

# **ACTION** *STATIONS!*

**HMCS SACKVILLE— CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL**

Volume 38 • Issue 1 • Winter 2019



**20** Young seaman on convoy duty



**24** Thunderbird goes to sea



**26** What's in a name?

# ACTION STATIONS!

Volume 38 • Issue 1 • Winter 2019

## Inside:

From the Chair .....	3
Executive Director .....	5
Captain's Cabin .....	6
My summer as an interpreter .....	7
Crossed the Bar .....	8
DEFSEC Atlantic .....	10
The Hamilton Connection .....	11
Bell for Newfoundland Escort Force .....	12
Wreaths Across Canada .....	14
Busy Day in Halifax Harbour .....	16
Trustees preserve HMCS Sackville .....	18
Life as a stoker during BoA .....	20
Thunderbird goes to sea .....	24
Maple Leaf tradition .....	25
Newest AOPV named for heroine .....	26
UNTDA fundraiser aids Sackville .....	28
New members .....	30
Historic Ceremony in London .....	31
Battle of Atlantic Dinner & Concert .....	32
Remembering HMCS Kootenay .....	33
Tales of a pom-pom gunner .....	34
Poetry: A night on convoy duty .....	35



## Our Cover

Rear Admiral Leonard W. Murray was on hand to welcome Lieutenant Commander John Stubbs, right, Commanding Officer; Lieutenant Ralph Hennessy, left, Executive Officer and the victorious crew of HMCS *Assiniboine* on the ship's return to St John's, NL in mid-August 1942. The destroyer was on convoy escort in the North Atlantic when it engaged, rammed and sank U-boat 210. During the "zig and zag" engagement U-210 shelled and damaged *Assiniboine*, igniting fires and inflicting casualties before the ship was able to sink the sub. *Assiniboine* rescued and took on board a number of the sub's survivors.

## Editorial Committee

LCdr (ret'd) Doug Thomas, Executive Director CNMT  
LCdr (ret'd) Pat Jessup, Chair-Commemorations, CNMT  
Cdr (ret'd) Len Canfield, Public Affairs  
Debbie Findlay, Financial Officer  
Stu Ducklow, Words & Pictures Design Services

## Photographers

Lt (N) (ret'd) Ian Urquhart  
Cdr (ret'd) Bll Gard  
Doug Struthers  
Sandy McClearn

## HMCS SACKVILLE

PO BOX 99000 STATION FORCES  
HALIFAX, NS B3K 5X5  
WINTER PHONE HMC DOCKYARD: 902-427-2837  
SUMMER: 902-429-2132

# Need to broaden vision for Sackville

by Commander (ret'd) Wendall Brown

**T**he end of 2018 and the start of 2019 requires reflection on the past year and consideration of the plans and challenges to face in 2019.

2018 commenced with significant issues regarding the future of HMCS *Sackville* which created considerable uncertainty requiring action by the Board. Evolving federal financial regulations since the *Sackville* was acquired in 1983 precluded the Navy from providing the level of support that the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT) had enjoyed in past years. As a result of the seriousness of the situation the Trust had determined that the ship could not deploy to the Halifax waterfront in 2018 without a major refit to ensure that the ship was harbour seaworthy.

The long standing association between the CNMT and the RCN, the RCN's interest in preserving the ship's heritage, and the immediate requirement to save the ship focused efforts on the part of all concerned to achieve a \$3.5 million one time Government grant to the Trust to refit *Sackville*. This grant was announced in Halifax January 26, 2018 by Treasury Board President Scott Brison. Receipt of this grant saved *Sackville* from immediate demise.

The refit required for *Sackville* proved to be extensive and complex. Surveys and testing revealed

that long term preservation will require the replacement of the below water hull plating. This operation will require specialized skills and techniques and additional resources that could not be acquired within



the time frame availability of the repair facility in HMC Dockyard.

The interim solution developed by Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott (FMFCS) was to clad the existing below water hull plating with ¼ inch thick steel plate pressed tightly against the hull, welded together and to the hull, to form a solid layer of plate over and attached to the hull. Before the cladding was commenced, obvious perforations in the hull, in areas that might not

be immediately clad, were patched. When *Sackville* was refloated in October, the areas of greatest concern and steel shaping complexity were covered. *Sackville* will be taken out of the water again in March 2019 to complete the cladding progress with an estimated completion date of mid-June and a return to her downtown summer berth for the summer and early fall.

With light at the end of the tunnel for the ship's survival for the immediate future, the focus of the Trust must be broader to embrace a vision for her future as the National Naval Memorial.

The Trust is at a crossroads: the Board directed that a committee examine options for the future preservation of the ship as a Naval Memorial. In this regard it was concluded that development of Battle of the Atlantic Place was not feasible in the current support environment. Its termination was essential to ensure the refit and survival of the ship.

Fortunately, our need to develop a comprehensive vision for the ship and the Naval Memorial coincides with the exciting opportunity of partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia, through Develop Nova Scotia (DNS, formerly called Waterfront Development Corporation), and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, supported by the Canadian Maritime Heritage Foundation in redeveloping the future Halifax waterfront.

**Continued on Page 4**

#### From Page 4

For some time, Develop Nova Scotia has been working on developing a highly interactive Canadian Maritime Heritage District between Sackville Landing and the new Queen's Marque development (adjacent to Murphy's Wharf). The Canadian Maritime Heritage Foundation, the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic are very supportive of this initiative and will work together to ensure the vision comes to fruition.

Together the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, CSS *Acadia*, a National Historic site; HMCS *Sackville* (also a National Historic Site) and a new Centre for Small Craft will provide a place where people can gather and have immersive, hands-on experience with our maritime history, skills, and traditions. The Canadian Maritime Heritage District will be near the centre of the harbour boardwalk, which is a huge drawing card for visitors, particularly international visitors from the cruise ships which berth at the south end of the board walk.

Canada's Naval contribution in both war and peace will be conveyed by walking the decks, climbing the ladders, with hands on the equipment, or experiencing the spartan mess decks that were home to their ancestors in ships like *Sackville* and *Acadia*. The proposed multi-media interpretative presentations within the Maritime Museum will provide the context of the environment in which the ships and crews served. Traditional boat building, maintenance and operation will be interactively experienced in the Centre for Small Craft. The extensive work



Wendall Brown  
interviewed by CTV  
reporter Heidi Petracek

carried out in the course of previous proposals for this area will be of great assistance as the vision is implemented during the next few years.

From our informal discussions, it is clear that the RCN and DND view the future of the National Naval Memorial as a significant element of this Canadian Maritime Heritage initiative which has received informal expressions of support from the three levels of government, the Navy, and the local private sector. Much work needs to be done before this concept can come to fruition, but the Board of the CNMT has concluded that the future of *Sackville* will be as part of the district.

If major projects such as the Maritime Heritage District are to receive support from the three levels of Government, the private sector needs to first demonstrate support and commitment by raising a

significant level of funding for the project. Once such funding is in place or committed it will be possible to access municipal, provincial and federal sources for funding. It is recognized that support from various levels of government will be limited by a number of uncertainties which will require an incremental approach to the total development over the next few years as we work closely with our partners.

The Trust has been very fortunate with our faithful trustees who have supported *Sackville* through some very trying times. Now as we move ahead with planning for the future, the Trust continues to need the support and assistance of its trustees even more. The ongoing refit is depleting Trust funds as the Government's grant was limited and specific to actual repairs to the

**Continued on Page 16**

# Sackville going back to waterfront

## Do you hear there?

**T**here appears to be an opportunity to get more of the hull sheathed in the spring, so the ship is expected to return to the Syncrolift during the March-June period; we are aiming to return to the waterfront not later than Canada Day 2019.

## On the Waterfront:

We anticipate requesting two students from the Canada Summer Jobs Program again, with the aim of having them help interpret the ship during summer 2019. We have been very fortunate to receive grants from this program which pays for most of the wages of our interpretive guides. There will still be a need for Duty Trustees to oversee the summer staff, help with interpretation, and ensure that appropriate standards are maintained: training will be organized in the early spring.

## DEFSEC 2019

We anticipate being part of DEFSEC 2019, to be held 1-3 October. This is a good opportunity to show-off Sackville to many people in the Defence Industry, from various parts of North America and abroad. We make spaces onboard available for meetings, provide tours, and tell the story of Canada's contribution to winning the Battle of the Atlantic to a different audience.

## HMCS Sackville Sails Again!

You will remember that *Sackville* was Lidar-Scanned late in 2017 in order to assume the fictional role of one of the convoy escorts in the new Tom Hanks' film "Greyhound," based on C.S. Forester's novel "The Good



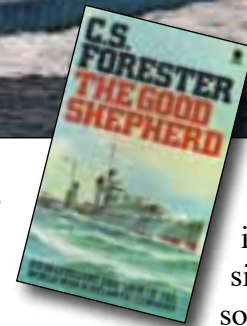
Shepherd." As you probably know, most current action-film sequences employ Computer Graphic Imagery to produce amazingly realistic effects. The film was scheduled for release on the 22nd of March 2019 but I have just heard its release has been delayed until 08 May 2020.

