

HMCS SACKVILLE - CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL ACTION STATIONS

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Editor's Corner

First, I want to apologize for the late delivery of the print version of Action Stations. A lot of moving parts went wrong, including the dreaded Christmas hiatus. At least the E-version was available much earlier so most of you would have been able to read it online.

Your Action Stations (A.S.) team strives to do two issues each year and we schedule delivery dates for May and prior to Christmas. We will keep trying to make that happen.

Content is always an issue. We have standing columns from the Chair and Commanding Officer to keep you advised of Trust and Ship activities, many excellent pictures taken by our photographers of Trustees' activities, features usually dealing with Canadian Naval history or Battle of the Atlantic from a few authors, and general interest snippets.

The A.S. Team would appreciate letters to the editor, contributions of articles, and also wartime memories (letters, photos, etc. from Veterans writing home during the war, for example). If you are forwarding submissions please send them to me online at doug.thomas@eastlink.ca and to Kaela Ramsay, our layout coordinator, at actionstations@canadasnavalmemorial.ca.

Best wishes,
Doug Thomas

On the Cover...

A tug assists HMCS *Sackville* off the Canadian Peacetime Sailors Memorial (Bonaventure Anchor Memorial) in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. The memorial, dedicated in 1973, is near the Halifax (Sailors) Memorial. Services and ceremonies are held at both memorials, including Battle of the Atlantic and Remembrance Day.

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British Battle of Atlantic corvette veteran Thomas Walford, centre, checks out HMCS *Sackville*'s engine room.



From the Chair

Capt(N) (ret'd) William Woodburn

Dear Trustees,

On January 31st, 1923, the Government of Canada authorized the stand up of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR), to build support and bring awareness to Canadians from coast to coast of a fledgling RCN. By the end of the Second World War, Canada had the third largest navy in the world with 95,000 men and women in uniform. Approximately 77,000 of those men and women were members of the RCNVR. This year we are proud to celebrate along with all Canadians, 100 years of service of the Naval Reserves in Canada. On behalf of all our Trustees it gives me great pleasure to recognize this auspicious occasion with a well deserved BRAVO ZULU!

As I write this report, we are three weeks back from our annual commemorative ceremony of The Battle of the Atlantic, on Sunday May 7th. It will mark the beginning of yet another busy summer for HMCS *Sackville* on the waterfront. This year, Halifax is on track for a record breaking cruise season, with 191 cruise ships expected to visit the city, bringing an estimated 325,000 guests to the port. This presents us with an outstanding opportunity to continue to inform a global audience of the significance of the sacrifices and contributions made by our ship, our navy, and our nation, in times of both war and peace on the high seas.

This also marks the first year HMCS *Sackville* is expected to spend eight months in its public berth downtown. HMCS *Sackville* will arrive on the waterfront on May 4th and remain there through the Summer and Fall months,



CNMT Chair Bill Woodburn welcomes new Executive Director Cynthia O'Connell

returning to HMC Dockyard in early January. This extended season is made possible by the recent installation of heat pumps in the ship to provide the heating necessary to properly operate onboard at that time of year. This will open up a brand new opportunity to invite school and special interest groups to visit and learn about the ship without the challenges of navigating the security demands of dockyard. In my mind a win-win all round!

Things are exceptionally busy at the moment as the ship's crew prepares for Summer while the Board of Directors presses on with the development of our Strategic Plan. We are aiming to present the final product to all Trustees at

our Annual General Meeting scheduled to occur in late June. In addition, small delegations will travel to the the UK in May to represent the ship and the Trust at ceremonies commemorating the Battle of the Atlantic in both Liverpool and Londonderry.

I am proud to inform you that the breadth and depth of discussion, and the level of collaboration exercised by the Board in the development of our Strategic Plan continues to be most impressive. That said, going into the process, we significantly underestimated the level of energy and degree of commitment required to produce a first class document. I can honestly say everyone stepped up to the challenge in as much



The Canadian Naval Memorial Trust has contributed \$3,000 towards the refurbishment and rededication of the National Naval Reserve Memorial, Ottawa. Captain (N) (ret'd) Bill Woodburn, Chair of CNMT presents a cheque to Captain (N) Beth Vallis, NR centennial project team leader during Friday noon gathering in HMCS *Sackville*. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Naval Reserve. The Naval Reserve Memorial was unveiled at Dow's Lake (HMCS *Carleton*) during the 50th anniversary of the Reserve in 1973.

as they possible could. It was an honour to be a part of the process.

Our mission is straight forward - Preserve the Ship and Tell the Story. To achieve this, the Trust will focus its effort over the next few years on pursuing the following four key goals:

- Ensure we have the Business Organizations, Practices, and Governance Needed for the ongoing viability of the Trust;
- Leverage Knowledge to Enable, Engage, and Educate the public;
- Grow Wealth and Capacity to Meet Future Needs; and
- Preserve the Hull and Maintain the Ship

We have already begun to implement key actions that will be critical to the implementation of the plan. Foremost amongst these was the need to hire an Executive Director. I am pleased to announce that on March 1st, our new Executive Director, Cynthia O'Connell began her employment with the Trust. Cynthia has over 25 years of managerial experience in strategic planning, marketing and communications, and fi-

nance and administration. She has been involved with the tourism industry for years, and brings with her the skills, expertise, and energy needed for the Trust to succeed. We look forward to working with her and wish her all the very best in her new position. Welcome aboard Cynthia!

I would be remiss if I didn't include in my comments a few words about a couple of remarkable events that recently occurred onboard. First, in recognition of his service to Canada, Rowland Marshall, a veteran of the Battle of the Atlantic and long-time supporter of the Trust, was awarded a "Quilt of Valour" by the Canadian non-profit society, Quilts of Valour, during a very touching ceremony held in the Trustees Mess on St Paddy's Day. Second, a week later, a special guest from the UK joined the ship to celebrate his 98th Birthday onboard. Mr Thomas Walford served with the Royal Navy in HMS *Armeria*, K187, during the war. He travelled from London to Halifax specifically to spend his birthday in the "The Last Corvette" and was both overjoyed, and overwhelmed

by the experience. If only there was a way to bottle the range of heartfelt emotions he conveyed during his visit HMCS *Sackville's* existence would be assured for generations to come. It was truly a pleasure, and an honour, to have Rolland and Thomas spend their precious time with us.

I think it fair to say that 2023 is shaping up to be an exceptional year for the Trust. It will be a time of significant transition and a time of positive change. It will definitely be a busy time. In the illustrious words of Sir Winston Churchill:

"To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often"

Ya Gotta Love it!

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer and if you have the chance don't be shy to come down to the waterfront and visit the ship.

Respectfully,
Bill Woodburn
Chair



From the Captain

Cdr (ret'd) Gary Reddy

HMCS *Sackville* has weathered the winter very well in HMC Dockyard. Our berth, NC1, provides great protection from the winter storms and north-easters that blow through Halifax. It has been a slow winter for *Sackville* but the pace is about to pick up with the ship's move to our downtown berth at Sackville Landing on 4 May. The ship will get underway to support Battle of Atlantic Sunday and committal of ashes service at Point Pleasant Park.

On the personnel front, our Chief of the Ship (COTS), CPO1 (Ret'd) Art Forward, has stepped down. Art's support to *Sackville* over the last four years has been spectacular. Coming to the ship during phase one of the major refit/hull cladding and then leading the team

through phase two, he was our on-scene manager/leader for all aspects of the refit. Phase two docking, which

During phase two docking that extended over a 10-month period Art consistently maintained oversight of all shipboard activities. His coordination with Fleet Maintenance Facility – Project Manager, support personnel, crew, and Canadian Naval Memorial Trust Board proved crucial to the tremendous success of the refit. In post refit, Art led the team to tell the story of HMCS *Sackville*. He saw us through the most successful summer on record in 2022. We owe Art a huge Bravo Zulu! Equally important, he has committed to remain with the ship as the Chief Yeoman of Signals.

With Art's departure, the ship has hired CPO1 (Ret'd) Charles Trombley as COTS. In addition, the Board approved the hiring of an Assistant COTS which will be filled by CPO2 (Ret'd) Austin Collett.

As we prepare for our move downtown, the ship is in good shape. Much work has to be done but the team is up to the challenge. Our theme this year is "Life at Sea" within which we will tell the story of the RCNVR and their centenary. With the installation of heat pumps, our plan is to remain at our downtown berth till January 2024.

Make sure you visit HMCS *Sackville*, take in a Fri (noon) Weepers, and if you would like to be a Trustee guide please reach out.



During their visit to Halifax, the Veteran's Ombud, Colonel (Retired) Nishika Jardine, and her staff, visited HMCS *Sackville* and were provided an exceptional tour of the ship from stem to stern and masthead to tiller flats by 1st Lieutenant Rick Powell. The Ombud Team were very appreciative of the tour and got a real understanding of the hardships enduring by those who served in these ships during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Art Forward Recognized



Chief Petty Officer (ret'd) Art Forward, left, has completed his time as Chief of the Ship (COTS) after four very active years for HMCS *Sackville*. During that period Canada's Naval Memorial underwent an extensive refit in HMC Dockyard, including cladding the hull. At a gathering to recognize and thank Art for his significant contribution to *Sackville*, particularly during the refit, Trustee Bob Stewart presented him with a rope work plaque he created. The good news, after some well earned R & R Art will return as Chief Yeoman of Signals.



Battle of the Atlantic: Impact on the German U-boat Fleet



U-995, the last survivor of 703 Type VII's completed in WW II. Part of the Naval Memorial in Laboe, Germany.

On average, the U-boat force sank a ship for every day of the war in Europe, accounting for 69% of all Allied shipping losses. These numbers were disastrous: 2603 merchant ships and 175 naval vessels with a total displacement of 14,500,000 tons and the loss of 30,246 merchant seamen – 25 % of those who went to sea.

The U-boat losses were even more severe. 39,000 men sailed in German submarines during WW II, the U-boat memorial near Kiel records a death toll of 27,491 (over 70%) and another 5000 were made prisoners of war. Of the 863 U-boats that sailed on operational patrols, 754 were lost (over 87%) – staggering numbers. In the latter days of the war, it must have seemed to the crews that it was not a matter of whether they would die, but of where and when. U-boat crews showed great courage and tenacity – qualities worthy of a better cause. Had the U-boats been successful in the Atlantic battle – and in the first half of 1942 it looked as though they

would be – a victory for the Axis powers would have led to the deaths of millions and the subjugation of many millions more. While the prodigious efforts and steadfast conduct of the U-boat men can be admired and accorded respect in the long history of warfare, there must also be rejoicing that they failed.

