water there".

By this time Jav, who had been in the hover for 20 minutes or so, was beginning to get low on fuel. He went into a hold and sent me in to pick up as much of the fancy kit as we could; radios, medical kits and survival gear of all manner. It turned out the hoist hydraulics went U/S and so Rowe and Barker took turns doing alternate hydraulic hoists with the Billy Pugh net. After we had the back of the

aircraft absolutely chock-a-block with the pieces of the MA 1 kit that we were able to bring on board, we picked up the USAF PJ after he had sunk the rafts and off we went on our way to Shearwater. It was routine stuff to us experts from HU 21 up to this point in time.

As an aside, Ken Edmonds recalls that RCC Halifax had also contacted ships in the vicinity to provide assistance and one of the vessels that responded was the Queen Elizabeth II which hove to during the rescue. In fact, Ken adds, the PJ, Sgt. Beyerle, after being hoisted onboard expressed his disappointment at being picked up - apparently he had scrounged all the money anyone was carrying on the Herc and was planning his trip to England onboard the QE II!

We headed back to Shearwater and then things started to deteriorate. About 100 Km south of Halifax on the way home, me flying number two on Jav in echelon port, his GHARS (directional gyro) went U/S. He turned the lead over to me, slid back and took up an echelon port position himself. We were at 300 feet doing the max allowed 144 knots, beating feet for Shearwater and the warmth of waiting blankets for our survivors. What followed next happened in the wink of an eye, but I can still see it all unfolding in exquisite slow motion every time I think of it.

As there was no place to stand or sit in the back which was stuffed with the MA 1 kit contents that Barker, Rowe and Sgt Beyerle had purloined from the sea, all three of them were up between the pilot seats taking a few rays of afternoon sun through the windows. The PJ had been in the water for about 2 hours and Barker and Rowe had been in the back door of the cab for approx 1 hour. The PJ was between the two seats, and Barker was standing to the left of him, nestled up against the personnel door, while Rowe was behind me in the starboard seat. Barker was about to prove that those of us who had been trying to convince the Engineers for some time to change the personnel door handle from a "push down on it and it will open", to a "pull up on it and it will open", were right.



*... someone had just left my  
cab in an unauthorized  
manner...*

Barker leaned on the door handle: the door flew open and there he was - out in the thin air. Jav, who was still flying echelon port on me, started yelling into the radios that someone had just left my cab in an unauthorized manner, so the first thing I did almost instinctively was to reach down and turn off the radio mixer switch. My co-pilot was also coincidentally yelling at me that somebody had departed the aircraft in an unusual manner (or words to that effect) and was hanging onto the stub wing for dear life. My instincts took over and I immediately rolled the aircraft hard right, hit bottom rudder and headed for the water. It would have taken me approx 3 turns to reach the water where I planned to flare, let him drop off and then Mr. PJ would go for his second swim of the afternoon. If he fell, it was curtains for Mr. Barker as we were at 300 feet doing the max allowed 144 knots.

The effects of this uncoordinated flight were as follows: Barker was more or less hanging in mid-air, twisting counter-clockwise, about to commence his descent to the ocean 300 feet below. The aircraft flew into him as he was twisting and the port stub wing impacted him in his stomach, not his back or his side which would have knocked him out. The combination of his twist in the air and being impaled on the stub wing, caused his feet to fly up into the wheel well while his outstretched arms grabbed hold of the stub wing. The turn and the bottom rudder and the rapid bleeding off of speed caused him to fall towards the aircraft, actually sucking him up against the side of the cab.

Simultaneously, and I mean not even a split second later, the USAF PJ grabbed LS Rowe's free hand while Rowe grabbed onto the back of the co-pilots seat. He stepped partway out of the cab, reached out and caught Barker as he was about to let go. LS Rowe pulled Beyerle while Barker hung on for dear life. Edmonds was up in his chair at this point hanging onto the PJ as well and all I could see before I even completed one turn was a pair of eyes coming through the doorway, followed by the rest of Barker. They got him into the aircraft, and the PJ immediately disappeared back aft with him and started digging through the absolute mound of medical supplies that Barker and Rowe had hauled out of the water. When I looked back after my heart rate came back to normal, there was Barker laid out in the back of the aircraft. He was splinted up like a medical dummy and we eventually got the report that he had a suspected broken leg, severe bruising all over, etc, etc. LS Rowe was by this time hanging onto the broken personnel door to avoid it from flying off in the slipstream as we headed for home.

Jav Stevenson, flying number two in echelon port,

recalls the shock of seeing the personnel door of Sea King suddenly opening, like the mouth of a monster, and spitting out a body and then the immediate response of the rescuers hanging outside the door and holding Barker from peril during the flare and deceleration.

Fast forward to an uneventful flight in silence back to Shearwater (I conveniently forgot to turn the radio switch back on so I could gather my thoughts) where we were met by ambulances to take Barker and the other survivors who were going for a very fast ride to the MIR. I was still gathering my thoughts on the entire affair, (I was the Squadron Flight Safety Officer) while writing my reports of the incident, when an apparition hove to out of the blue. It was by now approx 6 PM in the evening. It was Barker. They had checked him out in the MIR, found absolutely nothing wrong with him with the exception of a few bruises, burns on his hands from the alternate hydraulic buttons in the cab and a shredded flying suit where the PJ had cut it open with his knife to check him out.