## Canadian Naval Review (CNR)

Canadian Naval Memorial Trust Essay Contest – For the last few years we have sponsored the \$1000 first-prize for the annual CNR essay competition on the topic of Canadian maritime affairs, and the prize for 2018 was presented to Adam MacDonald (who also won in 2016). We plan to continue to sponsor this contest as it is good publicity for the Trust, and we are credited as a sponsor in each issue of the magazine and in descriptions the contest. Past issues of CNR are available online at: <http://www.naval-review.ca/>

## Website:

Please look at our website first for information about ship and Trust



activities. If you have issues with the website that you can't resolve, please let me know in detail what the problem is so that we can fix it.

Action Stations has had some down-time of late but is back with this issue. We are looking at ways to revitalize Action Stations, including short updates on our website and several larger issues throughout the year. We have engaged a professional graphic design/layout person to help with making Action Stations look good, but we need your articles and pictures. If you would like to research or submit articles or photographs, please contact me. If you would like to assume the role of Editor, or assistant Editor while you learn the ropes, we would welcome your assistance – you could be anywhere in the country!

**Yours aye,  
Doug Thomas**

[execdir@canadasnavalmemorial.ca](mailto:execdir@canadasnavalmemorial.ca) or  
902-721-1206/902-492-1424  
(weekday mornings)



Trustees Jacqui and Kenneth Tam from Edmonton visited the ship in the Dockyard Syncrolift submarine building.

# Much work in drydock this winter

by Lieutenant Commander  
Jim Reddy (ret'd)

**T**he Chair has described the overall situation in which we find ourselves - to be sure a challenging but very good one as we finally came to grips with ship safety and preservation issues that had become more and more urgent in recent years.

The underwater hull has been completely treated inside and out by local marine contractor MacKinnon and Olding. This included grit blasting and then coating of all internal tanks and bilges. The removal of equipment to make way for this work and the insertion of the necessary gear including ventilation trunking throughout the ship all resulted in a horrific mess. Now we have to clean up the ship inside and put everything back where it belongs in preparation for the 2019 season.

To help with this work, we've engaged a new Chief Boatswain's Mate/Shipkeeper in the person of

CPO1 (ret'd) Art Forward, a Naval Communicator. Welcome onboard Art!

Although the underwater hull was the focus of the docking, a circumstantial bonus was the complete refurbishment of the mast. Because the mast had to be lifted off so the ship could fit through the door of the submarine building, an opportunity presented itself to clean, repair and paint the mast including the crow'snest. With the new standing rigging produced in the Dockyard shop, it will be quite beautiful. Thanks to a support donation from the Naval Association of Canada, the contractor completed this work which could not have been included in our hull repair budget.

Another significant habitability improvement has been the installation of a modern heads system. To meet emission restrictions introduced in Halifax Harbour many years ago, we had fitted a chemical system that proved challenging to operate. A year ago, the Board ap-

proved up to 15K from the Preservation Fund for the new heads which then came in under budget. This modern system is much more robust and will cater to those human needs when functions take place onboard.

While the ship was "high and dry" in the building last year for nearly eight months, we were able to take some visitors into the worksite. This included Trustees visiting from afar, politicians, local news media and senior naval personnel. The sight of the old corvette laid bare and the truly impressive preservation work taking place produced a certain level of "shock and awe" as well as a strong sense of satisfaction.

As we prepare for the second docking in early spring and have resumed Friday noon gatherings onboard until the docking, our challenge is to restore the ship to the state that she was in prior to refit. To do this we can always benefit from able volunteers. Don't hesitate to contact me to discuss a volunteer opportunity.

# My life as a historical interpreter

by Benjamin Wilke

Being a historical interpreter involves doing more than learning just figures and dates. It is about connecting with history, with the people you meet, hearing their stories, and understanding how events that seem distant to some still shape our lives today. The greatest experiences I had as a guide for HMCS *Sackville* during the summer of 2018 were hearing the stories others had to offer, and sharing with them the stories I had learned in return. Helping preserve *Sackville* as Canada's Naval History was an amazing experience that I felt proud and happy to be a part of.

Whether it was meeting with a sailor from HMCS *Swansea* who was at Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953, or a young child interested in semaphore flags, or helping someone find museum information or an artifact they were looking for it was wonderful to interact with guests. Sometimes, it was difficult to tell what people would find interesting and figure out how to tell a story in a way that was meaningful to them. I took it as a challenge and was amazed by the number of people who had a personal connection to the story of Canada's Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic.

For those looking to become a historical interpreter aboard *Sackville*, I would recommend reading up on the history surrounding the ship. *50 North* is commonly recommended as it is the memoir of Alan Easton, one of HMCS *Sackville*'s first wartime captains. I would per-



Historical interpreters Ben Wilke (Dalhousie University - Engineering) above left, and Tallis Clarke (McGill University - Linguistics) on the right.

---

## Events that seem distant to some still shape our lives today

---

sonally recommend *The Corvette Navy* by James B. Lamb which I began reading in my first few weeks on the job. It was not a challenging read, gives a great overview of how Canada and the Allies fought through the Battle of the Atlantic, and is overflowing with powerful stories that really showed the expe-

riences of the sailors. The members of the Canadian Naval Memorial Naval Trust that maintains and operates *Sackville* are great to talk to for advice if you need some guidance on how to interact with guests and where to find good information about the ship and its history.

Overall, being part of the Trust was a great learning experience that showed me the scale of the Battle of the Atlantic. The number of people I met who had a father, grandfather or great-grandfather who served during the battle was staggering. I had a great time interacting with these people, connecting with them through a history that shaped the country we live in today. There was never a shortage of new things to learn, new stories to explore and share with those interested in hearing them. I would recommend this position to anyone with a passion for history.

## Crossed the bar

**Commander Guy J.R. Boucher CD OMM** (ret'd), one of the first graduates of HMCS *Venture*, in Esquimalt and a 39 year veteran of the RCN passed away in Halifax Sept 21 at age 81. His career included service in HMC Ships *Cayuga*, *Ottawa*, *Jonquiere*, *Crescent*, *Assiniboine*, *Nipigon* and command of HMCS *Skeena* (1980-1983). Shore appointments included staff officer at CMR, Training Group Pacific and Maritime Command Official Languages Coordinator. He was active in church and community affairs. Survivors include his wife Helen, children Eric, Mark, Karl, Therese and Diane; brother Carol and sister Huguette.

**Cdr Leo MacDonald CD** (ret'd) of Braeshore, Pictou County, NS, who joined the RCN at 17 as a member of the first class of HMCS *Venture*, Victoria passed away August 26 at age 81. During his career he served in HMC Ships *Ontario*, *Restigouche*, *Inch Arran*, *Sioux*, *Algonquin*, *Loon*, *Cormorant*, *Gatineau* and assumed command of *Fraser* in 1973. In 1977 he retired from the Regular Force, transferred to the Naval Reserve and returned to university to receive his law degree in 1980. During the summers he commanded the training vessels HMC Ships *Porte St Jean* and *Porte St Louis*. Survivors include wife Barbara, daughter Sandy, sister Colleen and brother Ron.

**Chief Petty Officer Guy Thomas Ouellet** (ret'd), whose naval career included service during the Korean War and an active member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust where he served as coxswain of HMCS *Sackville* passed away in Hubble, NS April 19 at age 92. Following Korea he served in Halifax

and from 1969 to 1971 in Ottawa, followed by service in Victoria where he retired in 1972. He returned to Halifax and worked for the Canadian Coast Guard at Chebucto Head until 1987. He was active in the community and a member of a number of organizations including St Marguerite Bourgeoys Church (Sacred Heart Parish), Knights of Columbus, the Chief and Petty Officers Association and Navy League. He was predeceased by his wife Phyllis; survivors include his children Catherine, Pierre, Stephen, Michelle and Jacqueline; a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren; brothers Roger and Henri and sister Pauline.



**Rev Alan Sagar (Lieutenant Commander, ret'd)**, who commenced his career in the Royal Navy in 1943 and trained as a clearance diver, later joined the RCN in 1955 and was very influential in helping to stand-up the Navy's Clearance Diving Branch and was commanding officer of the Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) before retir-

ing from the service in 1970. Among his many activities was his ordination as a priest in the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia, and a number of years in full-time ministry. An accomplished artist and advocate for veterans, he was also active in the scouting movement and a number of other organizations including the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*. During his ministry he served in communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Labrador as well as continuing his military association as a primary reserve chaplain. He passed away in Halifax Dec 23 at age 93. He was predeceased by his first wife Jane, mother of his children, and his second wife Elizabeth; survivors include his wife Rev. Margaret Sagar, sister Alice, sons Simon and Robie; daughters Lucy and Jennifer; stepdaughter Eleanor, stepson Julian and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Commodore Bradley Laurence (Larry) Wilkins** (ret'd) of Chester, NS, a career naval officer who served in several ships and held appointments on both coasts and at National Defence Headquarters passed away April 1, 2018 at age 91. He was a graduate of Royal Roads Naval College (1946) and the University of Toronto (engineering physics). On return from a tour in Korea in the 1950s he served in London, England, followed by service in HMC Ships *Huron*, *Nootka* and *Restigouche*. Later he served in HMC Dockyards Halifax and Esquimalt and at NDHQ, retiring in 1982. In his follow-on civilian career he held engineering positions with Irving Shipbuilding and Davis

**Continued on Page 9**

### From Page 8

Shipbuilding. He retired to Chester, was active in the community and a member of several organizations including the NS Naval Association of Canada. Survivors include his wife Jane, daughters Pat and Cathi, several grand and great-grandchildren, brother Jon and sister Desmay.