Analysis: During the first years of the war, Germany held the upper hand in the Atlantic in spite of the relatively small numbers of ocean-going U-boats available for deployment. Like the Allies, it took some time to build new vessels, train their crews, and equip them with reliable weapons. As the war progressed, Allied scientific and technical research resulted in important discoveries and improvements in sensors and weapons: radar being a significant example. Allied forces gradually tipped the balance in their favour with improved training, long-range radar-fitted anti-submarine aircraft patrolling what had been the Mid-Atlantic Gap, deployment of hunter-killer and escort

task groups to seek out the U-boat wolf packs and strengthen besieged convoys, small aircraft carriers sailing with the convoys and making it more difficult for U-boats to attack, and the fitting of improved sonar and ASW weapons such as Hedgehog and Squid mortars, and - not known until many years after the war - the breaking of the German Enigma Codes made a huge contribution thought to have shortened the war by 2-4 years.. In May 1943 (known to the German Navy as Black May) the tide turned decisively when 47 U-boats were lost in the Atlantic. All U-boats were withdrawn from the Atlantic after these catastrophic losses for training and fitting of new equipment – and never regained their ascendancy in the Battle of the Atlantic. This was the beginning of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic, and we celebrate the “Turning of the Tide” in May each year: 2023 marks the 80th anniversary.

Happy Birthday...



Maurice McGaffney, HMCS *Sackville*'s live aboard shipkeeper in the 1980s-90s celebrated his 80th birthday in February. As he explained to ship visitors at the time *Sackville* was not only his place of work but his home. A photo from the October 1999 issue of *Action Stations* shows Maurice holding a tray of sandwiches with the caption, “Regardless of the event (including Friday gathering/lunch) Maurice McGaffney always has a good selection of sandwiches and other treats for guests and other trustees.”



Cdr Fraser McKee (ret'd), a veteran of Second World War, naval chronicler and long-time Naval League of Canada supporter was recognized by the NLC Ontario Division on his 98th birthday. Fraser has also been an active supporter of HMCS *Sackville*, the last of Canada's wartime corvettes. Photo taken from The Navy League of Canada - Ontario Division's Facebook page.

An Easy One!

For members of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and other dark blue crossword aficionados who challenged the nationally syndicated large grid Colossal Canada Crossword January 21 the clue to # 58 across should have been easy: “Nova Scotia...HMCS *Sackville*, a, is today's Canada Naval Memorial and National Historic Site of Canada.”

If by chance you had a bit of a memory lapse regarding the correct answer to # 58 a member of *Sackville*'s crew or a ship guide will be more than pleased to discuss significance of the Flower Class corvettes.

COLOSSAL CANADA CROSSWORD

Saturday, January 28, 2023

Distributed by Torstar Syndication Services

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Escort Aircraft Carriers: HM Ships Nabob and Puncher

LCdr (ret'd) Doug Thomas

(with thanks to the Royal Navy Research Archive and
"For Posterity's Sake.")

At the Quebec Conference in August 1943, the RCN was made aware that the RN had a serious manpower-shortage, and that they were looking for help from Canada to man some of the thirty-eight new Escort Carriers (CVEs) which had been contracted from American Shipyards for Lend-Lease to the Royal Navy. The RCN agreed to man two escort carriers, HM Ships *Nabob* and *Puncher*. Their air departments (pilots, observers, deck handlers and maintenance personnel) would be British, and they would remain units of the Royal Navy because they were provided by the USA under the Lend-Lease Agreement.

Escort carrier designs were based on merchant ship hulls and propulsion systems and could be built very quickly (10 -11 months) employing welding techniques and advanced methods of construction such as round-the-clock construction in US West Coast Shipyards. These extremely useful ships could quickly undergo operational role changes by embarking different types of aircraft: ASW Avengers, Wildcat fighters for fleet protection, torpedo bombers for anti-ship strikes, and bombers for minelaying or ground attack. Escort carriers were also being used as command ships as a member of hunter-killer groups along the Trans-Atlantic convoy routes.

Manning these two ships was a very positive initiative for the growing Canadian fleet, as it would provide useful experience for the future when the RCN received its first Light Fleet Carrier, HMCS *Warrior*, in 1946. The fol-



lowing article describes the experience of operating HMS *Nabob*. It was an extraordinarily complex process compared to that experienced by the RCN with corvettes and frigates: to fit-out the ship and work-up the crew and air department of a major warship, integrate it with one of the world's major navies, and conduct wartime combat operations in Northern European waters.

A History of HMS *NABOB*

HMS *Nabob* was a British 'Ruler' class escort carrier (US Bogue class) built in the USA at Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Co. Tacoma, Washington. Her keel was laid down in October 1942 as a freighter, but the hull was purchased by the US navy to be completed as the USS *Edisto* (CVE-41).

It had been decided to transfer CVE-

41 to the British Admiralty after her completion, which took place September 7th, 1943: after 322 days construction. The White Ensign was hoisted, and the ship was commissioned as HMS *Nabob*, pennant number D77. The ship was just under five hundred feet long overall, displaced 15,390 tons, and was capable of eighteen knots with her steam-turbine propulsion system.

Nabob departed Tacoma on September 10th for Vancouver, Canada, arriving later that day. She was one of 19 escort carriers to be modified to meet Admiralty requirements by the Burrard Dry Dock Co. Ltd. in North Vancouver, B.C. While in Vancouver she was to receive her full crew and commence workups to ready her for operational service.

Modification and Preparations for War

On October 15th Capt. Horatio Nelson Lay, OBE, RCN assumed command; *Nabob's* ship's company, excluding the Air Department and squadrons, was provided by the Royal Canadian Navy. *Nabob* was still a British naval vessel however: the terms of the lend-lease agreement between the United Kingdom and United States prohibited her transfer to the Canadian government.

Nabob's alterations and modification were started by Burrard Drydock on November 1st, these would bring the ship up to RN standards and outfit her as an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) carrier. The work totaled 150 separate modifications and included lengthening of the flight deck, fitting redesigned flying controls and fighter direction layout, modifications to hangar, accommodation, and storerooms, installing extra safety measures including ma-

ior changes to the aviation fuel stowage and fueling at sea arrangements, modifying gunnery and other internal communications, adding extra radio equipment, and improved darkening-ship arrangements.

On January 20th she sailed for Bremerton Navy Yard, Washington to embark ammunition, and then back to Esquimalt to begin steaming, gunnery, radar, and other trials. After live firing exercises in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, she loaded more stores and victuals (food and drink) and on February 6th HMS *NABOB* sailed for San Francisco on the first leg of her voyage to the UK.

On the 11th she embarked aircrew and maintenance personnel and a squadron of 12 American Avenger torpedo bombers, which awaited the ship's arrival. *Nabob* now had her full crew complement: 504 RCN, 327 RN and 9 RNZN personnel. She then sailed to commence a short workup on passage to San Diego. A destroyer joined her on

the 16th as plane guard for flight operations, remaining in company until the 20th when both ships arrived at Naval Operating Base San Diego.

Most of the air crew were fresh from flight training schools and accidents were frequent, particularly when launching and recovering aircraft. She also conducted live firing of her AA weapons prior to departing for the Panama Canal in company with the frigate HMCS *New Waterford* and continued flying training enroute the major East Coast naval base at Norfolk, Virginia. Accidents continued to occur, but no aircraft or lives were lost, and crew proficiency steadily improved.

A unique situation arose after Panama: a mass protest or 'near-mutiny.' *Nabob* was a Royal Navy ship: together with HMS *Puncher* the only two ships to be jointly RN/RCN manned; additionally, she carried British Merchant Navy personnel to man the engine room, and each of the three groups had different





rates of pay and victualling (provision of food) scales. The RCN personnel received Canadian pay and marriage allowance but all other allowances, and victualling, were to RN rates of scale; it was this disparity that precipitated the dispute. They made their dissatisfactions known, first with a brief 'lock-in' - refusal to work - which was followed by many desertions on reaching Norfolk. The situation was relieved as a result of Captain H.N. Lay, (a nephew of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King) bringing the dispute over living conditions on board to the attention of the British Admiralty; he was able to use the 'incidents' as evidence of the discontent and to secure concessions.

Captain Lay flew from Norfolk to Ottawa to speak in person with the RCN Naval Board and outline the seriousness of the situation. He suggested that all RN personnel should be borne on the books of the Canadian Naval Headquarters for pay and allowances, and the whole ship should receive rations at RCN scale. This was approved and Captain Lay flew back to Norfolk to re-join his ship.

She sailed for New York on March 18th, arrived the next day and em-

barked aircraft for delivery to the UK. The Avengers were all stowed in the hangar, and 45 P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft for the RAF were loaded and lashed to the flight deck. She also had twenty-seven civilian passengers; fifteen of them were schoolboys returning home after three years in the US and Canada as evacuees.

On completion of loading, *Nabob* sailed from New York on the 23rd of March, joining the fast trans-Atlantic troop convoy UT-10. *Nabob* detached from the convoy off Ireland and proceeded to Liverpool where she secured alongside and unloaded the Mustangs before continuing to the Clyde.

More alterations and working up in the UK.

On the 7th of April *Nabob* was allocated to Western Approaches Command and entered a Clyde shipyard for a short period of defect rectification. Further work was needed, and *Nabob* returned to Liverpool on the 19th of April for alterations and additions, this work was complete on June 17th when she sailed to return to Greenock.

Nabob now began to work up in preparation for active duty, she re-embarked 852 squadron and proceeded to Belfast.

The squadron now included a fighter flight of 4 Wildcats bringing its strength up to sixteen aircraft. *Nabob* sailed on the 14th of July to begin preparing for anti-shipping and mine laying operations to be conducted off the coast of Norway with the Home Fleet.

Minor flying incidents continued to be a problem, but the ship and squadron suffered their first fatalities on the 29th in an air crash. On returning from patrol in dangerous weather an Avenger was given an early wave-off on approaching the ship, the aircraft passed up the starboard side of the ship at about 400ft and crashed into the sea ahead of the ship. The two depth charges on-board exploded. The pilot was seriously injured but rescued by the destroyer *Newmarket*, the other two crew members were lost.

Home Fleet operations: August 1944

After receiving replacement aircraft *Nabob* sailed in company with sister CVE *Trumpeter* on July 31st for Scapa Flow to begin operations with the Home Fleet. They arrived at Scapa on August 1st and spent the next 7 days conducting exercises to prepare for Operation OFFSPRING.

Operation OFFSPRING was designed to force the enemy out of the Leads (the sea corridor between the offshore islands and the mainland used by German merchant and naval vessels) by laying mines. In addition to the laying of two minefields, the Force was to attack an airfield and shipping off the coast of German-occupied Norway.

