

# ACTION STATIONS!

CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL MAGAZINE

Volume 35 - Issue 2  
Summer 2016



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Volume 35 - Issue 2  
Summer 2016

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## Our Cover

### **Second Subaltern Elizabeth Windsor**

Our cover honours Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, her 90th birthday and her service. As an 18-year-old princess the Queen joined the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service during World War II serving as a mechanic and military truck driver. She is the only living head of state who served in World War II.



# From the Chair by Captain ret'd Byran Elson



HMCS Sackville has been awarded a Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor for the 4th year in a row. L-R, Sackville's skipper Jim Reddy, CNMT Chair, Captain (N) ret'd Bryan Elson, Jack the Sailor, His workshop Mike Savage and Board Member Neil Black

Dear Trustees and Friends of the Canadian Memorial Trust.

**A**t the recent AGM, I was returned as a Director and subsequently elected by the Board to the position of Chair. Newly elected directors included Wendall Brown (Vice-Chair), Peter Stoffer, Roger Chiasson, Steve Rowland, Gordon Burns, and Bert Walker. Resignations were Bruce Belliveau, Myra Freeman and Peter Butler.

I would like to thank the Trustees and Directors for their expression of confidence, and I commit to doing my best to justify their support. I would be remiss if I did not once again express our great appreciation for the dedicated services of my predecessor, Commodore ret'd Bruce Belliveau over the last two and a half years. Thanks largely to his efforts the Trust finds itself in a solid position as we face the future. Personally as well as on behalf of the entire membership I wish him continuing success in his second career.

At the time of the last Chairman's Action Stations letter we were looking forward to our traditional

Battle of the Atlantic (BOA) commemoration, centering on the Battle of the Atlantic Dinner and Concert. These activities once again enjoyed their usual success. As usual, it was the tireless work of a limited number of volunteers (we all know who they are) that made this success possible, reminding us that our activities are strictly limited by the level of support. In this connection it was good to see the number of trustees who have signed up to be Trust hosts on visitor days. Aably organized by Bert Walker, along with the paid staff, they processed more than 1300 guests on Canada Day. The ship has again been recognized by Trip Advisor as one of the top ten tourist draws in the city. His worship Mayor Savage was kind enough to present a suitable certificate at a small ceremony in the mess. Spearheaded by Neil Black and Steven Rowland the Trust has applied for a license to operate a Chase the Ace lottery, in partnership with the Halifax Casino. No guarantees, but the potential is exciting.

Technical issues have delayed our scheduled docking, but there is no immediate concern. All in all, the next few months should be smooth sailing, *so steady as she goes.*

# Captain's Cabin

by Lieutenant Commander ret'd Jim Reddy

It is mid-July and Sackville has been on the waterfront for almost a month. Visitor numbers are up following a Nova Scotia trend reflecting good weather and a weak Canadian dollar which is attracting our US neighbours and keeping Canadians at home.

We had wintered safely in the Dockyard but unfortunately, the expected, major docking preservation work of this past winter did not occur. The technical surveying and planning had been done and we had expected to be lifted out on the Navy syncrolift for a major, underwater hull renewal. However, among other complications, the syncrolift itself remains out of service. This has become an issue for the Navy's own work and as a result, we now expect to dock this coming winter. The delayed docking work also resulted in *Sackville* having to be replaced in the BOA underway ceremony for the second consecutive year. On the positive side, HMCS *Montreal* carried out the committal service on May 1<sup>st</sup> with willingness, professionalism and style. Engaging an operational RCN frigate in our traditional ceremony gave considerable visibility to our own heritage theme both within the Fleet and at Point Pleasant.

Because the docking and its associated hull painting did not occur, we were faced with preparing the ship on our own for the summer season. Chief Engine Room Artificer Pat Devenish stepped up and coordinated six weeks of contracted steel repair and painting the ship before a new Chief Boatswain's Mate (CBM) and assistant to replace Mike Muldoon who retired after 13 years on the job - could be hired. Our new CBM is recently retired CPO2 Danny Rowe assisted by former Navy PO2 Kevin Waterman.

With our increasing concern over the state of the ship's underwater hull, some years ago we installed an automatic bilge pump that I'm happy to report has never activated on its own. Nevertheless, we have just installed an additional and independent alarm that will warn of a rising water level by way of telephoning four contacts. This has been set to work by Wendall Brown.