**Donald Bowman**, who served as a sub-lieutenant in the corvette HMCS *Edmundston* during the Second World War, passed away in Regina, SK on Nov. 23 2018 at age 96. Following the end of hostilities he joined the family automotive business and later developed a livestock/feed lot operation and a specialty advertising business. In retirement he wrote of his wartime convoy escort experience and attended Battle of the Atlantic commemorative services in Canada and Northern Ireland. He was predeceased by his wife Muriel and son David; survivors include children Brian, Cathy and Tammy and a number of grand and great grandchildren. Donations in his memory may be made to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* or the Royal Canadian Legion Regina Branch 1.

**Captain (N) Donald J. Scott** (ret'd), a specialist in radiology and a former commanding officer of the Canadian Forces Hospital, CFB Halifax passed away in Bridgewater, NS April 26 at age 82. He joined the Navy while a medical student and after graduation from the Manitoba Medical College he was posted to National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa,

followed by service with the Second Canadian Escort Squadron, Esquimalt. In 1971 he was posted to Kingston, ON and began post-grad training in radiology (diagnostic imaging). In 1971 he was posted to CFB *Halifax* and in 1980 promoted Captain and appointed CO of CF Hospital, Halifax. Following retirement from the Navy he moved to Bridgewater and continued his medical career, including chief of radiology at Dawson Memorial Hospital and chief of medical staff. He was a member of several organizations including the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and the NS Naval Association of Canada. Survivors include his wife Karen, brother Stuart, daughters Linda, Sylvia and Carol, son Donald and a number of grandchildren.



**Mrs Rose Murray**, widow of James Murray, passed away in Calgary, AB May 12, 2018 at age 105. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland she is survived by daughter Marsha and several grandchildren. She was predeceased by daughter Heather and her first husband Thomas Lawrence. The latter was serving in HMCS *Shawinigan* in November 1944 when the

corvette was torpedoed and sank in the Cabot Strait with the loss of all 85 crew members.

**Frances Pearl Clappison**, wife of former HMCS *Sackville* crew member Philip Clappison and a Life Member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, passed away in Waterloo, ON July 10, 2018 at age 91. She was a registered nurse and a graduate of the University of Waterloo. In addition to her husband, survivors include children Philip, Stephen, Susan, Elizabeth and Margaret; several grandchildren; sisters Jean and Pauline, and brother Sheldon. Philip Clappison was serving in *Sackville* in 1944 during a convoy escort when he discovered a leak in one of the boilers that impacted the ship's operations for the rest of the war.

**John (Jack) Hare**, who joined the RCNVR at 18, trained as an ASDIC operator and survived the torpedoing of the frigate HMCS *Chebogue* in October 1944, passed away in Oro Township, ON Dec 12 at age 94. A Trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, he participated in one of the Trust's pilgrimages to Londonderry, Northern Ireland and donated his RCN life jacket for display in the ship. He was active in the community in Port Credit and Oro Township, including the Royal Canadian Legion and was the first fire chief of Oro Township Fire Department. He was predeceased by his wife Edith; he is survived by children Cyril, Lois, Robert, John, Russell, Brian, Philip and Patricia. A celebration of his life will take place in the Jarrett community hall in Jarrett, Ontario on Saturday March 16th 1-4pm.

**Continued on Page 10**

## Crossed the bar

### From Page 9

**John Reginald Helliwell** of Dartmouth, NS, who served in the British Army during the Second World War and was a member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* passed away March 2, 2018 at age 91. Following the war he worked as a mining engineer in Africa and moved to Canada in 1953. Prior to retirement he was an industrial engineer with the Nova Scotia Research Foundation. He was predeceased by his wife Patricia; survivors include children Diana, Claire, Phil and Robert, sister Barbara, brother Guy and a number of grandchildren.

**Lieutenant Commander Malcolm (Fitz) George Fitzgerald** (ret'd), who joined the Navy at 17 and served for 28 years, passed away in Saint John, NB Nov 20. Following retirement from the Navy he was employed with the frigate program at Saint John Shipbuilding. In addition to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust he was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #69. Survivors include his wife Patricia (Penny), sons David, Michael and Brian, sister Lorna and several grandchildren.

**William (Bill) Stephen Todd Sloan**, a Second World War naval veteran remembered by family and friends as an artist, smith, jeweller, woodworker, potter and photographer passed away in Ottawa April 14, 2018 at age 97. Among his works are paintings of HMC Ships *Sackville*, *Sarnia* and *Esquimalt*. He is survived by his wife Joan, children Kim, Cindy and Stephen and several grandchildren.

## Upcoming Activities:

**Battle of the Atlantic Concert** – Central Library Halifax, 1400 Sunday 28 April 2019

**Battle of the Atlantic Dinner** – CFB Halifax Stadacona Wardroom – 1830-2130 Wednesday 02 May 2018

**AGM 2019** –at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia on the afternoon of 27 June; evening reception to follow onboard *Sackville*.



## DEFSEC Atlantic 2018

CNMT Trustee and RCAF veteran Bert Walker was one of a number of Trustees attending opening day events at the Canadian Defence Security and Aerospace Exhibition Atlantic at the Cunard Centre, Halifax Oct 3-4. Although HMCS *Sackville* was not alongside at DEFSEC this year—due to undergoing refit in HMC Dockyard—Trustees had an opportunity to “show the flag” by meeting and chatting with representatives of the different companies and organizations taking part. Here, Bert chats with Commander Neil Marriott of the British Liaison Staff, Ottawa at the MacTaggart Scott display booth (supplier of equipment for naval defence and marine industries). (Bill Gard photo)

# Two historic ships tie two cities

A team of 12 representing the Friends of HMCS *Haida* and the Burlington-Oakville Naval Veterans Association visited Halifax in late June. While in town they attended the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo with CNMT Directors Pat Jessup and Jim Reddy and the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust AGM reception held on the 'Bridge' (12th floor) of Juno Tower, CFB Halifax/Stadacona.

The City of Hamilton was represented by Mayor Fred Eisenberger who brought greetings from his city to Halifax and a proposal to develop an association between the historic ships from Hamilton and Halifax, HMC Ships *Haida* and *Sackville*. Halifax Mayor Mike Savage also attended the reception and brought very encouraging words of current and future support for *Sackville*. He applauded the efforts of the many volunteers who have had the vision and perseverance to preserve *Sackville*, 'The Last Corvette.' The mayor is familiar with the Trust and the ship having previously "manned" *Sackville*'s gangway for couple of hours greeting visitors to the iconic corvette. Both mayors were presented with a mounted photo of *Sackville* by Commander Wendall Brown (ret'd), Chair of the CNMT to mark the occasion.

The overall theme is that both Hamilton and Halifax have a Royal Canadian Navy historic ship in their harbours. HMCS *Haida*, alongside in Hamilton, was recently designated Canada's ceremonial naval flagship. She is owned and operated by Parks Canada. In Halifax, HMCS *Sackville* was designated as Canada's Naval Memorial in 1985. By



## Halifax-Hamilton Special Connection

Halifax and Hamilton, ON have much in common, home ports respectively of HMCS *Sackville*, Canada's Naval Memorial and HMCS *Haida*, Canada's ceremonial naval flagship. Following the annual general meeting of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust in late June the Trust hosted a reception in Juno Tower, Stadacona during which Halifax Mayor Mike Savage and Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger

were presented with framed photos of *Sackville*. Guests at the reception included visiting members of Friends of HMCS *Haida* and the Burlington-Oakville Naval Veterans Association. Shown above, from left: Cdr Wendall Brown (ret'd), Chair of CNMT; Mayor Eisenberger; Rear Admiral Craig Baines, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic; Mayor Savage and Fred Noonan. (Bill Gard photo)



contrast, *Sackville* is owned, maintained and operated by the volunteer CNMT with support from the Navy.

*Sackville* was not at her regular downtown summer berth on the

Halifax waterfront in 2018 due to undergoing a major refit in HMC Dockyard. As a result, the AGM reception normally held on board was relocated to *Stadacona*.

# Ship's bell commemorates Newfoundland Escort Force

by Lieutenant Commander  
(ret'd) Pat Jessup

**S**eventy-seven years after its establishment, the Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) was honoured in a special ceremony on September 11, 2018 at Government House in St. John's. At the same time a unique international project, 13 years in the making, was concluded. Since May of 2005 members of HMCS *Sackville* in Halifax, the Royal Naval Association (RNA) - Londonderry, Northern Ireland (NI) and the Crow's Nest Club in St. John's have joined forces to connect their wartime port cities with specially crafted ships' bells. Most recent was the founding of the Newfoundland Escort Force Bell, the last in the series of three, consecrated last May at St. Columb's Anglican Cathedral in Londonderry, NI.

The three bells commemorate Allied naval and merchant sailors, DEMS gunners and air personnel who lost their lives between September, 1939 and May, 1945 in the Battle of the Atlantic while safeguarding convoys carrying much-needed supplies from North America to Britain and Russia.

In his opening remarks at the NEF Bell presentation ceremony to the Honourable Judy Foote, Lieutenant



Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), emcee LCdr (ret'd) Jim Reddy, HMCS *Sackville's* captain, explained the meaning of a bell in the world of sailors, ships and the sea:

“As much as a ship can approach being a living thing, the bell could be considered to represent its heart and its soul, and even part of its memory. The bell is engraved with the ship's name. In former times the bell served as the timekeeper announcing the change of watches so was heard regularly by everyone onboard. Today, the bell is mandated as a safety sound signal for the ship at anchor.