Nabob was allocated to Force 4, which comprised a large Fleet Carrier, two CVEs, two heavy cruisers and a flotilla of destroyers (including HMC Ships *Sioux* and *Algonquin*). The Force sailed from Scapa on August 8th.

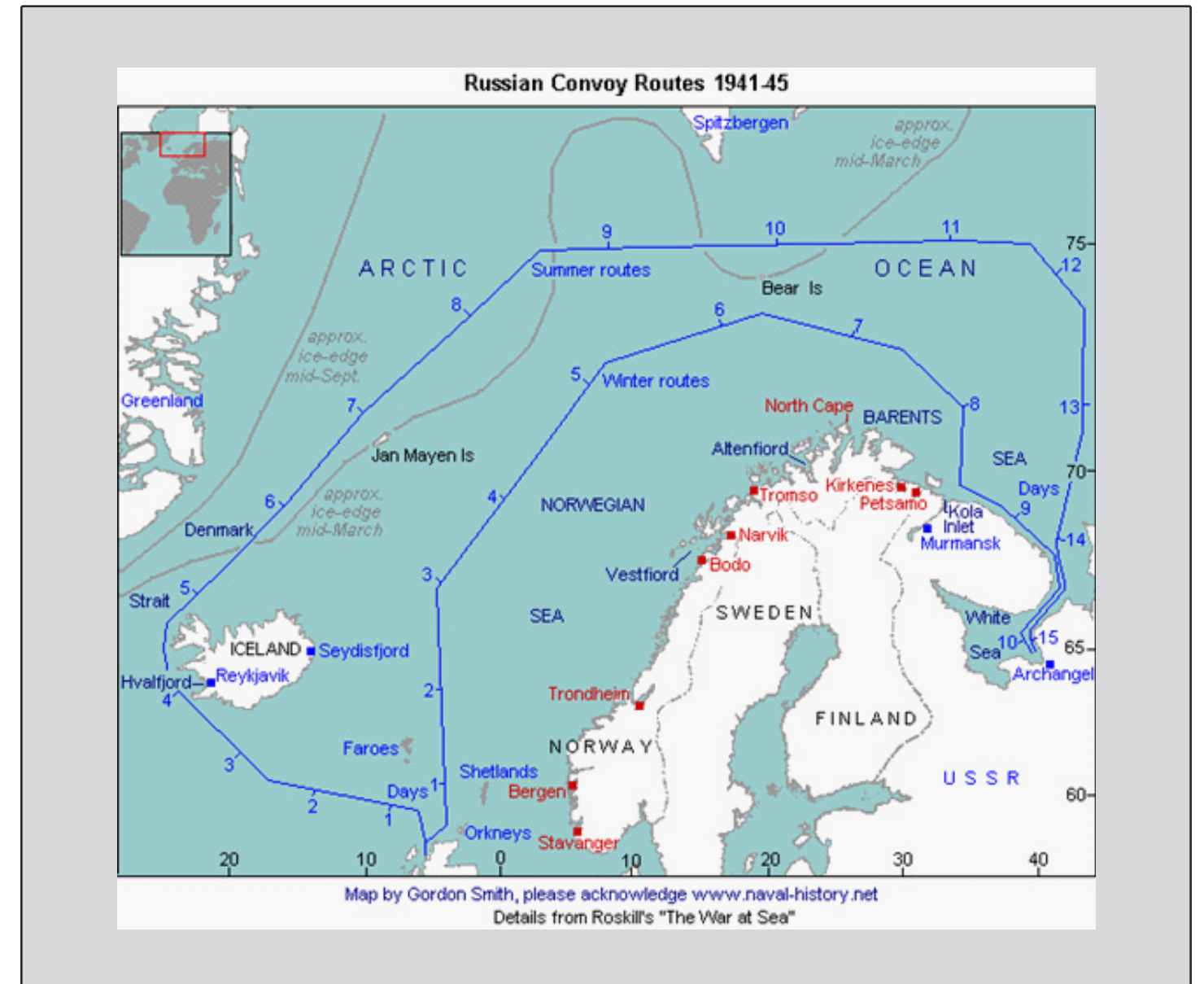
The operation commenced on the

ninth and was successfully concluded. Forty-seven aerial mines were successfully laid by the Avengers. In addition, 6 Me 110s were destroyed and one damaged on the ground. Two hangers and some storehouses were left burning and many subsidiary targets were attacked, including three radar and two wireless stations, a dredger and gun positions, three armed ships of which two were left burning and an oil tank which was left smoking. Force 4 losses were light: 1 Avenger of 846 Sqn and its crew; 1 Firefly ditched. The Force withdrew and arrived back at Scapa on the 11th. *Nabob* and *Trumpeter* sailed for Rosyth

later that day.

Arriving at Rosyth on the 12th both carriers embarked more aerial mines for use in their next operation, Operation GOODWOOD. On completion of loading, they sailed to return to Scapa, arriving on the 14th.

Article will be concluded in the Autumn 2023 Edition of Action Stations.



A Special Visitor

On the 24th of March, we welcomed a special visitor who wanted to celebrate his 98th birthday in our ship. Thomas Walford, a British veteran of the Battle of the Atlantic, served in the Flower Class corvette HMS *Armeria* and wanted to walk the decks of a corvette again.

Thomas, a Stoker during the War, has been a member of the Flower Class Corvette Association (FCCA) for many years. The Association was recently

disbanded as there were very few members still alive, and fewer still who are well enough to travel to meetings. As Thomas said during the visit, this was an opportunity for one of the very last members of the FCCA to visit the very last Corvette! The highlight of his tour of *Sackville* was visiting the Engine Room and Boiler Room – once a stoker, always a stoker!

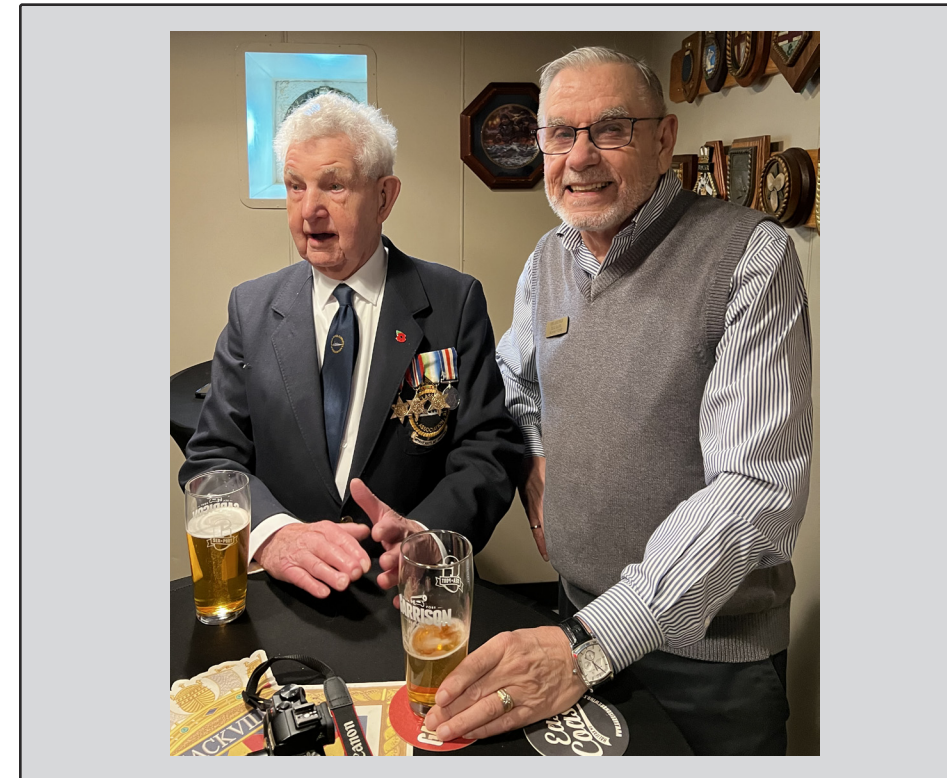
Thomas, his daughter Carol Skelton,

and grandson Thomas Buckley were warmly welcomed by Trustees in the Mess, all of whom wanted to speak to our visitors and hear about his memories from 80 years ago.

Life Trustee and former Honorary Norwegian Consul Steinar Engeset was pleased to recognize Thomas' service by awarding him the Convoy Cup Medal. (See The Convoy Cup Foundation for more details.)



By Trustee Ken McClean Sackville Tours Coordinator



Thomas Walford and family have asked me to extend their heart-felt thanks to the CNMT, the crew, the Trustees of HMCS *Sackville*, and all present, for making their visit, and Thomas' 98th birthday, such an incredible occasion! Thomas' daughter Carol commented that when the idea of visiting *Sackville* from the UK began to take form, all the family expected was perhaps an opportunity to fulfill Thomas's wish to "tread the decks of a corvette once again".

To quote the family, "the tour, and the welcome given were brilliant, but the cake, and especially the convoy medal, were the absolute icing on the cake!" (Not sure if the pun was intended or not...)

Note:

I had met with the family, prior to Friday's event. As we chatted over a pint, Thomas reminisced about an incident during a convoy run, while aboard the corvette HMS *Armeria*.

As he related the following, he got that far-away look in his eyes, as if he was right back to 1944:

"The ship was at action stations, and I was on the quarterdeck, at my depth charge station. I was Starboard watch, so this was my duty, if I wasn't on watch in the engine room. We passed an oil tanker that had been torpedoed, and she was burning. There were men in the water screaming, as the ocean was on fire from the burning oil. I had to stand at the stern and watch helplessly, as the convoy sailed on. Admiralty orders at the time were very strict! There was to be no stopping for rescue, as this would have put more ships and crews in danger."

It seems this has haunted Thomas' memory, for all these years. When we arrived in *Sackville*, he asked if he could be given some time alone at the stern. As he stood in the same spot where he had watched that burning tanker, perhaps he offered a prayer, and an apol-

ogy, to the men lost so many years ago?

In my own mind, I believe he was looking for some closure, and I trust that his visit to HMCS *Sackville* gave him some measure of that. That "The Last Corvette" was available to give Thomas some degree of peace, makes all of our efforts to preserve the ship, that much-more worthwhile!

As I returned them to their hotel, Thomas, his daughter Carol, and grandson Tom were effusive in their thanks to myself, and all present, for the manner in which Thomas was honoured, and for the welcome extended to the family.

Thomas is already planning to return for his 100th birthday, and by the way he scampered up and down the engine room ladder, like a 20-year-old sailor, I do believe we'll see him again! As he is now an Honorary member of the crew (complete with ball cap and shirt), I told him he'd better show up, or he would be logged as "adrift"!