As we settle into the summer season we have a varied "ship's company" in place with gangway and maintenance staff provided by a handful of loaned RCN sailors, two student visitor guides and our Gift Shop/Ticket Sales team. We also have in place a new and improved "Duty Trustee" organization coordinated by Bert Walker.

As you see in the photos we've enjoyed some notable, recent visitors. LGen Romeo Dallaire, well known soldier, senator and humanitarian visited while working locally with his Dalhousie University Child Soldier Initiative. The family photo below from Canada Day shows the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Max Corkum, BOA veteran and past Captain of the restored HMCS *Sackville*. Max served in the corvette *Moose Jaw* including a D-Day operation. He was an inspiration to us all as a exemplary Nova Scotian and Canadian. To have his family onboard on Canada Day underlined the meaning of our ship to our country.



# Executive Director's Report

*Do You Hear There?*



*Julia Thomas from Oakville thrilled to meet a well-known duck sweeping-up "A Sack-Full of U-boats!"*

**Battle of the Atlantic Concert:** Our annual concert at the Spatz Theatre on 26 April was another big success, with excellent music from the superb Stadacona Band, and great performances by soloists and two choirs from the Halifax Schools Music Program. This was the last concert with LCdr Ray Murray in command of the STAD Band, and the Trust presented him with a letter of appreciation and a complimentary membership at his retirement function. We have already started planning for the 2017 Concert, which will be at the same venue on the 2nd of May 2017. Please mark it on your calendar and come with family and/or friends – this concert is a truly wonderful event with new music and performers each year.

**Volunteers needed:** We could really use a "Ready-use Locker" of volunteers. If you would be willing to have your name on this list, then I would contact you regarding availability for a particular project. If you were not available, I would go to the next name on the list. This approach has been successful with local yacht clubs.

**DEFSEC 2016** – we will be moving to the Cunard Centre at Pier 23 for the period 6-8 September as in past years. We will need a few of you to man our display, and help host the "Hour of Good Cheer" Reception onboard HMCS Sackville on the 7th. Please contact me if you are interested.

**Action Stations:** We are looking for a new Editor or Assistant Editor. Because the current editor, Pat Jessup, is involved in so many other activities onboard HMCS Sackville, without any additional help, she cannot keep up the pace of four issues a year. At the June AGM, it was agreed that three issues would have to suffice until someone steps up to assist/replace Pat. Please let it be known if you have an interest in helping with the production or publication of our magazine.

**Naval Heritage Calendar:** Our 2017 calendar is now available from our gift shop and will be sent to CANEX outlets in Halifax, Ottawa, Esquimalt and CFB Borden in the near future. I can tell you that the calendar is "a keeper" for all Trustees, and it is also an excellent souvenir for visitors. It highlights the war-time experiences of L.B. "Yogi" Jenson with some of his superb drawings from "Tin Hats, Oilskins & Seaboots" while still providing a calendar for reference and reminders, significant naval dates, and interesting snippets. We need more of you to buy our calendars – for yourself and as a gift to friends and relatives.

Thanks to the support of Peter Mielzynski Agencies (PMA) we are able to offer this calendar for \$9.99, tax included – consider buying more than one! We also need your feedback and input to enhance future issues: suggestions, photos, and short "Salty Dips" are most welcome.



*Yours aye,*

Doug Thomas  
execdir@canadasnavalmemorial.ca  
902-721-1206 (weekday mornings)

# Crossed the Bar

**Grace Olive Acheson** passed away in Ottawa



Feb 28 at age 94. She was predeceased by her husband James, infant son John and siblings Milburn, Ruth and Wilma; survivors include children Virginia Maclatchy and James Acheson and several grandchildren.

**Benjamin William (Bill) Bint**, a veteran of WWII



who survived the sinking of HMCS *Athabaskan* in 1944 and subsequent time in a German POW camp passed away in Calgary March 6 at age 92.

Following the war he graduated in geological engineering and had a lengthy career in the oil industry in Canada and internationally. He was predeceased by his wife Helen, sisters Ellen, Dorothy and Bernice and brother Joseph; survivors include his children Sharon, Bev, Bill and Joey and a number of grandchildren.