Recently in our Arctic waters, the tragic wrecks of HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* were discovered and visited by underwater teams after over 200 years of mystery. The most important recovered part of either ship was the bell.”

Robert Buchanan, President, RNA - Londonderry Branch added:

“In recognition of the service and sacrifice of the Newfoundland Escort Force during the Battle of the Atlantic, it gives me great pleasure to present this Newfoundland Escort Force Bell to the City of St John's and



Shown unveiling the NEF Bell are Robert Buchanan, RNA – Londonderry; Jim Reddy, captain of HMCS Sackville; Honourable Judy

May Foote, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, and 95 year old Bomber Command pilot Arthur Barrett.

the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This ceremony will bring the Convoy Bells Project to the conclusion of what could be called ‘Phase One’. I say the end of Phase One, because it is my fervent hope that when people see these bells, they will ask “what’s it all about” and hopefully, they will seek out answers. In that way we will have put a catalyst in place, which will perpetuate the memory of the sacrifice of our predecessors and remind generations to come of the awful cost of freedom.”

Lt Gov Foote graciously accepted the Bell on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and in her remarks recalled that period of history in her province and the wide effect of the Second World War and the Battle of the Atlantic. Her Honour thanked those responsible for making the decision to offer the Bell to Government House in St. John’s.

Fourteen Shipmates from the

RNA - Londonderry who travelled with the bell to St. John’s attended the ceremony along with Cdr. Corey Burse, A/Naval Advisor representing the Canadian High Commission in London; Nick Whalen, Member of Parliament St. John’s East; Canadian Naval Memorial Trustees from as far away as Belfast and Red Deer, Alberta; members of the historic Crow’s Nest; Cdr Shannon Lewis-Simpson, CO of HMCS *Cabot*; 95 year old Second World War Veteran and Bomber Command pilot Arthur Barrett, from St. John’s, and local dignitaries.

The casting of the NEF bell was undertaken by the Royal Naval Association and sponsored by RNA – Londonderry Shipmates and HMCS *Sackville* Trustees whose names are engraved on its interior. The North Atlantic Convoy Bell, on display in St. Brendan’s Church, CFB Halifax was the first bell, followed by the Newfie-Derry Run Bell in Londonderry’s Tower Museum.

Cdr Burse, on behalf of High

Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Janice Charette, spoke of the sailors of the convoy escort force, numbering in the tens of thousands, holding a special relationship with the ports of Halifax, St. John’s and Londonderry.

“The bond between these cities and between our two nations runs much deeper than the Battle of the Atlantic. Ours is a history steeped in common values and culture, sewn together with the blood and treasure of many battles in both world wars, which continue to be consummated in places like Africa, the Middle East, and yes still today, on and in the North Atlantic.

Already in 2018 alone five RCN ships, as well as RCAF maritime patrol aircraft, transited the Atlantic to the UK Area of Operations working bridge wing to bridge wing with Royal Navy ships and submarines and Royal Air Force aircraft, in both operations and exercises, helping to ensure the Atlantic sea lines of communication and trade remain open and secure.

With this bell you have helped ensure that the enduring military bond between our countries is not forgotten, and equally important you have helped ensure the many lives lost at sea during the Battle of the Atlantic are not forgotten.”

To cap the NEF ceremony, LCdr (ret’d) Brian McCullough performed a beautiful tin whistle lament in honour of those who went to sea in ships and never returned during the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Newfoundland Escort Force Bell is now on display and will remain in Government House for public viewing.



HMCS Sackville and the maple leaf used to distinguish Canadian boats from their British counterparts

## The maple leaf: an RCN tradition

By Roger Litwiller

If you look at any ship in the Royal Canadian Navy today, you will see a bright red maple leaf proudly displayed on the funnel or helicopter hangar.

This has become a unique tradition in the RCN and can be traced back to 1918 when several RCN Drifters (CD Class) used for mine-sweeping had placed a green Maple Leaf on their funnels to distinguish their Canadian ships amongst the Commonwealth.

During Second World War Canada built the fourth largest navy in the world: with more than 400 ships and 100,000 sailors the RCN was no longer an offshoot of the Royal Navy. The RCN was developing its own personality and growing in a direction unique from the RN. New customs and traditions were being born every day.

Wearing similar uniforms and operating ships designed by the Royal Navy, Canadian sailors looked to distinguish themselves from the RN. Many Canadian ships began to display the maple leaf on their funnels, a true, simple symbol of Canada.

Initially the maple leaf was just as varied as the many ships in

service and the personalities of the sailors that sailed in them. Some displayed a single leaf, others in clusters of three or more. Some placed the number of their escort group in the centre of the leaf, colours were primarily red or green.

There is one story of the recognition of the maple leaf during the Normandy Invasion. HMCS *Trentonian* was off Juno Beach when a large troop ship came to anchor next to them. The soldiers were lining the ship's rails waiting to disembark for the beachhead. When they spotted the green maple leaf on *Trentonian's* funnel they collectively began to cheer and call out to the corvette. The *Trentonians* returned the cheers and calls. When they realized the soldiers were a French Canadian Regiment the cheers turned to friendly jeers between the corvette and the soldiers in the troop ship.

The soldiers began to disembark into the waiting landing craft and in short order, lined up and began their race into the beachhead. As the soldiers of the regiment were sped in-shore, the entire crew of *Trentonian* called out in three cheers for their

Canadian brothers heading to the beaches.

With the maple leaf spreading throughout the RCN, Naval Headquarters issued an order in September 1944 that all RCN ships display a single green maple leaf on the funnel, standardizing what had become a new tradition.

Briefly following WWII, the maple leaf on the funnel disappeared. On 9 December 1949 the RCN officially adopted the practice of placing a single red maple leaf on the after most funnel or superstructure of all RCN ships. This tradition continues to today.

A Canadian warship is easily recognized around the world by the bright red maple leaf proudly displayed on her. A unique Royal Canadian Navy tradition, born during the First World War and revived during the Battle of the Atlantic in WWII, has become a living testament to honour the sacrifice and memory of the veterans that have served before them.

See Dave Freeman's book, *Designs of Distinction, Unofficial Badges of the RCN 1910-1948*, for further information about this colourful RCN legacy.



Wreaths Across Canada ceremony, National Military Cemetery - Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, 6 December, 2015.

## Wreaths program connects Canadians with war vets

by Craig MacFadgen

**O**n a bitterly cold Sunday, with bagpipes playing, pairs consisting of a Cadet and either a Veteran or currently serving military member, placed 115 balsam wreaths at the markers for Canada's Veterans at Fairview Cemetery in Halifax. Modeled on a similar program in the United States, the Wreaths Across Canada program is meant to inspire Canadians to make a personal connection with our veterans. Taking place on the first Sunday in December, the initial Wreaths Across Canada Service of Remembrance was held at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in St John's, NL with the inaugural National Service being held in 2011 at the National Military Cemetery, Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa. Following on chapters were established across the Country with Halifax being the most recent. The NS Chapter President, CPO1 Craig MacFadgen stated "whereas Ottawa typically will place 4000 wreaths, it is our intent to grow with each subsequent year spreading East and West across the Province". A registered charity, you can donate and learn more about the program at the following: <http://wreathscrosscanada.ca>

### Honour Poem

by Kathleen Mills

On my honour,  
we will stand at the place where you rest and  
remember you.

On my honour,  
we will pick up the torch of freedom and carry it  
for you.

On my honour,  
you will not be a silent memory,  
we will speak of you often so the world will know  
what you have done.

On my honour,  
as you reach the gates of heaven  
you will hear the voices of a grateful nation rise up  
and we will honour you.

And we will honour you.

Kathleen Mills wrote this poem for her husband, Col. Darryl Mills, of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry while he was serving in Iraq. The family is now in Canada where Mills is Commander of the Land Force Central Area Training Centre in Meaford ON.

*The poem is carried on the Wreaths Across Canada website.*

# Need to broaden vision for *Sackville*

## From Page 4

ship needed to keep her afloat for the next five years or so. Significant essential costs were incurred that did not fall within the scope of the grant. The Trust continues to be responsible for all operating expenses for the ship and administration.

The interim refit was essential to achieve a harbour sea-worthy hull to allow the continuation of our summer program and gain time to raise in the order of magnitude of \$10 million to replace the below waterline hull plating. Experts believe that renewing the underwater “skin” of the ship, followed by a sound maintenance program, should exceed the seaworthiness of the present hull. (Most of the hull plating is original; the ship was launched in May 1941).

It is intended that large scale capital funding program related to developing and presenting the story of Canada’s maritime heritage will be a coordinated effort among the partners. A steering committee will

be established by the partners to coordinate the development schedule and fund raising for the project, and to avoid any conflict regarding individual partner routine operational

fund raising requirements.

A strong national awareness created by our trustees and supporters across Canada and internationally will be the backbone of our success.