While my "official" title may be *Sackville* Tours Coordinator, an event of this nature is never a one-man evolution. What started as yet another visit request blossomed into an incredible display of kindness and generosity, towards an aging veteran, that will live on in his, and his family's memory, for generations to come.

My personal thanks to all for the amazing display of teamwork! You are why I continue to volunteer!

Yours aye,
Ken



Halifax Memorial

“...their memory shall endure”

Cdr (ret'd) Len Canfield

The Halifax Memorial with its striking Cross of Sacrifice located in historic Point Pleasant Park is clearly visible to all ships approaching or leaving Canada's internationally recognized harbour and naval port.

Passing naval ships 'pipe the still' as a mark of respect to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in times of conflict. Serving military, public officials, members of community and military support organizations including the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust gather at the Halifax Memorial for Remembrance Day and Battle of the Atlantic services and other commemorative occasions. Equally poignant is HMCS *Sackville*, Canada's Naval Memorial, 'cold tugged' to south of Point Pleasant Park and abeam of the memorial conducting a burial at sea service for naval veterans and family members.

The plaque on the Halifax Memorial (commonly known as Sailors Memorial) reads: "In honour of the men and women of the Navy, Army and Merchant Navy of Canada whose names are inscribed here. Their graves are unknown but their memory shall endure."

The memorial contains 23 bronze panels with the 3,247 names of those who lost their lives during the First and Second World Wars, including members of the RCN, RCNVR and RCNR; Merchant Navy, Canadian Army and Newfoundland merchant seamen.

The Halifax Memorial, the third of three memorials to commemorate those "who have no known grave," was unveiled in November 1967 by Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Harry P. MacKeen CD QC.

The first memorial, the Seamen's Me-



morial, was also located in the park on a bluff jutting out to the sea and unveiled in 1924 by Defence Minister E.M. MacDonald. The memorial was granite and listed the names of 415 Canadians killed during the First World War and who had no known grave.

By 1953 and with deterioration of the memorial, the City of Halifax decided

to move the 25-foot cross to Citadel Hill to be placed on two L-shaped granite walls. The names of the Second World War dead were added and the second version of the Halifax Memorial was unveiled by Governor-General Vincent Massey in July 1955. An estimated 5,000 people attended the ceremony.

In time, weather, vandalism and 'soil slippage' at the Citadel Hill site took



their toll on the memorial and by 1965-66 it was decided to remove the memorial and create a new (third) memorial. The stones and blocks containing the names of the war dead "were slipped over the side of a floating navy crane into the deepest part of Bedford Basin" during a service conducted by two military chaplains.

The third memorial unveiled in 1967 was constructed by the Canadian Government and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The 40-foot Cross of Sacrifice was designed by the prolific British architect Sir Reginald Blomfield. There are only two other crosses of the size and design of the Halifax Memorial—both located in Egypt. Smaller versions of the cross are seen in other military cemeteries in Europe and Canada.

The Halifax Memorial's location in the 75 hectare Point Pleasant Park at the southern end of the Halifax peninsula further recognizes the park's unique place in the history of K'jipuktuk/Chebucto/Halifax.

Following the establishment of Halifax by the British in 1749 and as part of the extended Halifax Defence Complex, the Point Pleasant area served as an im-

portant defensive site where a number of fortifications and batteries were constructed—starting with the Point Pleasant Battery in 1762-- to guard the harbour entrance and naval installations.

Other installations built in the 18th and 19th centuries included Northwest Arm Battery, Prince of Wales Tower (a National Historic Site and oldest Martello Tower in North America), Fort Ogilvie and Cambridge Battery. The installations would play an important role in the defence of Halifax during different conflicts through to the Second World War and the pivotal Battle of the Atlantic fought off Nova Scotia's shores.

Halifax, Canada's storied wartime "East Coast Port," was considered by some naval commanders as the Allies most strategic North American port for its crucial role in the Atlantic convoy system and the Allies winning the war at sea. During the war 334 convoys escorted by RCN and Allied ships, including HMCS *Sackville* and the other Canadian corvettes, sailed from Halifax for UK and other Allied ports. The RCN lost 24 ships and more than 2,000 sailors during the hostilities.

The fortifications of Point Pleasant

Park are an important piece of Nova Scotia and Canada's history. In light of rising sea levels, the deteriorating state and potential demolition of the 183 year-old Point Pleasant Battery, military historians and heritage advocates have encouraged Halifax Regional Municipality to advance plans for shoreline protection and an archaeological review of the park's fortifications to ensure preservation of the historic defence installations.

Together, the Halifax Memorial and the Point Pleasant Park fortifications are timely reminders of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in times of conflict and those who guarded the 'Warden of the North' through the centuries.

Author's note:
Sources of Halifax Memorial background include a paper by JoAnn Cunningham and HMHPS.ca website.

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal Recipients

As reported in the Fall 2022 Action Stations, a number of long-serving members of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust have been presented the Platinum Jubilee Medal for their contributions to the Trust as well as to other military support and community organizations. Venues for the presentations included Government House, Halifax and HMCS *Sackville*.



CNMT Administrator Debbie Findlay, front row centre, displays her Platinum Jubilee Medal and is congratulated by Bill Woodburn, CNMT Chair to her right and other CNMT Directors and members of the ship's company.



Top left: Tony Goode is presented the Platinum Jubilee Medal by Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc at a ceremony at Cambridge Military Library.
Top right: Platinum Jubilee Medal recipients David Benoit, left and Bill Gard.
Lower left: John Pickford is presented the Platinum Jubilee Medal by Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc.
Lower right: Bryn Weadon is presented the Platinum Jubilee Medal by Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc.

We're Baaaccckkk...

Let the Thunder Begin!



After a two-year absence due to the Covid pandemic a long standing and traditional St. Barbara's Day gunnery competition returned to HMC Dockyard on Friday 2 Dec 2022 on board HMCS *Sackville* at her winter berth NC1.

St. Barbara is regarded as the patron saint in the time of danger from thunderstorms, fires, and sudden death. When gun powder made its appearance in the western world, St. Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions. Many of the earlier artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectile. St. Barbara thus became the patron of the artillerymen, armourers, military engineers, gunsmiths and anyone else who worked with cannon and explosives, this included naval gunners.

The Feast of St. Barbara's is normally celebrated on 4th of December. For more than 35 years the Naval Weapon Association has traditionally conducted St. Barbara's Day, hosting the event on-

board HMCS *Sackville*. The event requires input and effort by MARLANT personnel to make it all happen. This year CPO2 Robert Keenan, CSE Division, Naval Fleet School (Atlantic) accepted the role as the overall event coordinator while PO1 Glen Nelson, above water system engineering manager at Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott was responsible for the technical aspects.

Two weeks prior to St. Barbara's Day, PO Nelson and weapon technicians from FMF were greeted on board by *Sackville's* First Lieutenant, Rick Powell. Their task; to inspect the overall tolerances of the firing mechanism of the 4 inch gun (breech; firing pin, and firing lanyard) to ensure the gun could be fired safely. Initial inspection confirmed the firing lanyard was broken requiring some repair and landed for repairs and bench testing at FMF. Once this was completed the firing mechanism was re-installed and the gun test fired successfully.

On 30 November residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality were advised that St. Barbara's Day gunnery activities will occur in HMC Dockyard on December 2 that may be audible or visible to the public. The notice included that only blank ammunition would be used and the gun trained towards the harbour.

On the morning of the event the organizers, competing teams, judges and spectators began arriving on the jetty around 0830. The competing teams were from HMCS *Harry de Wolf*, Naval Fleet School (Atlantic) and a "press ganged" guns crew from HMCS *Sackville*. By 0930 the participating teams assembled on the "Fiddle Deck" to get organized and into their costumes. By 0945 teams were called forward to the fo'c's'le for instruction on firing the 4 Inch Gun, safety protocols which included firing a pre-action calibration (PAC).

What was once a serious test of shooting skills, now a lighted event that sees

naval gunners dress up in costume and perform a skit before firing the ship's gun. CPO2 Robert Keenan, the master of ceremonies said the day is about introducing younger sailors to a bit of naval lore while having some fun as the holiday break approaches.

It's a tradition, we have been doing for a long time, not unlike the Crossing the Equator/Arctic Circle events and we don't take things too seriously and everybody usually has a good time.

At 1000 S1 Meghan Johnston from HMCS *Max Bernays* portraying St. Barbara summoned the competing teams forward, gave them the blessing, and then gave the order to "let the thunder begin".

After performing their skit each team then had the opportunity to fire the gun, four-five salvos, with team members alternating through the firing positions after each salvo (opening/closing the breach, loading/unloading the car-

tridge, elevating or training the gun, and giving the orders as the gun captain).

Following the event all participants along with spectators, judges, and members of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust went below to the after mess for a reception and "Up Spirits". The winning *Harry de Wolf* was presented with the St. Barbara's Day trophy which will be retained by them until the competition returns in December 2023. Also, during the post event activities Gilles Hogue, president of the East Coast Naval Weapon Association, presented a much appreciated cheque to the Trust.

St. Barbara's Day 2022 was a rebuilding year; hopefully this year's event will kindle more teams participating next year.

What was most appreciated by naval gunner personnel was the smell of cordite wafting around the jetty once again.



The Rum Locker

Returning from overseas in the spring of 1945, the young Captain, Murray Knowles, still a Lieutenant RCNVR, felt that he had every reason to be proud of his ship's company. He had joined the Increased Endurance Flower Class corvette as First Lieutenant in the fall of 1943 while she was under construction in Quebec. After commissioning in December,



Lt Murray Knowles, CO HMCS *Louisburg* is shown at right.

just before the *St. Lawrence River* was closed to shipping, she sailed with other new corvettes and frigates to Halifax where he was delighted to be joined by his wife, then expecting their first child. After further time alongside and extensive training off Halifax the corvette proceeded to workups in Bermuda. After a brief return to Halifax the corvette joined several others for an independent Atlantic crossing. Something big was in the offing. Sure enough, the corvette was assigned to Operation Neptune, the naval phase of Operation Overlord: the Allied landing in Normandy and tasked with escorting the block ships which would be sunk to create artificial harbours at the beachheads. In the succeeding months, the corvette was busy escorting convoys in the English Channel, ensuring that the Allied armies ashore were sustained and reinforced. This essential work requiring skill and teamwork seemed tedious to many of the ship's company but enemy action could never be discounted. In fact one night the corvette, with one

of her sisters, fought off an E-boat attack in a vigorous action illuminated by starshell. Danger was never far away. 3 Canadian corvettes would be lost in British home waters due to enemy action during the last year of the war.