The rest is a bit fuzzy. As there was a monster TGIF going on that day I took ABAB (Able Seaman Air Bos'n) Barker up to the mess, plied him with liquor and mix until he couldn't see straight (and neither could I by the way), and where of course he was the hero of the day when the story about this little escapade of ours made its way to the assembled multitudes.

I haven't seen much of Barker in the ensuing years. Caught the occasional glimpse of him when I was bouncing on and off various ships where he was a Fire Fighter for the rest of an almost very prematurely shortened career and life, and I believe he retired from the Navy several years ago as a Chief Petty Officer Second Class Fire Fighter. (Editorial Note: Barker was last reported as a Lt(N) in the Joint Support Ship Project Office.)

Subsequent to all of this activity, after we had filled out all the reports and genuflected to the east several times for our sins, the engineering world finally did two things: they changed the handle of the personnel door so it was now a "pull up to open me" affair and they installed the Barker Bar across the door. It is a rudimentary affair but has served since the fall of 1970 to keep all wayward persons from exiting an aircraft in this unauthorised manner again.

And now you know where the Barker Bar comes from. And my friend Able Seaman Barker will never know how many times that one has been told and retold as various evenings wore on.

Good luck to you Mr. Barker, wherever you are!

**John M. Cody**

*(Editorial Note: There were no awards for gallantry or Flight Safety Awards for the Canadians involved in this incident although Sgt. Beyerle, the USAF PJ, received an American Airman's Medal.)*

## **MAY 2012 SAMF 50 / 50 DRAW will be held 16 May 2012.**

**Tickets must reach our office NLT 11 May 2012 to be included in the May draw.**

You are no doubt aware that the winner of our past draw in November was Col (Ret'd) John Cody. His winnings totalled \$3080.

Many of you did not get involved in our first draw but we are hoping you will try this one coming up in May.

The basic idea of the 50/50 draw was for the person to whom we sent tickets, to purchase them for themselves. Rather than just another donation, they would have a chance at winning. A few sold them to others. This is ok too but we didn't want to burden you with selling tickets. The tickets you still have on hand are good for all the draws. Cost - \$10 per book of 5 tickets.

***Here is an easier way to play*** - just call or email us, give us your credit card number and the amount of tickets you want to put in the draw and we will fill out the tickets for you. Several took advantage of this procedure last time. You may call us at our toll free number: 1-888-497-7779 or email us with your credit card number at [samf@samfoundation.ca](mailto:samf@samfoundation.ca)

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

Carol Shadbolt  
Chair  
50/50 Draw



### ***The Last Word***

Hello everyone. 2012 is off and running so to speak. Before I go too far, just a reminder that there are still over 160 out there that have not renewed their membership. Come on guys, this is most important to the welfare of the Foundation and keeping your history and heritage alive.

[www.samfoundation.ca](http://www.samfoundation.ca)  
bring back memories.

Our photo gallery will surely

BTW George Plawski has sent in a couple of stories (see 'Articles' on our web site) and especially the article about the last Naval Aviators Mess Dinner - George is quite the writer. Some Photos are included. See our website: [www.samfoundation.ca](http://www.samfoundation.ca)

Yes, the SAMF has purchased an Avenger - a flyable one. You'll read more on that in other issues.

Talk about excitement.

Thanks to everyone who helps with WARRIOR, our Membership, the Dinner/Auction etc.

Thank God for Margaret Ferguson and Carol Shadbolt. If it wasn't for their generosity with their time as volunteers, I'd be up to my neck trying to get our WARRIOR ready and send out reminders etc for memberships and the 50/50 Draw. Thanks ladies.

I hope this is going to be a great year for you all. Keep healthy and keep in touch with each other.

Your time here at Shearwater was the best and don't forget it. Take care, Kay



*L-R Carol Shadbolt and Margaret Ferguson*

Have you checked out our web site as yet?





## SEA KING MEMORABILIA

The Sea King 50th Anniversary Committee has designed a number of keepsakes to commemorate this auspicious event. Unless otherwise specified, item sales are conducted through the shop at the Shearwater Aviation Museum. Please ensure your contact information is in your email when ordering products online.

To date, our commemorative products include the Challenge Coins and Flightsuit patches. The Flightsuit patches come in full colour and subdued (with or without velcro).

### CHALLENGE COIN

Sea King 50 Level Coin - approx. 2" diameter - sequentially numbered - sold in protective sleeve

\$25.00 taxes incl., \$30.00 with presentation box

\$10.00 for single presentation box, if purchased separately from coin

### SHIP LEVEL COINS

Pennant numbers of Sea King carrying ships

\$50.00 taxes incl.

### HELICOPTER LEVEL COINS

RCN registration numbers and CF registration numbers

\$75.00 taxes incl.



### SQUADRON LEVEL COINS (not yet available)

Coin numbers corresponding to a Sea King operational or support Squadrons will be auctioned at a later date. Details will be published how to get involved in the hunt for these highly sought coins!



### SUBDUED FLIGHTSUIT PATCH

3.5" diameter

\$10.00 taxes incl.

\$12.00 taxes incl. (with velcro; please specify when ordering)



### FULL COLOUR FLIGHTSUIT PATCH

3.5" diameter

\$12.00 taxes incl.



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Sea King 425 hovers off stern of CF DDH at sea