## Remembrance Day

Captain (N) John Pickford (ret'd), at right, a member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust Board of Directors lays a wreath on behalf of CNMT/HMCS *Sackville* during the Remembrance Day service at the Halifax (Sailors) Memorial in Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. The service under sunny skies was one of the largest attended in years. (Doug Struthers photo)



## Sail Past

HMC Ships *Halifax*, *Charlottetown* and *Toronto* sail past five cruise ships that brought more than 10,000 visitors to Halifax on October 10; it was the busiest day of the 2018 cruise season in Canada’s historic “East Coast port.”

(Doug Struthers photo)



## Onboard reception to thank Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott Team

HMCS *Sackville* was the appropriate venue for Captain (N) Dave Benoit, CO of Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott, HMC Dockyard to thank the workers who carried out the first phase of *Sackville*'s refit in 2018 (including sheathing the hull). It was also an opportunity for Commander Wendall Brown (ret'd), Chair of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and Lieutenant Commander Jim Reddy (ret'd), CO of *Sackville* to extend their thanks to the FMFCS workers, plus serving up Wendall Brown's traditional chili and biscuits. Among the attendees, front row from left: LCdr Reddy, Bob Naugler, project manager; Cdr Brown; Capt(N) Benoit; Cdr Bill Gard (ret'd), a former CO of *Sackville* and LCdr Doug Thomas (ret'd), Executive Director of CNMT. (Mona Ghiz photo)



# How the Memorial Trust helped restore and operate HMCS *Sackville*

by Len Canfield

The following narrative is a look back at the individuals and events that have been important in the acquisition and operation of Canada's Naval Memorial, HMCS *Sackville*. This feature will be serialized, with this first part going to 1991.

## Background

In the late 1970s/early 1980s a group of naval veterans (including Commander Latham B. (Yogi) Jensen and Captain (N) Vern Howland), along with officials of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and other supporters came together to identify and acquire one of the few remaining WWII corvettes that participated in the pivotal Battle of the Atlantic. The primary goal was to preserve and operate a corvette as a memorial and museum for the benefit of all Canadians and in so doing recognize the significance of the Battle of the Atlantic, the role of the Royal Canadian Navy and the service and sacrifice of our wartime sailors and members of the Merchant Navy.

## Sackville retires

In 1982, CFAV *Sackville* – formerly HMCS *Sackville* – was paid off as an acoustic research vessel. At this time, the newly established Canadian Naval Corvette Trust (CNCT) – supported by the Naval Officers Association of Canada and the Royal Canadian Naval Association – had entered

---

Mission:  
preserve and  
operate a  
corvette as a  
museum to  
recognize the  
Battle of the  
Atlantic

---

into negotiations to acquire *Sackville* and to restore the ship to her 1944 configuration.

## Sackville given to CNCT

On 28 Oct 1983, at a ceremony at Halifax Industries shipyard, the Government of Canada transferred title of ownership of *Sackville* to CNCT. Participating in the ceremony were Senator Henry Hicks, representing the Government; Vice Admiral James Wood, Commander Maritime Command; Edmund C. Bovey, CNCT Campaign Chairman and Commodore Andy McMillin, Chairman Halifax Working Group. During the ceremony a

\$24,751 cheque from serving members of Maritime Command (MARCOM) was presented to Campaign Chairman Bovey and Cmdre McMillin in support of the ship's restoration.

CNCT, with an office in Toronto, included political, business and naval leaders (serving and retired) across the country. Honorary Patrons included a former Governor General and several Lieutenant Governors. A national campaign to restore *Sackville*, directed primarily out of Toronto, raised approximately \$1 million. Exterior restoration work was carried out by contractors with Vern Howland serving as CNCT Project Manager and Commanding Officer of *Sackville*.

## Dedicated as Memorial

In May 1985, as part of the Navy's 75th Anniversary celebrations and with the major restoration work completed, HMCS *Sackville* was dedicated Canada's Naval Memorial at a ceremony in HMC Dockyard, with Defence Minister Erik Nielsen and senior naval leaders participating.

Vice Admiral J.A. (Andy) Fulton (Ret'd), former Commander Maritime Command (1980-83), was appointed Chair and in 1987 the name Canadian Naval Corvette Trust was formally changed to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT). A volunteer working group coordinated by Vern Howland undertook a number of interior restoration/refurbishment projects, including the wardroom, wireless office, CO's



HMCS *Sackville* at her summer jetty

cabin, removal of cabins built for scientists, wheelhouse, engine room and tiller flats. Members included Max Corkum, Ted Smith, Jim Bond, George Smith, Duncan Leslie, Dick Aldhelm-White, Rolly Edwards, Ross Wagner, Ian Urquhart, Rolland Vaillancourt, Frank Stolley (who also served as first editor of *Action Stations*) and Bob Connors.

### Living aboard

During the mid-1980s, the pressing financial requirement regarding the ongoing restoration of the ship was recognized and VAdm Fulton, as Chair, contacted the several hundred members of the Trust explaining the need to increase the annual donation to \$50 from \$25. At this time, the financial accounts of the

Trust were transferred to Halifax from Toronto and Captain (N) Kevin Power assumed the duties of Treasurer (from Ron King) and later as Secretary of the Trust. In addition, the need for a ship keeper was identified and Maurice McGaffney was retained and lived aboard.

### New Jetty

In 1988 the Commander Maritime Command, Vice Admiral Chuck Thomas, approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of *Sackville* (to a financial ceiling) on a long term basis. Also, the Federal and Nova Scotia Governments (the latter represented by the Waterfront De-

velopment Corp—now Develop Nova Scotia ) agreed to jointly fund a new jetty next to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, one side of which would serve as the summer berth of *Sackville*, and an adjacent interpretation centre. In 1990, Cmdre McMillin relieved VAdm Fulton as Chair of CNMT with Lieutenant Commander Max Corkum serving as CO. Kevin Power, who had served as Treasurer-Secretary and executive assistant to the Chair for six years was relieved as Secretary by Commander Russ Wilcox.

In 1991, the new jetty and interpretation centre (now NS Tourism) at Sackville Landing were completed, helping to increase the ship's profile and attraction for visitors.

# Life as a stoker in the North Atlantic

A proud veteran: Stoker First Class Davy Jones, RCNVR

by John D. Ayre

**T**he Simcoe (Ontario) newspaper had a photo on the front page of an older gentleman wearing his Royal Canadian Legion jacket and holding a poppy box prior to Remembrance Day. He wore several medals and they looked familiar. The article noted: “Davy Jones, 94 of Simcoe has been busy selling poppies on behalf of Legion Branch 79... (and) served aboard the corvette HMCS *Kamsack* K171 in the North Atlantic during the Second World War.”

I had to meet him! In the course of researching what I hope will be a book concerning my father’s ship during the war (the frigate HMCS *New Glasgow*), here was a veteran living in my community who knew ‘what it was like’. There aren’t many of them left but here was a member of the wavy-navy, the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) in my backyard. ‘Wavy’ was a term used because RCNVR officers sleeve rings were ‘waves’ to distinguish them from the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) regular force or Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (RCNR) officers. The president of the local Legion helped set up our meeting at a local fast food restau-



Davy Jones as new recruit aged 17 and today at 94

rant for lunch where it was soon clear Davy Jones (he prefers Dave) knew almost everyone and nearly everyone knew him.

HMCS *Kamsack* was one of the original series of corvettes built for the RCN. The Navy would begin World WarII with fewer than 3,000 men and a dozen ships but would end the war with almost 100,000 men and women and 400 ships. More than 120 of those ships were corvettes (mostly of the 205 foot Flower Class) and

thousands of Canadians served in them. Some were sunk by enemy U-boats (submarines). If hit by torpedo or sunk by mine some corvettes sank in under one minute. If you worked in the engine room or as a stoker in the boiler room like Davy it was a steep climb to the main deck (assuming you survived the explosion) with the prospect of leaping into a freezing and churning North Atlantic...and that was Davy’s job. He was a teenager and a stoker in the bowels of the ship.

The son of a Welsh coal miner the family immigrated to Canada in 1929 when Davy was five years old after the doctors had told Davy's father that he had to get out of the coal mines because of his lungs.

Davy tried to enlist at HMCS *Prevost* in London, ON when he was 16 but he couldn't carry it off and they told him to come back a year later... so he did. With his 17th birthday in 1942 he showed up again at the Navy recruiting office but this time in Hamilton, ON at HMCS *Star*. He had bro-

---

## At 17, he concealed an old injury to pass the medical

---

ken his wrist at age 12 and was unable to rotate his arm fully but being wise to the doctor examining him he simply turned his complete arm.

He told me that if he hadn't they wouldn't have let him join. He demonstrated this stand-up medical examination from over 75 years ago in the restaurant where we were eating but the other customers didn't seem to mind.

After training in Hamilton and Halifax he was rated as a stoker second class but before war's end he became a stoker first class. A first class Stoker was paid almost \$2 a day. I pointed out to him that his burger and



Stoker First Class Davy Jones, RCNVR,  
sells poppies for the Simcoe, ON, Legion

coffee cost twice that amount and it seemed an interesting sum to pay a volunteer who was risking his life. He smiled. And even though the RCN carried the tradition of a daily rum ration, he like many others was too young. You had to be 21 to get the rum ration.... too young to drink al-

cohol, but old enough to fight.