In February 1945 the young First Lieutenant who had been in the Navy less than 5 years was appointed Captain of another corvette. It would be his second command after that of HMCS *Suderooy V*, a minesweeper converted from a Norwegian whale catcher. Of course most of the officers and sailors had even less service than he did. To his surprise, after hardly a month aboard, he was shown a signal indicating that his previous ship and crew would soon be returning to Canada. After a year overseas and, never having seen his son then almost 10 months old, he was anxious to return home. He knew that his former Captain would prefer to continue to operate in European waters for "personal reasons." A request was made, and Naval Service Headquarters approved an exchange of commands. The former

returning from overseas.

The war was still raging but the good news was that the corvette would go into refit in the Captain's home town. He would spend time with his young wife and son and see his family. By early May the refit was well under way with the usual bedlam associated with a shipyard taking charge. Many crew members had been drafted to other ships or shore establishments or had dispersed to their homes across Canada on well-earned leave. The Captain and his wife were able at last to get away on a delayed honeymoon, returning just in time for the V-E day celebrations on 8 May. The following morning on coming aboard he greeted the First Lieutenant with a cheery "Good morning Number 1" to which the reply was "Not a good morning, Sir, look at this signal." The Captain was ordered "forthwith" to report to the Senior Naval Officer of the Port to explain the serious misdemeanors of certain of the ship's ratings. The likely culprits were 2 sailors whose station cards were still at the

First Lieutenant returned as Captain to the ship whose company he had shared and respected since late 1943. After crossing the Atlantic through a major storm, during which the corvette sustained major damage, arrival in Halifax just after midnight in late April was hardly noticed. There were no bands to greet one of many rusty, salt-caked, storm-damaged corvettes re-



brow. What had they done? Standing at attention with his cap under his left arm before the Senior Naval Officer, an imposing WW1 veteran, the Captain had to admit that he had no idea of the offence attributed to his ship. A WREN officer immediately produced the shore patrol and police reports. During the night, Able Seamen G..... and F..... had been charged with stealing an ambulance and careening recklessly around the city until cornered by police. Laughing loudly, they merrily accepted arrest. The Captain, thoroughly embarrassed at this blemish on what had been an exemplary record, assured the Senior Naval Officer that immediate disciplinary action would be undertaken, adding that he was "proud of my ship and proud of the men who have served under me." Back on board the Captain ordered the Supply Officer and Coxswain to pay \$30 fines as charged, out of the Ship's Fund. The following day both sailors readily pleaded guilty

at "Requestmen and Defaulters." Their pay was docked to reimburse the ship's fund and, although both sailors had volunteered to fight in the Pacific war, they accepted release from the service.

Before the 2 sailors were discharged from the ship the Victualling Assistant and the Supply Officer discovered that the rum locker had been pilfered, with nearly a gallon missing - very serious indeed. Not surprisingly to all, including the Captain, stoppage of leave for the entire ship's company until the culprit or culprits came forward produced no result. As a final gesture the Captain stopped the rum issue for 2 days. This hurt but again no one came forward.

Several years later, the Captain had returned to civilian life. While on a business trip, he visited an agricultural fair during the evening. While watching a ploughing competition he felt a tap on his back and turned to face none other than former Able Seaman G....., immediately recognizable, even in ci-

vilian clothes. Now just former shipmates, they recalled their corvette days and shared their regret on their ship's fate of being sold to a foreign navy. Finally, former Able Seaman G asked his former Captain if he ever found out who broke into the rum locker and stole the rum. The Captain replied "no, was it you?" "Yup it was me" was the response. The Captain, breaking into a smile, had to admit that he had often wondered who the guilty party was and, in thanking Able Seaman G for his admission, wished him good luck as each one parted into the crowd.

Adapted from the Unpublished Memoirs of the late Life Trustee LCDR Murray Knowles RCN(R) Ret'd by his son, CNMT Life Member Stephen Knowles.

Trust and Mess Events



Naval Museum of Halifax
@NavalMuseumHFX

#potd of Vice-Admiral DeWolf. Joined the #RCNavy in 1921 and received his first command in 1931. During #WWII he took command of HMCS HAIDA and after the war he was commander of HMCS WARRIOR and MAGNIFICENT. IN 1956 he was promoted to Chief of Naval Staff before retiring in 1960.



Two Korean War naval veterans visit HMCS *Harry DeWolf* Dec 6, 2022 - Tom Estabrooks and Graham McBride, both long-term supporters of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, visit the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) HMCS *Harry DeWolf*. Tom was a member of the ship's company of HMCS *Haida* in during Korean War when Commander (later Vice-Admiral) Harry DeWolf was the famous ship's first captain.



Ward Skinner visited HMCS *Sackville* in February and met up with his childhood friend, Sherry Richardson. You can see by the smiles on their faces that this was a warm and friendly gathering of dear "old" friends.



First Lt Rick Powell welcomes Veterans Ombud Col (ret'd) Nishika Jardine to HMCS *Sackville*.



Cheque presentation from ret'd Vice-Admiral Duncan Miller - at Friday noon weepers today. This cheque, from the NS Commissionaires, is for \$1000



Lower Sackville Councillor Paul Russell and Penelope Russell onboard HMCS *Sackville* for the Christmas Friday noon Weepers.



Naval Reserve at 100: Continuing to Serve

Cdr (ret'd) Len Canfield

Rear Admiral Walter Hose, head of the little known Royal Canadian Navy in 1922 had some hard decisions to make: attempt to keep the miniscule regular force afloat or allocate the bulk of the \$1.5 million shoestring budget to establish naval reserve units across the country. He chose the latter.

As Cdr Tony German noted in his definitive “The Sea is at Our Gates, The History of the Canadian Navy, “History would prove his decision (to establish the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve) sound.”

In Hose’s view, to increase awareness of and the need for a navy and to “find a place in the hearts and minds of Canadians,” it was necessary “to take the navy to the people.”

In 2023 the 4,100 members of Canada’s 24 Naval Reserve Divisions (NRDs) located in all 10 provinces are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Naval Reserve and continuing the 1923 role “to take the navy to the people.”

Commemorative events officially kicked off January 31 with recognition of the Naval Reserve Centennial in Parliament and provincial legislatures along with civic flag-raising. In addition to individual NRD activities, other significant public events during 2023 include Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies, freedom of the city parades in major centres September 23 and rededication of the revitalized National Naval Reserve Monument in Ottawa (next to HMCS Carleton). The UNTD Association website: https://untd.org_posts_NRD_events/activities.

Battle of the Atlantic services and

events in late April-early May will draw attention to the role of naval reservists during the longest battle of the Second World War. This includes the significant role of Canada’s 123 corvettes like HMCS Sackville that were primarily crewed by reservists.

With the declaration of war in September 1939 and the need for the RCN to expand rapidly, the RCNVR became the backbone of the RCN, recruiting citizen sailors from communities large and small across the country. The whole of the Halifax Division, similar to other NRDs, volunteered for active service and the division formally paid off in November of that year.

By the end of the war the RCN’s strength was 95,000 men and women in uniform, of which approximately 77,000 were members of the RCNVR or the Women’s Royal Canadian Naval Service.

The mission of the Naval Reserve has evolved over the years. Today, the Naval Reserve generates trained sailors for Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) operations, both domestically and abroad, while supporting the Navy in connecting with Canadians through meaningful community interactions.

British Prime Minister Winston

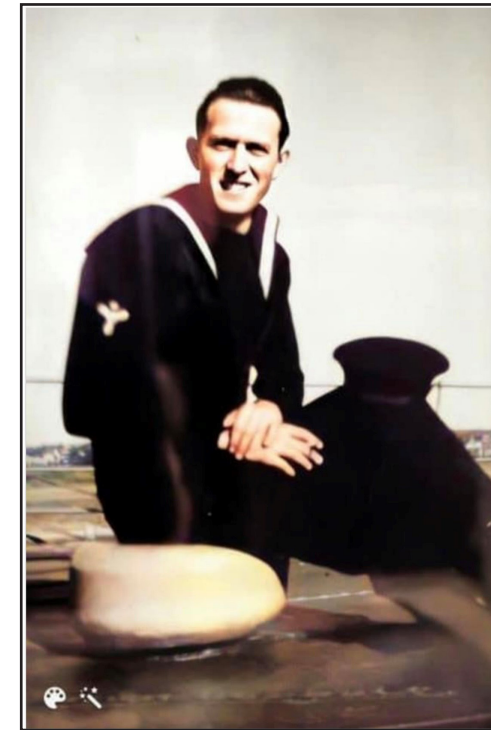


Churchill’s observation that the “the reservist is twice the citizen” rings true in peace and war.” It is particularly noteworthy during the Naval Reserve Centennial.

With files from LCdr Paul Pendergast, NavRes
<https://www.google.com/>



Remembering the crew of HMCS Spikenard



Canadian Military Photos Lost and Found - Research Group
Nansee Hughes · 2d · 🌐

This is my Great Uncle Murray Cowan. He was on HMCS Spikenard when it went down. He was a lead stoker on the vessel. I wish we had had the chance to know him. I know my grandpa missed his brother terribly. He debated not joining the war himself because he didn't want to put his father through that again, especially because his wife died 6 months after Murray passed away - they say from a broken heart.

I was wondering if anyone had any more information about the crew of HMCS Spikenard. I know there were only 6(?) that survived and one of them had written a letter describing what happened. Thank you!

While the Second World War is in the distant past for many Canadians others search for information of relatives who served or lost their lives during naval and other military operations in different theatres of hostilities. More than one million men and women served in Canadian forces 1939-1945. There are many stories yet to be compiled and told.

Nansee Hughes recently posted a request for information on her great uncle Murray Cowan. She described him as a lead stoker serving in HMCS Spikenard when the corvette was torpedoed and sunk south of Iceland September 10 1942 with a heavy loss of life including the commanding officer.

She writes: “I wish we had had the chance to know him. I know my grandpa missed his brother terribly. He debated not joining the war himself because he didn't want to put his father through that again (loss of a son), especially

because his wife died six months after Murray’s death—they say from a broken heart. Would appreciate any more information about the crew of HMCS Spikenard...I believe there were only six (?) that survived.”

Spikenard, under command of Lieutenant Commander H.G. Shadforth and part of the Newfoundland Escort Force, was the senior ship for convoy SC-67 when the convoy was attacked by German U-boats. At the same time the nearby Norwegian tanker Heina was hit a second torpedo struck Spikenard. Her sinking was not detected for some time until the corvette HMS Gentian was dispatched to search for the ship and came across a Carley float with only eight survivors.

HMCS Spikenard’s sinking and loss of crew is documented and remembered at the Crow’s Nest Club which was established as the Seagoing Officers Club in St John’s during the Second World.

Several weeks before the ship sailed for escort duty, LCdr Shadforth hammered a six-inch spike into the floor of the newly opened club. Several weeks later LCdr Shadforth and his ship were lost. The nail has been preserved and displayed as “Spikenard and his Spike” at the historic club.