He didn't get sea sick, except once and thereafter never again but he saw others who were perpetually sea sick. The food was good and there was enough of it, a typical observation from a child of the depression grow-

**Continued on Page 22**



HMCS *Kamsack*

**From Page 21**

ing up in Brantford in the 1930s. Fresh food was somewhat scarce on board because of a lack of sufficient refrigeration for close to 100 men. Davy recalled that one time a barrel of fresh apples came aboard but they weren't doled out until late in the voyage and they were almost all rotten. How did they get by with lack of sleep, sunshine and fresh food I asked? 'We just did it, we were young' he said.

The officers and other crew members were good and he said that the secret was simply to keep your mouth shut and do as you were told. He dismissed as fiction the image of haughty officers as depicted in some of the movies. One got the impression that there was a strong streak of Canadian democracy at play between the decks.

His job as a stoker (actually he had two jobs on board) was to keep the boilers running. When he became a leading stoker in the engine room he monitored the distillers (evaporators)

---

How many  
could sleep  
below the  
waterline while  
others were  
trying to kill  
you?

---

which converted sea water to fresh water and the fresh water was for the boilers. *Kamsack* (named after a town in Saskatchewan) never had a problem with her distillers but he knew of other ships that did and if it was an issue of fresh water to drink or water for the boilers, the boilers came first. There was never water for bathing so

washing was limited to 'bird baths.' While in the boiler room he also monitored the oil pump and water gauge. It had to be kept at a certain level. Low oil meant a host of bad things such as engine failure which was never a good idea in U-boat infested waters. Upon being rated as leading stoker he moved to the engine room and also monitored the reciprocating engine that drove the ship.

I asked him about fatigue and he said that it wasn't too bad and that with the three watch system including two 'dog (two hour) watches' that you never worked the same hours and if lucky enough to have the watch from 2000 hours to midnight that there followed an eight hour period that might give you the longest rest period available. And there was no problem sleeping because he loved his hammock while at sea. I did ask him of an iconic photo showing the *Kamsack* stokers mess: Wasn't it true that sometimes while they ate another watch of men off-duty might



**Above:** Corvettes leave Halifax, April 1941. *Library and Archives Canada / PA105334*

**Right:** Convoy assembling in Bedford Basin, 1941. *Library and Archives Canada / PA128093*



be swinging in their bunks inches above their heads. ‘Yes.’ ...of course he answered’ as if that was a completely normal way to eat and sleep.

Were you scared to sleep? ‘No’ he said, ‘I got in my hammock, said my prayers and went to sleep’. I was left wondering how many of us could sleep soundly in a stokers mess and work in the boiler room and engine room, below the water line, while somewhere in the darkness on the other side of the hull of the ship were people trying to kill you?

In September 1939 Nazi Germany had only 18 U-boats fit and ready for duty in the North Atlantic. That number would rapidly grow resulting in an enormous number of ships torpedoed. By June 1943 there were 240 operational U-boats with 118 of them in the North Atlantic. As well, the Germans had even placed mines only 30 kms or so outside Halifax Harbour. That month *Kamsack* departed from Halifax along with two

## They fired depth charges for 48 hours at a submarine contact before oil came to the surface

other RCN vessels and enemy mines were spotted on the surface. And Davy didn’t wear a life vest. He noted that the small vests the stokers

were issued were useless and he tended to just hang his up on the oil pump.

When ‘Action Stations’ was called those who were not already on watch did not go to their usual stations... you only needed so many stokers in the engine room. Sailors were cross trained; some manned the guns; others handled the ammunition (the 31-lb 4-inch projectiles were manhandled up to’s main deck gun by hand).

Davy’s second job on board was with the depth charge throwers on the side of the vessel and rails on the stern. He and his comrades would, on command set the depth for the charge to explode having manhandled it by hoist (they were too heavy to lift) and on command fire and reload with the hoped-for result of driving off or sinking a U-boat.

**Continued on Page 24**

## Continued from Page 23

He recalled one incident in particular that having left a convoy and while in sight of the narrow approach to St John's harbour entrance 'Action Stations' was sounded and off to the depth charges he went. The sea was very rough and one other vessel, a British destroyer, was nearby. They had an asdic (sonar) contact with a U-boat and then the 'hunt to exhaustion' began. For 48 hours they manned the stern depth charge rails firing and reloading using most of their depth charges. Oil came to the surface which in his view had to come from the U-boat. But without debris or more wreckage the Admiralty would not give them a 'confirmed kill.' I detected from the way Davy related his story that he was sure they had got the intruder and *Kamsack* had scored a victory.

When Davy was serving in *Kamsack* the corvette was part of the Western Local Escort Force. The ship would depart New York or Halifax and take the convoy out into the Atlantic where the Mid Ocean Escort Force, usually made up of longer range frigates (like *HMCS New Glasgow*) and newer corvettes with extended range operated to take the convoys to the British coast. They would be out for a week or sometimes much longer before the handover. In late 1943 the ship underwent a refit in the Baltimore navy yards. Davy loved the kindness of the Americans and an occasional side trip to New York City. With the refit complete the ship returned to the North Atlantic in March of 1944.

The corvettes, represented today by *HMCS Sackville* in Halifax (and which Davy has visited) were built to mercantile specs, that is to say the hull design was that of a whaling vessel and was not specifically designed as a



*HMCS Kamsack* Monument dedication ceremony,  
20 May, 2016, *Kamsack Times*

warship. Later classes of corvettes gave them some increased speed and endurance but the Canadian Navy seemed to be the last to get the newest and best radar sets and other equipment. But the corvettes were at sea from late 1940 onward while 70 River Class frigates were constructed and launched at St. Lawrence River ports and at Esquimalt, BC in 1943-1944.

So for Davy it was convoy duty until the end of the war. As late as April 1945 RCN vessels were being torpedoed and sunk, with *HMCS Esquimalt* lost just a short distance off Halifax. And the Atlantic storms didn't stop when the deck heaved and dropped under your feet in every direction. Davy had passed as a petty officer stoker but war's end meant there were no billets (vacancies) in that trade. Finally it was over.

For Davy it was home, marriage (his wife had been a WREN), work, children and now (he said with great satisfaction) 10 great grandchildren. He played hockey until age 88. Sure there were a few things or names he couldn't remember but it was the

spark in his eyes when he spoke of past sailors and the sea that brought the events of 70 plus years ago to life. And most of the 100,000 members were RCNVRs. Some Reserve!

So it didn't bother the patrons of the restaurant when he stood up and demonstrated how he tricked the doctors at his physical. And I assumed they didn't mind when I sang (quietly) a few verses of the RCNVR song 'Roll along Wavy Navy' as my father had taught me the words. " Oh we joined for the money and the fun, oh we joined for the money and the fun, of the money there is none and the fun has just begun, roll along Wavy Navy roll along'

There is a monument in the Town of Kamsack built to honour its namesake ship. People like Davy are our living memorials. So next time you see a photo of an older man or woman selling poppies remember that it might be Davy or someone like him. Maybe they served in World War Two, or Korea or Afghanistan. Someone you would be privileged to meet as I was to meet Davy. And buy a poppy!

# The Thunderbird, the Quesnel, & the Sea

by **Bev Lundahl**

Published by  
Your Nickel's Worth Publishing

Review by **Keith Foster**

\$19.95 ISBN 978-1-988783-35-2

In *The Thunderbird, the Quesnel, & the Sea*, Bev Lundahl takes readers on an investigative journey to track down a stolen grave marker carved in the shape of a mythical Indigenous thunderbird. She invites readers to follow her leads, hoping to find the missing artifact but not knowing if it even still exists

During the dark years of World War II, while docked at Alert Bay on the coast of British Columbia, sailors from the Canadian corvette HMCS *Quesnel* removed the carving from the 'Namgis First Nation burial ground. The area was notable for its totem poles, and the crew wanted to distinguish their West Coast ship from East Coast ships. A thunderbird mascot would do just that.

The thunderbird was in such poor shape that the crew wasn't sure whether to fix it or simply discard it. They opted to repair and paint it and bolted it to the crow's nest on the mast. The *Quesnel's* captain, Murdo Smith, wanted the thunderbird off his ship, not because it was stolen, but because he believed it was a pagan idol. The crew persisted, and a near mutiny ensued. But the thunderbird remained.

Lundahl details the wartime history of the *Quesnel* and some of the perils it faced – a loose depth charge rolling haphazardly on deck, an ASDIC operator who was deaf in one



ear listening for the ping of submarines below, and a crack in the hull that allowed seawater to seep in.

The *Quesnel* saw service on both sides of the continent – tracking Japanese subs in the Pacific and German subs in the Atlantic, particularly in the St. Lawrence. By the time Germany surrendered, the *Quesnel* was in such bad shape that it wouldn't have lasted much longer.

Lundahl contacted former crew members to see what had become of the thunderbird when the ship was sold for scrap. She proposed to seek, find, and return the missing mascot. She had a personal stake in this matter – her father had served on the *Quesnel*.

Like any good detective, Lundahl visited the scene of the crime – the site of the theft – the gravesite of Michael Dutch. She also toured the grave of Murdo Smith, captain of the

*Quesnel*, who died in Bermuda under “controversial circumstances.”

The Thunderbird, the *Quesnel*, & the Sea is also a search for reconciliation. Lundahl travelled to Alert Bay, met Dutch's sisters and relatives, and learned about West Coast Indigenous culture and history. As a grave marker, this thunderbird was much more than a mere mascot. It marked the final resting place of a First Nations man who died in 1926 at age twenty-three.

Lundahl suggests that the federal government should apologize for the theft, replace it with a newly carved thunderbird, and pay for a potlatch ceremony to celebrate its return. Replacing the thunderbird may seem like a small gesture, but it would be one giant leap toward reconciliation. And it would allow Michael Dutch's spirit to rest at last.

This book is available from your bookstore or at [www.skbooks.com](http://www.skbooks.com)

# AOPV to be named HMCS *Margaret Brooke* after naval heroine



Cdr Michele Tessier will take command of HMCS *Margaret Brooke*, having previously commanded the MCDV HMCS *Nanaimo*. Women have now commanded frigates and MCDVs, but Cdr. Tessier will be the first CO of an AOPV.



**Above:** HMCS *Harry DeWolf*, launched in Halifax in August, 2018.

**Right:** *SS Caribou*.



Lieutenant Commander Margaret R. Brooke was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) during the Second World War for her heroic acts following the sinking of the ferry, *SS Caribou*.



**T**he RCN's newest class of warships, the Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels (AOPV) being constructed at the Halifax Shipyard, will bear the names of Canadian naval heroes who distinguished themselves during their naval and civilian careers.

With the launching of the first AOPV, HMCS *Harry DeWolf* in August 2018, the next AOPV will bear the name Margaret Brooke.

Lieutenant Commander Brooke was serving as a nursing sister when the Newfoundland ferry SS *Cari-bou* was torpedoed and sank in the Cabot Strait in October 1942 with the loss of 136 military and civilian passengers including children. She was decorated for gallantry (Order of the British Empire) trying to save fellow nursing sister Sub-Lieutenant Agnes Wilkie as they clung to a life raft in the frigid waters.

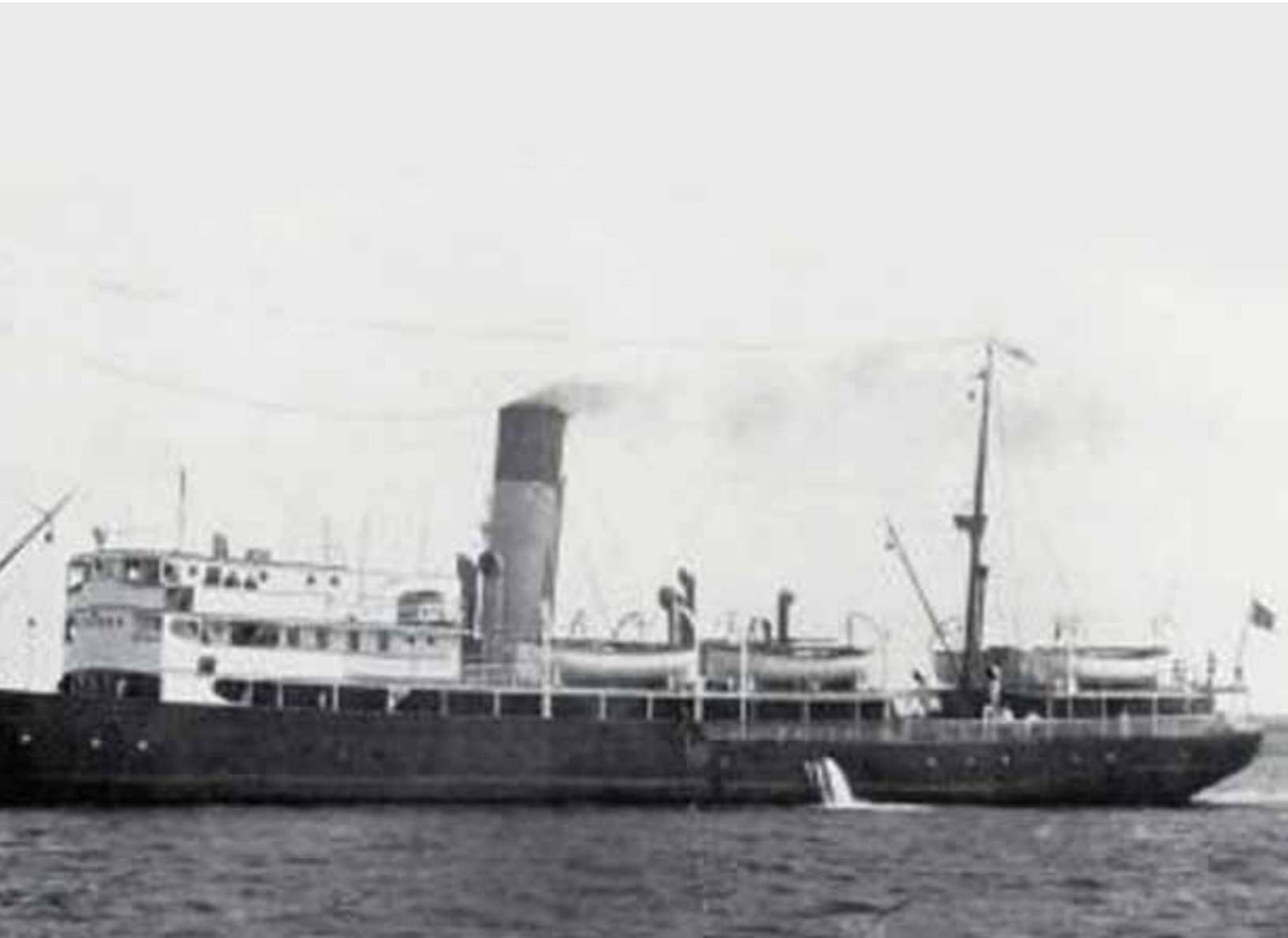
Following the war she remained in the Navy, retiring as a lieutenant commander in 1962. She then returned to her native Saskatchewan and pursued an aca-

demetic career earning a PhD (paleontology) from the University of Saskatchewan. She passed away in Victoria in January 2016 at age 100.

Margaret R. Brooke, Dr Brooke's niece and namesake, recounts a lighter part of how her aunt's ship-naming honour came about. When former Defence Minister Jason Kenney contacted 'Mrs' Brooke on her 100th birthday to advise her of the recognition, "My aunt gave the defence minister an earful when he phoned her. Well, she tore a strip right off him; she said my name is not Mrs Brooke. You can call me Miss Brooke or Dr Brooke but don't ever call me Mrs."

It is the first time a Canadian naval ship is named for a woman. Equally fitting, the first captain of the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke* will be a woman, Commander Michele Tessier.

In addition to Harry DeWolf and Margaret Burke, the other AOPVs will be named after Max Bernays, William Hall VC and Frederic Rolette



# UNTDA fundraiser supports HMCS Sackville

The University Naval Training Division Association (UNTDA) held a legacy fund-raiser at the Royal Canadian Military Institute, Toronto in March, 2018 for the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT) in support of HMCS *Sackville*. The event, organized by UNTDA Treasurer Ross Connell, raised \$3,000. Guest speaker for the evening was former Senator and Honorary Captain Hugh Segal. Vice Admiral Dean McFadden (ret'd), at right representing CNMT, presented HCapt Segal with the distinctive RCN Centennial rum decanter that features the Battle of the Atlantic, Sackville and the Merchant Navy. At a later date, UNTDA Vice President Graham Scott, below at right, presented a cheque to Commander Wendall Brown (UNTD Queen Charlotte 1958), chair of CNMT during a Sackville noon luncheon in Halifax.



## HNSA Educator Award

Wendall Brown presents the Historic Naval Ships Association (HNSA) Educator Award to Life Trustee Steve Rowland. Steve has contributed in a major way to the Trust, most particularly in recruiting, training, and organizing Duty Trustees and volunteer tour guides which resulted in markedly enhancing the visitor experience.



## Essay Award

Wendall Brown presented the CNMT Essay Competition first prize cheque to Adam MacDonald 12 December 2018 at the Trust's Christmas Reception on The Bridge at Juno Tower in CFB Halifax. Adam's essay makes a case for a Canadian sea-based ballistic missile defence capability in the new Canadian Surface Combatant, and will be in the February 2019 issue of the Canadian Naval Review. (Bill Gard photo)



## ***HMCS Midland***

HMCS *Midland*, a Flower Class corvette built in Midland, ON and commissioned in November 1941 at Montreal is shown alongside Halifax in 1942-1943. She was first assigned to the Western Local Escort Force escorting convoys on the

Triangle Run (New York, Boston, and St. John's). Later, while serving with Escort Group W2 in the St Lawrence she was credited with a probable U-Boat kill off Newfoundland. *Midland* was paid off in Sydney, NS in July 1945.