There are many stories of individuals and events regarding the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest battle of the war. If you have a story or memory to share we would like to hear from you.

Crossed the Bar

Vice Admiral Peter William Cairns CMM CD, who joined HMCS *Venture* as a naval cadet in 1956 and would conclude a distinguished career as Commander Maritime Command passed away in Ottawa February 18 at age 84. Following submarine training at HMS *Dolphin* in the UK in 1965 he served in HMCS *Rainbow* and as Commander First Canadian Submarine Squadron. A graduate of the US Naval War College, he served as commanding officer of HMC Ships *Fraser*, *Margaree* and *Assiniboine*; deputy commandant of the Canadian Forces Fleet School, commandant of the Canadian Forces Maritime Warfare School and commander Fifth Canadian Destroyer Squadron. Following his appointment as chief of staff (ops) to Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Norfolk, VA, he served as Commander Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAF) and Commander MARCOM, retiring in 1994. In civilian life he was a driving force behind the Shipbuilding Association of Canada and active in the Navy League of Canada and Naval Association of Canada. Survivors include his wife Carolyn; sons Simon, Nicholas, Michael and Christopher, grandchildren Luke and Phoebe and sister Carol.



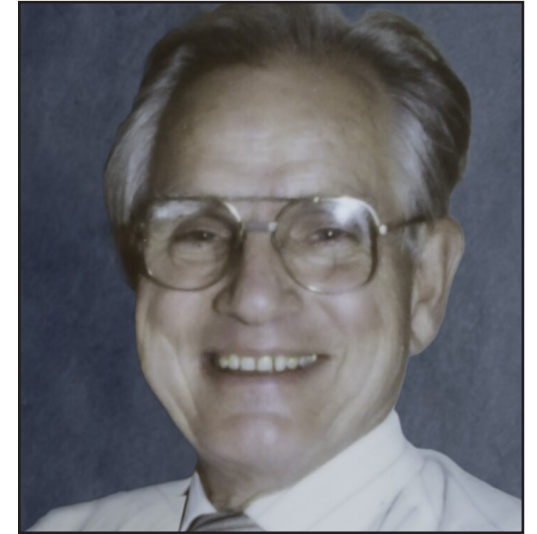
Commander Michael Hodgson CD SSM (ret'd), who is remembered by many junior officers and crews for his skills as a trainer and mentor passed away in Collingwood, ON in December 2022 at age 84. He attended Royal Roads Naval College in Victoria, BC. His career spanned 42 years, including six NATO tours, surviving a helicopter crash in the North Sea and serving at sea during Canada's response to the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962. He was also an advisor to the Commander of the Canadian Task Group during Operation Desert Storm (Gulf War). Other postings were as stage manager for the 1967 Centennial Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo and as navigating officer of the test crew for Canada's only hydrofoil, HMCS *Bras d'Or*. He felt his fondest time in the service was in support of the Naval Reserve, including coastal defence, mine warfare and naval control of shipping operations, commanding officer of several ships and HMCS *Scotian*. Following retirement from the Navy in 1998 he served as a justice of the peace in Nova Scotia. He volunteered for a number of charities and causes, including Alzheimer Society of Canada, Diabetes Canada, Children's Hospital and the Gilbert and Sullivan Society. In 2017 he moved to Collingwood to be closer to his family. Contributions in his memory may be made to Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*, Diabetes Canada and Wounded Warriors Canada.

Augustine Robert (Bob, Gus) King, a naval veteran and Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* Life Trustee, passed away January 1, 2023 in Dartmouth, NS at age 92. A native of Sydney Mines, NS and at the age of 18, he joined the exodus of young Cape Bretoners to Ontario. In 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy and served in HMC Ships *Huron* and *Magnificent*. Following his naval service, he joined the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) where he served for 32 years and retired with the rank of staff-sergeant. He was predeceased by his wife Olga and infant daughter Mary Elizabeth. Survivors include daughter Maureen, grandsons Daniel Robert, Michael Xavier and William James, sisters Cecilia, Trudy, Anne and Voni, and brother Anthony.

William John (Bill) Cox, a fifth generation Shelburne, NS master shipbuilder and a naval veteran of the Second World War passed away at Camp Hill Veterans Memorial, Halifax March 23 at 105. In 1940 he was recruited by the Power Boat Company of Montreal along with other shipwrights from Shelburne to build motor torpedo boats (MTBs) for the war effort. The following year he joined the RCNVR and served as a shipwright petty officer in HMCS *St Laurent* until the end of hostilities. For his wartime service he was awarded the Distinguished Service

Medal and the British Empire Medal for "bravery and undaunted devotion to duty in time of need." Following his discharge from the Navy he joined his father and brother in forming the shipbuilding firm Harley S. Cox and Sons Ltd in 1947. He was active in the Shelburne community, including serving as town councillor and mayor (two occasions), chief of the fire department and chair of the board of trade. In retirement he built a motorized river boat and along with his wife Olive piloted the boat down the Mackenzie River to the Beaufort Sea. For his various community services he was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal (1977), Queen's Gold Medal (2002), Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012) and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal (2022). He was predeceased by his wife Olive; survivors include his children Joanne Hayman, Nancy Cox, William (Bill) Cox Jr and Ronald Cox and a number grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Philip H. Clappison, who served as an engine room stoker in HMCS *Sackville* during the Battle of the Atlantic, passed away in Waterloo, ON April 18 at age 97. He joined the RCNVR at 18 in 1943 and along with *Sackville* also served in the minesweeper HMCS *Winnipeg*. In civilian life he operated a manufacturing business and was involved in constructing rental properties. In 2019, accompanied by members of his family, he visited *Sackville* and recalled his wartime experience serving in 'The Last Corvette.' He was predeceased by his wife Frances; survivors include children Philip, Susan, Stephen, Elizabeth and Margaret; Neil; brother Paul and a number of grand and great-grandchildren. Donations in his memory may be made to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*.



The wreath was presented to HMCS *Sackville* by Thomas Walford, the Royal Navy Battle of the Atlantic veteran. The wreath will be on display in the ship, and is in memory of the many Corvette sailors who lost their lives in World War II.

Where did You go on your Honeymoon?

When we decided to choose a “honeymoon destination” our first choice was Canada. “Let’s go to Halifax” - a city of history, scenery, seafood and pubs and HMCS *Sackville*. We knew the first week of November might be chilly but packing toques and gloves is “Canadian”. It turned out to be the warmest November week in Nova Scotia!

The vacation would be a first for us travelling to the east coast as a “married couple”. Being the planner, I wanted to make the best of each of our six days travelling in all directions from Halifax. This would include a drive across the Confederation Bridge to P.E.I. - a day trip (round trip) from Halifax. We booked the Cambridge Suites Hotel by the Citadel and an airport rental vehicle. The hospitality of everyone was above and beyond anything we could have imagined. We met many locals at pubs, diners, tourist areas who were willing to share stories about Nova Scotia.

The fact that family members have served in the military, and Halifax is an integral part of Canadian Service and History, piqued our interest. This past summer with one of our sons and two grandchildren, we visited the HMCS *Haida*, berthed in Hamilton Ontario. The extreme heat caused an evacuation of the ship for our safety. We recognized the affect weather would have on a ship’s crew. We also learned our son in law’s uncle Captain (N) in Halifax was a former commander of the HMCS *Montreal*. Our interest in Canada’s naval history was growing.

What to do and see is easy with the internet. When a visitor gets to “see history”, it is more easily understood - the Citadel and the Town clock, the Museum of the Atlantic, the Titanic, the Halifax Explosion, CSS *Acadia*, Pier

21 and the Immigration Museum where we obtained records of immigration for parents/grandparents, Titanic Gravesite, Alexander Keiths Tour, Many memorials and monuments, Peggy’s Cove, the tidal changes and beautiful parks. Then I saw the name “HMCS *Sackville*” and my interest was captured so we added it to our “bucket List”.

The HMCS *Sackville* is our history. She is Canadas oldest war ship and Canadas Naval Memorial. She is home for the summer from late June to late October at the Halifax waterfront for tours. She is then moved to the naval dockyard the rest of the year for service/ refurbishing. Since we would arrive November 1, I was disappointed I wouldn’t be able to surprise Keith (hubby) with a visit to the ship.

On the website I found an email and sent a message wondering if we could at least get a glimpse of the *Sackville*. I received a reply from the *Sackville*’s First Lieutenant Richard Powell and after a few emails he confirmed a date for a tour during our “honeymoon”.

This was a wedding gift we did not expect and one we will always be grateful for. We met “Rick” in the naval



Cheryl and Keith Coleman tour HMC *Sackville*.

dockyard and so began Keith’s surprise. Rick’s knowledge was overwhelming and eagerly consumed by the two of us.

The HMCS *Sackville* saw combat in WW2 in the Battle of the Atlantic as an ASW convoy escort. She is the only one of 294 allied corvettes from the second world war that remains and is one of 122 built in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia that served in the Royal Canadian Navy. The *Sackville*

was built in St. John, N.B. and named after the town of Sackville NB.

Flower-class corvettes had a nickname “cheap but nasties” - some of what we remembered, they were built cheaply, quickly and were fierce. The *Sackville* engaged with German U-boats while escorting convoys from Canada to Europe. We saw paintings on the side of the vessel and Rick explained “gun-shield graffiti”. One in particular is a “sack full of U-boats”. He told us about “ships camouflage” paint scheme and its importance. This is when a reader needs to google the HMCS *Sackville* for more detailed information. Better yet, take a tour of the ship. Tour guides can share stories of the camaraderie of the crew and the bits of information handed down through the years pertinent to the *Sackville*’s history.