# New members of CNMT in 2018

## *Bravo Zulu and Welcome Aboard!*

### **Life Members**

Stephen Bloom, Halifax, NS  
Craig Bradley, Wallace, NS  
Millie Gregory, Rothsay, NB  
Gregory Haley, Ottawa, ON  
Elizabeth Lambie, Halifax, NS  
Alan Lane, San Diego, CA  
Richard Lee, Stewiacke, NS  
Peter Mitham, Vancouver, BC  
Carol Pattenden, Whitby, ON  
Paul Peacey, Saanichton, BC  
Steve Rowland, Hammonds Plains, NS  
Timothy Taft, Eastern Passage, NS  
Grant Thompson, Lower Sackville, NS  
Joost Ueffing, Hammonds Plains, NS

### **Annual Members**

Larry Ashley, Halifax, NS  
George Billard, Lower Sackville, NS  
Allen Boden, Halifax, NS  
Mike Bonin, Halifax, NS  
Beverly Charlton, Tantallon, NS  
Steven Clark, Upper Sackville, NS  
Max Clarkson, Flesherton, ON  
James Cummings, Halifax, NS  
Victoria Devenish, Portuguese Cove, NS  
Brian Eisan, Quispamsis, NB  
Tim Fotheringham, Middle Sackville, NS  
Ben Gibbons, Shearwater, NS  
Jim Gillis, Toronto, ON  
Daniel Herman Bedford, NS  
Adam Isenor, Elmsdale, NS  
Richard Legeer, Selbyville, QC  
Nigel Lindsey-King, Toronto, ON  
Lauren Marlin, Dartmouth, NS  
Vincent Masse, Saint Eustache, QC  
Carol Rowland, Hammonds Plains, NS  
Frances Thomas, Dartmouth, NS  
Jeff Topping, London, ON  
Earl Weir, Dartmouth, NS



## **Cessation of Hostilities Message**

Commodore Gerry Peer (ret'd), a former commanding officer of HMCS *Brunswicker*, Saint John, NB and Senior Naval Reserve Advisor, presented a copy of the message sent to the corvette HMCS *Arrowhead* ending hostilities against Germany effective 0001 09 May 1945 to HMCS *Sackville*. In his remarks at Sackville's Friday noon luncheon in early November he recounted reminiscences of *Arrowhead's* 1st Lieutenant. The message will be part of *Sackville's* wide-ranging collection of naval artifacts. Shown at left is LCdr Jim Reddy (ret'd), CO of *Sackville*.



## **CN Railroaders grant for ship**

Long-time Canadian Naval Memorial Trust member Barry Wile is one of HMCS *Sackville's* most active volunteers, including recently arranging financial support from the CN Railroaders in the Community program. The program approved a retired employee grant for \$500 submitted by CN retiree Barry on behalf of CNMT who has initiated this process a number of times in recent years. The organization noted: "CN is extremely proud of our retired employees who volunteer in our communities and celebrate their commitment for which they have volunteered at least 40 hours in a given calendar years."



HMCS *Halifax* passes under Tower Bridge in London



## Ceremony of the Constable's Dues

The ship's company of HMCS *Halifax* had the unique opportunity to participate in the occasional Ceremony of the Constable's Dues when the ship paid a courtesy visit to London in November. The ceremony dates to the 14th century during the reign of Richard II when it was determined that any large naval vessel that travelled upstream of the Thames to the Tower of London must pay a levy (keg of rum) to the Constable of the

Tower. It was one of the "privileges" enjoyed by the constables to recognize that the Tower provides protection for visitors. Led by the Royal Marines Band, the ship's company – under command of *Halifax's* CO Commander Scott Nelson – paraded to the Tower and duly presented the Constable's Dues. *Halifax* was in European waters at the time taking part in an international exercise.



## BoA Dinner

Patricia Martinson, centre, and fellow Trustees Sue and Bruce Moxley share memories of past Battle of Atlantic services and events during the Canadian Naval memorial Trust 2018 BoA dinner in The Wardroom, CFB *Halifax/Stadacona*. (Bill Gard photo)

## BoA Concert

It was a full house and a hand-clapping audience for the 20th annual Battle of the Atlantic concert of wartime and contemporary music by the Stadacona Band of the Royal Canadian Navy at the Halifax Central Library April 29. The concert, sponsored by HMCS *Sackville*, Canada's Naval Memorial, featured Liz Rigney with MCs Olga Milosevich and Duncan (Dusty) Miller. It was one of several BoA events and services held in late April/early May to observe the longest battle of the Second World War.



With HMCS *Kootenay* (258) alongside HMS *Drake*, Devonport, Plymouth, a naval ceremony was conducted to recognize and honor members of *Kootenay's* ship's company who perished during an explosion and fire in late October 1969; the Halifax-based destroyer was operating off the English coast at the time. Four of the crew were interred in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey; the service was attended by sailors, senior Canadian Forces and Royal Navy officers, government officials and dependents of the deceased.



## Remembering HMCS *Kootenay*

**S**teve Rowland had been in the Navy for less than a year when he was posted to HMCS *Kootenay* in May of 1968. Seventeen months later on Oct 23, 1969 the young seaman would undergo a life-changing experience when the destroyer suffered a gearbox explosion that claimed nine lives and injured 53 others. The ship was operating in European waters at the time.

"They were our mess mates, our ship mates and our friends...there is not a day goes by that I don't think of my 'big brother' mate Gary Hutton, and the others or that day," Steve, a member of the board of directors of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust recalls.

On the morning of the tragedy he had finished breakfast in the main cafeteria and was proceeding to the engine room to repack a leaking valve when the explosion occurred. He saw a solid wall of smoke moving forward and heard the pipe there was a fire in the engine room; he scrambled to find a Chemox (breathing apparatus) and lifejacket.

As Steve relates, "I was scared that morning (particularly when seeing flares being shot off the flag deck indicating the ship was in danger) but I had absolute confidence in the ship and the crew."

He continues: "The explosion and subsequent fire in the engine room changed the lives of everyone aboard; for me, one of the best

things came about is that we became a support group for each other. In addition to our annual remembrance a number of us gather for breakfast the first Thursday of each month."

On October 23, 2018 Steve was among the *Kootenay* survivors, naval and political officials who participated in a commemorative service at the Naval Fleet School Atlantic Damage and Control Training Facility *Kootenay*, Fergusons Cove, NS to mark the 49th anniversary of the explosion. He also spoke on the *Kootenay* tragedy and his experience at a public presentation at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

A 50th anniversary commemorative program of remembrance is planned for 2019.



**Below:**  
a newspaper account  
of Snowberry's  
encounter with a  
U-boat.



## HMCS Snowberry Gunner

**T**he late Max Michiel (shown kneeling at left of HMCS Cornwallis Kisby ring) served as a pom-pom gunner in HMCS Snowberry when the corvette HMCS Calgary and the frigate HMCS Nene engaged and

sank U-Boat 536 in November 1944 northeast of the Azores. Snowberry was commissioned in November 1940 and served throughout the Battle of the Atlantic. Michiel was working at a mine in the Kirkland Lake, Ontario gold fields when he joined

the RCN and returned to the mine following the end of hostilities. His son Patrick wanted the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust to have a memento from his father's wartime kit and has donated his sailor's knife, and other memorabilia for display.

# Convoy - A Night on the Atlantic

It's midnight on the Atlantic  
And we're bucking a head-on swell,  
We cling to a pump in the stokehold,  
For the plates are slippery as hell.

Finally the Red Watch relieves us  
And we drag our feet the stair,  
Blistering our hands on the hand rail,  
Cursing the stifling air.

We pause for breath on the fiddly,  
And stumble on some seaman there,  
He only moans and rolls over  
Because he's too tired to care.

I raise my face to the heavens,  
And feel the sting of the spray,  
Through my mind flashes picture on picture  
Of many a happier day.

The ship sways and turns at right angles ...  
We're doing a submarine sweep,  
Riding herd on that convoy, like a shepherd  
With a herd of wandering sheep.

Must think of those ships bound for Britain  
Loaded with the essentials of war;  
We'll just make sure that they're over  
And then we'll be back for some more.

We're jarred from our meditation  
By the sound of the action bell,  
We run and leap from the fiddly,  
And there's the howl of someone who fell.

We're never late for "stations",  
Because Jerry doesn't play;  
He strikes like a snake in the darkness,  
And softly slips away.

On the leeward side of the Convoy,  
A tanker breaks into flames;  
Probably oil for Britain,  
Probably fuel for her planes.

Now there's a black ship on a red ocean,  
And you think of the men that will die;  
There's a flash and a roar of "Old Gurtie"  
And a star shell lights up the sky.

They order a ten charge pattern,  
And your heart misses a beat;  
There's a funny feeling in your stomach,  
A crash and the scuffle of feet.

You fight and you heave on those charges,  
Against the roll of the ship,  
As you hoist to the cradle those heavies  
You pray that no one will slip.

There's a sudden slowing of engines,  
And the rev. counter gives a last ding,  
The water looks cold in the darkness  
While they wait up top for the ping.

We lay another pattern before the pipe "secure",  
Word comes down from the bridge that  
"We got him!"  
But no one knows for sure.

We fill the empty spaces  
And hope for a little sleep,  
But it's piped, "Stand to" till daylight,  
And we have a watch to keep.

Well, some say "Here's to our Corvettes",  
But I say, "Here's to our Crew",  
They come from the farms on the prairies,  
From the coast and the big cities, too.

Maybe they weren't always seamen  
Who sailed the bounding main,  
Still they make damn good fighters,  
And you can count on them all the same.

I know that we're not good sailors  
And convoying isn't much fun,  
But if we're lucky, we can stick it out,  
'Til the battle of the Atlantic is won.

And then it's back to Alberta,  
Give me a life that is free,  
Far from the cold Atlantic,  
Far from the sound of the sea.

Well, it's daylight on the Atlantic,  
And we're bucking a head-on swell;  
I cling to my pump in the stokehold,  
And the plates are slippery as hell.

**-Stoker A.V. (Ace) Craig, R.C.N.**



Return Undeliverable  
Canadian Address To:  
HMCS Sackville  
P:O Box 99000 Station Forces  
Halifax NS B3K 5X5