To see the crew’s quarters put into perspective, the cramped space, where the crew ate, slept and spent off duty hours. I pictured “sleep time” with everyone snoring! I wasn’t sure how a person could sleep with a feeling of “being ready for action during battle. The crew came from all areas of Canada, not knowing where they would be stationed. The hardships they endured should never be forgotten. “No job was any less than any other” - whether you steered the ship, worked in the engine room, cooked the meals, ran the canteen, or were a crew member forming a human chain to move shells from the magazine to the gun deck. They worked in extreme weather conditions. I can’t imagine what it would have been like to stand watches in winter in the North Atlantic. The *Sackville* is not a “cruise

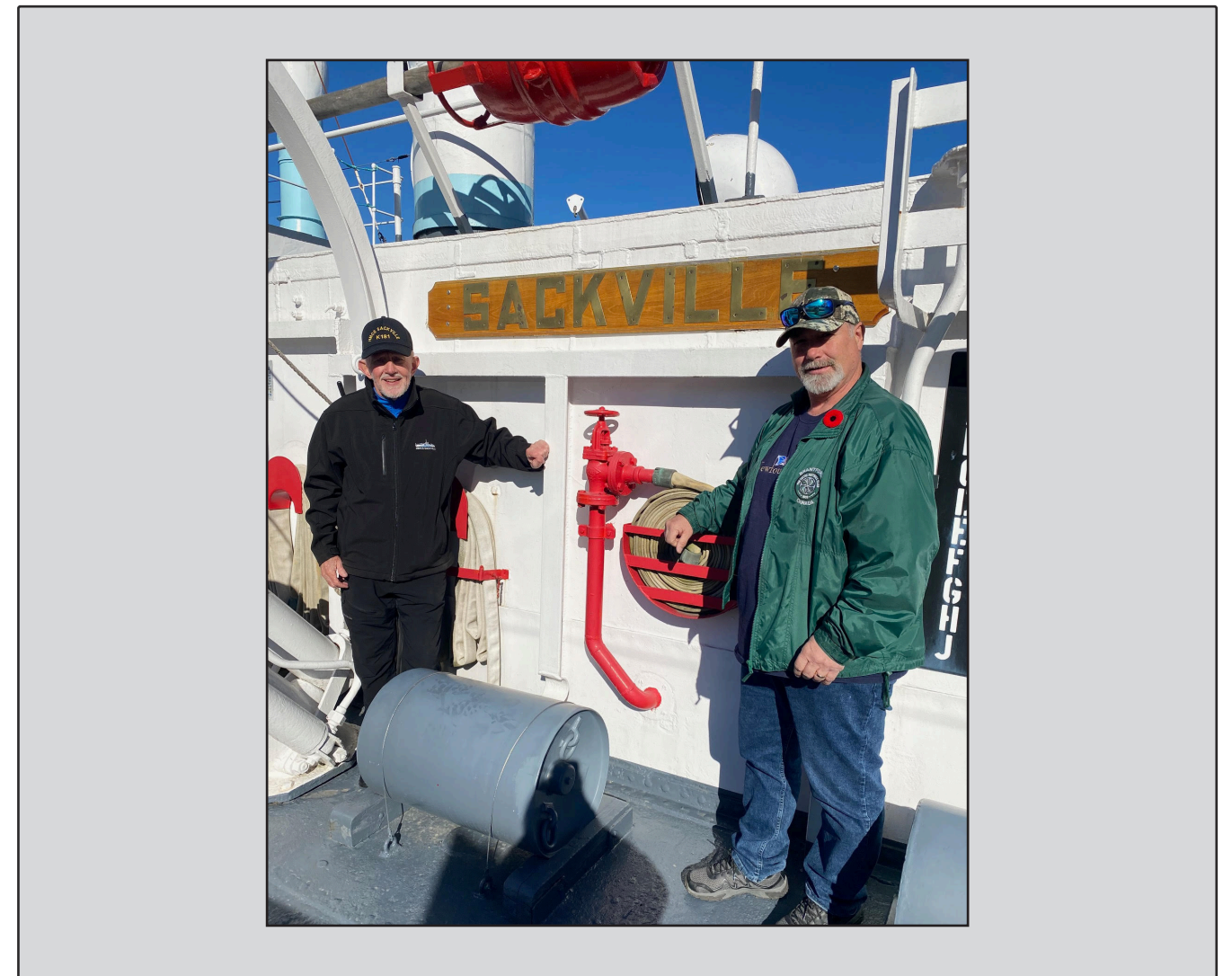
ship”; it did not leave port for a vacation. It left to protect its convoy and to protect our country. The dedication of the men and women who served during the war in any capacity, and who still serve is held in our highest esteem.

As we grow older and are witness to the media capturing events of war, we are even more thankful for our freedom. We need to teach our children and grandchildren to preserve our history. We were happy to make a donation to take care of the *Sackville*.

The easiest way to share our Canadian Naval History is to “see it”.

Thank you First Lieutenant, Richard Powell. You will not be forgotten.

Cheers
Cheryl and Keith Coleman



A Norwegian Family with a Flower Connection to Sackville

Rick Powell First Lieutenant



Anders Landro, his wife Marthe, and their two daughters Lucie (9) and Mathilde (6) departed Bergen Norway on 1st June 2021 Norway in their 50-foot yacht “Albicilla”. They were heading on an extended journey that would see them circumnavigate the North Atlantic Ocean, probably not a trip, of that magnitude, that would be on many young families bucket list. I asked Anders what it was that made him and his family decide to go on this journey. Anders stated it was a complex question, but the main reason was to leave main-

land Europe for the first time with their yacht and have a project as a family and spending time with the girls. There was the desire for an adventure that was tempting, to sail across an ocean on a small sail boat. To disembark on this journey Anders who is an Operations Officer in the Norwegian Coast Guard and his wife Marthe each had to request a leave of absence, which to his surprise, due to the length, were granted. The family also had to attend to schooling of the two daughters. The girls and his wife coped very well; the girls

were home schooled by his wife who is a professional teacher. According to Anders, that made him the principal on board the school ship Albicilla, but his kids insisted he was only the janitor since he did boat work every time, they had school. Marthe and the girls, in addition to schooling had specific duties on board.

Upon departing Bergen, they sailed south through Europe stopping in Cherbourg France and Normandy to teach the children about D-Day as part of their home-schooling program. They took



the opportunity to visit the Norwegian Memorial on Sword Beach because his grandfather was the Commanding Officer of K197, HNoMS *Eglantine*, during “Operation Neptune” D-Day 6 June 1944. More on this interesting connection to follow.

Then it was across the Bay of Biscay before heading south to the Canary Islands and then on to Cape Verde in Africa. Anders father, Aage, joined them in Cape Verde for the Trans-Atlantic crossing to the Caribbean. During this leg they participated in the “Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC+)” race along with 74 other boats. “Albicilla” crossed the finish line in first place and to win a trophy proved to be one of the highlights of their journey.

The first port of call in the Caribbean was Grenada. After celebrating their victory, they island hopped north calling at 12 Caribbean islands then arrived in US waters. They called at five ports along the American Seaboard including New York City. Sailing their own boat into New York harbour under the Statue of Liberty was another significant highlight in their journey. Following several ports in Maine it was then off to Halifax NS. “Albicilla’s” call at Halifax was a must for Anders and the family. Prior to their arrival Anders had reached out to *Sackville* hopefully seeking an opportu-

nity to visit the ship.

During their four-day stay in Halifax the family took the opportunity to visit many of the tourist sites however Anders’ keen desire to visit HMCS *Sackville*, the last remaining Flower Class Corvette in the world, was at the top of the list for a good reason. The Landros were invited aboard for a tour of the ship. During the tour my focus was to tell Lucie and Mathilde, as best I could, the significance of the different spaces in the ship and how they related to their great grandfather when he was in his ship during the war, for example, on the bridge this is where your great grandfather would command the ship and the Captain’s Cabin and wheelhouse where he would sleep. Some translation from English to Norwegian by mom and dad was required Following the tour Marthe and the girls went their own way, shopping, while Anders and I repaired to the Trustees Mess for Noon Hour Weepers. Anders thoroughly enjoyed meeting the Trustee Members and it was my honour to introduce him as my guest, as we do for all our guests. During my discussions with Anders, I learned of the exploits of his grandfather, Harald Voltersvik, who had a distinguished career in the Norwegian Navy. He attended the Norwegian Naval Academy 1927-1930. After leaving the academy he served as

a Captain in the merchant navy from 1930 until transferring to the Norwegian Navy at the outbreak of war. April 1940 - August 1941 he attended various courses in the UK and Norway to get back up to speed in naval operations before taking command. He commanded HNoMS *Eglantine*, K197 a Flower Class Corvette. He commanded *Eglantine* on two separate occasions, the first was 1941-1943 and again from Feb 1944 until the conclusion of the war. During his time in command of *Eglantine* his ship was assigned to the Liverpool Escort Force. During this time the *Eglantine* made a number of convoy escort crossings to North America. On one occasion the *Eglantine* was in Halifax between convoys, Lt Voltersvik was tasked to escort Norwegian Crown Prince Olav during a Norwegian Royal visit to Halifax. Following the war, he served in various staff positions rising rank. In 1957 was appointed Rear Admiral, Chief of Navy, Northern Norway. Following this posting he was appointed Commander Western Norway and in this position was Deputy Commander, Norwegian Navy, a position he held until his retirement in 1973. Following his retirement from the Navy he did not pursue a secondary career and passed away in 1977. Just to close the loop on the *Eglantine* she served as a Fisheries Inspection vessel before being sold to

a company that converted the ship to of all things a whaling ship, what the Flower Class designed Corvettes were based on.

Anne Voltersvik, Anders mother, became a doctor no naval service, but Anders entered the Norwegian Navy as an officer to pursue his professional career. In Norway the coast guard is an integrated part of the Naval Defense and the coast guard ships jump back and forth between the navy and the coast guard, the ships are armed and grey. He has served in various positions in the Navy, primarily on frigates, as a navigation officer and as an Operations Officer in the Coast Guard. Last Oct served in NoCGV Svalbard, a class of vessel, which the design of the HMCS *Harry de Wolf* Arctic Patrol Vessel is based upon. Since then, he has had the chance

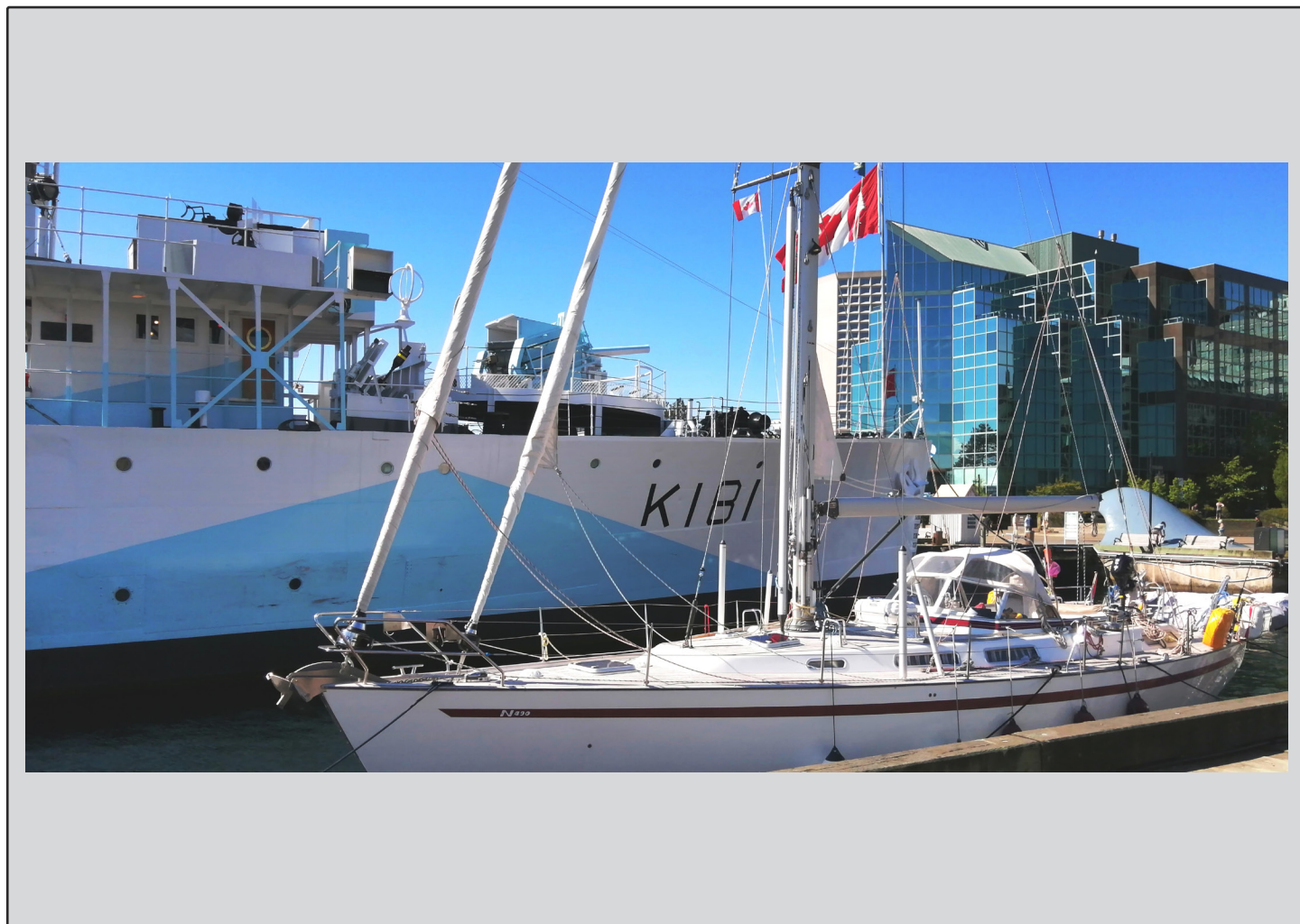
to serve as an XO in NoCGV Ardennes on a couple of operational trips. His desire is to eventually become the Commanding Officer of a Norwegian Coast Guard vessel.

While in Halifax Anders had the opportunity to meet Steinar Engeset former Honorary Norwegian Consul. When the “Albicilla” departed Halifax, I was on the jetty to slip their lines and wish them “Fair Winds and Following Seas” on the homeward leg of their journey.

After departing Halifax ports of call included several ports in NS including Cape Breton. Next a couple of small ports in Newfoundland but the main stop was in Corner Brook where they prepared for Labrador and Greenland. They proceeded along the Strait of

Bell Isle then north along the Labrador coast stopping every night reaching Hawk Harbour, in Labrador, before swinging east to Quartartoq Greenland. From Greenland it was then to Reykjavik Iceland and finally arriving back in Bergen on 5 August 2022. 431 days, 24 different countries and 14,000 nautical miles they were safely back home. Now that is a journey. But once back in Norway, life returned to normal, back to the Coast Guard for Anders, the classroom for Marthe and for the girls sharing their stories of their trip with their classmates.

Anders final highlight was “all the great people they met and got to know on their route, especially the Canadians, who were the most helpful and kindest they met on the whole trip”.



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CNMT has been sponsoring an annual Canadian Naval Memorial Trust Essay Contest in the journal *Canadian Naval Review* (CNR) for the past 10 years. Initially the contest was sponsored by Commodore Bruce Oland and, after his passing, his son, Commander Richard Oland: both Life Members of CNMT. This initiative provides us with the ability to inform a readers interested in maritime affairs about HMCS *Sackville* and our Trust.

For the past eighteen years, CNR has been a respected “not for profit” academic publication, providing a public forum for the maritime dimension of Canada’s national security, naval and maritime policy, and the examination of Canadian naval and maritime history.

Past winners of the essay contest have included academic and professional naval personnel, and their work has been published in the pages of CNR. The most recent winner is Jacob Benjamin, a PhD Candidate at the University of Waterloo in Ontario and the Basillie School of International Affairs. His essay explores the feasibility of the highly advanced Japanese Soryu class Diesel Electric submarine as a successor to our current Victoria Class. This is a particularly timely article with considerable recent publicity about the AUKUS agreement which will procure nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy to help counter the threat posed by Chinese maritime forces in the Western Pacific Ocean.



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Essay Competition

Canadian Naval Review will be holding its annual essay competition again in 2023. There will be a prize of \$1,000 for the best essay, provided by the **Canadian Naval Memorial Trust**. The winning essay will be published in *CNR*. (Other non-winning essays will also be considered for publication, subject to editorial review.)

Essays submitted to the contest should relate to the following topics:

- Canadian maritime security;
- Canadian naval policy;
- Canadian naval issues;
- Canadian naval operations;
- History/historical operations of the Canadian Navy;
- Global maritime issues (such as piracy, smuggling, fishing, environment);
- Canadian oceans policy and issues;
- Arctic maritime issues;
- Maritime transport and shipping.

If you have any questions about a particular topic, contact cnrcoord@icloud.com.

Contest Guidelines and Judging

- Submissions for the 2023 *CNR* essay competition must be received at cnrcoord@icloud.com by Tuesday, **30 May 2023**.
- Submissions are not to exceed 3,000 words (excluding references). Longer submissions will be penalized in the adjudication process.
- Submissions cannot have been published elsewhere.
- All submissions must be in electronic format and any accompanying photographs, images, or other graphics and tables must also be included as a separate file.

The essays will be assessed by a panel of judges on the basis of a number of criteria including readability, breadth, importance, accessibility and relevance. The decision of the judges is final. All authors will be notified of the judges' decision within two months of the submission deadline.

Concours de rédaction

La *Canadian Naval Review* tiendra à nouveau son concours annuel de rédaction en 2023. L'auteur(e) du meilleur article recevra un prix de 1 000 \$, gracieuseté du **Fonds de commémoration de la marine canadienne**, et son article sera publié dans la *Canadian Naval Review*. (Des articles non retenus pourraient aussi être publiés, sous réserve d'une révision éditoriale.)

Les articles présentés dans le cadre de ce concours doivent porter sur l'un ou l'autre des sujets suivants :

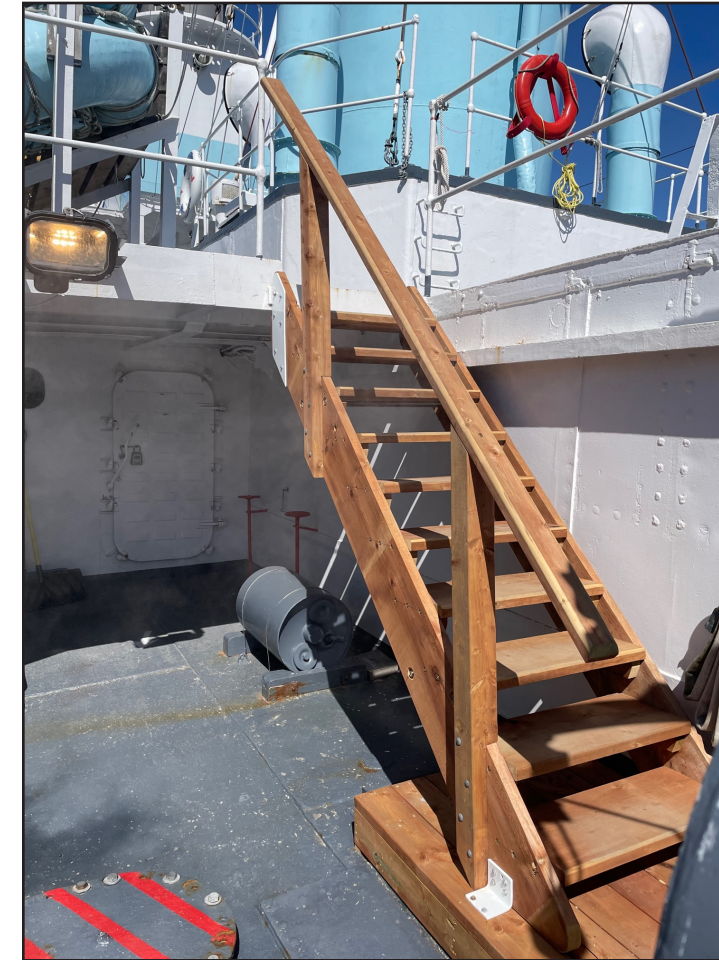
- Sécurité maritime canadienne
- Politique navale canadienne
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- Opérations navales canadiennes
- Histoire/opérations antérieures de la Marine canadienne
- Problèmes maritimes à l'échelle internationale (comme la piraterie, la contrebande, la pêche et l'environnement)
- Politiques et problèmes concernant les océans canadiens
- Problèmes maritimes dans l'Arctique
- Transport et expédition par voie maritime

Si vous avez des questions sur un sujet en particulier, veuillez envoyer un courriel à l'adresse cnrcoord@icloud.com.

Lignes directrices du concours et sélection du gagnant

- Les articles présentés dans le cadre du concours de 2023 de la *CNR* doivent être envoyés au plus tard le mardi, **30 mai 2023** à cnrcoord@icloud.com.
- Ils doivent contenir 3 000 mots au maximum. Ceux qui dépassent ce nombre de mots seront pénalisés au cours du processus de sélection.
- Les articles ne doivent jamais avoir été publiés auparavant.
- Tous les articles doivent être soumis en format électronique, et les photographies, les images ou toute autre représentation graphique et les tableaux qui les accompagnent doivent être envoyés dans un fichier distinct.

Les articles seront évalués par un jury en fonction d'un certain nombre de critères, dont la lisibilité, la profondeur, l'importance, l'accessibilité et la pertinence. La décision du jury est sans appel. Les auteur(e)s seront informés de la décision du jury dans un délai de deux mois suivant la date limite de la présentation des articles.



Crew members and visitors will have safer passage between decks with installation of a new exterior ladder in HMCS *Sackville*. We want to say that the new ladder was built by our Chief Shipwright, funding for the new ladder was provided by the Naval Association of Canada Endowment Fund.



The striking Merchant Navy Memorial on Plymouth Hoe facing Plymouth Sound and the English Channel recalls the significant role of the Merchant Navy during the pivotal Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1945. ('Hoe' old English for high ground).

John Pickford photo



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