**Roger Joseph Boutin** of Lower Sackville, NS, whose public service career included 37 years with the RCN and Canada Customs passed away



March 11 at age 83. He was an active volunteer in his church and community, 4th degree member of the Knights of Col-

umbus, a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Atlantic Chief and Petty Officers Association and Trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. Survivors include his wife Jeannie, children Pat, Judy, Vicky, Dorothy-Ann, Ted, Lee and Tracey; and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren; he was predeceased by brothers Leo, Edgar, Arthur and Ron.

**Daniel Leonard "Dan" Canfield** passed away in



Newmarket, Ont., June 2, 2016, after a lengthy illness. Dan was born in Halifax in 1965, son of Leonard and Mary Canfield. He grew up in Clayton Park, graduated from Halifax West High School and was a keen competitor in hockey and other sports. Following graduation from Saint Mary's University with a bachelor of commerce degree, Dan moved to Ontario

and commenced a career in the insurance industry. In addition to his parents, he is survived by his sister, Monica (Dennis); nieces, Amanda, Cassandra and Brittany, and special friend, Elisabeth.

**Wayne William Furtney**, CNMT Trustee, Dartmouth, passed away peacefully surrounded by



loved ones on Sunday, June 5, 2016 in the Halifax Infirmary, QE II at 68. Wayne was an avid volunteer onboard HMCS *Sackville* completely revamping the carpenter's space. Born Preston, Ontario, Wayne is survived by his wife, Diane "Sweetie"; daughter, Susan (George); 3 grandchildren, 3 great

grandchildren, and first wife, Cindy. Cremation has taken place. At Wayne's request there will be no memorial service. Burial at sea to follow. Donations may be made in Wayne's memory to HMCS *Sackville*, Canada's Naval Memorial Trust or RCNA Peregrine or any RCL Branch.

**Dr. Verdun P. (Don) Gilbert**, who served as an officer in HMC Ships *Brantford* and *Magog* during



the Second World War including *Magog* being torpedoed in the St Lawrence in 1944 passed away in Toronto March 14 at

age 100. He was working as a teacher and principal on Vancouver Island when he joined the RCNVR. Following the war he studied dentistry and practiced in Port Alberni, BC. He then pursued further training and practiced orthodontics in Toronto for 25 years and served at the University of Toronto dental school. Survivors include children Shirley and Barry and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Lieutenant Commander Sidney C. Gould, CD (ret'd)**, who served in the Royal Navy during



the Second World War and transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy in 1954 passed away April 29 in Halifax at age 93. Born in Barking, Essex, England his wartime service included the North and South Atlantic and the far East. After joining the RCN he was commissioned and served in HMCS *Mag-*

*nificent*, *Stadacona*, *Cayuga*, *Terra Nova*, *Settler*, *Sussexvale*, *Beacon Hill* and with the Sea Training

Unit Pacific as senior staff officer and staff officer operations; his last appointment was at National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa. In civilian life, he held a master home trade steamship certificate of service/master foreign-going steamship and was employed with the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and HMC Dockyard. He was a Life Member of the CNMT, a member of the Naval Association of Canada, the Company of Master Mariners and actively supported the Missions to Seafarers. He was predeceased by his wife Esther.

**Leading Airwoman Betty Ann Jessup**, born in Almonte, Ontario, served at RCAF Station



Dartmouth as a Wireless Operator Ground. After the war, she entered training at Wellesley Hospital in Toronto, graduating as a registered nurse in 1949. She worked for many years at Anson General Hospital in Iroquois Falls, ON, before taking up the position of nursing director at South Centennial Manor. Betty passed away

on 10 May, 2016 at the age of 91. A favourite aunt, she was predeceased by her parents, her brother P/O Carl Thomas Edward Lee – shot down over Germany on 29 January 1944, daughter Christine Lee, in 1987, and is survived by her husband Murray, children, Clifford Sydney Lee (Patricia, of Saskatoon), Lynda Lee (Jeffrey Brisson, of Kingston), and Ann Elizabeth Lee (Philip Parry, of Barrie); her two grandchildren, Georgina Whittaker (Robert, of Innisfil) and Alexander Scott, of Barrie, and one great-grandchild, Keeley Ann Whittaker.

**Diana Marie Elise Jessup**, born and raised in Iroquois Falls, Ontario, passed away in Halifax on July



29, 2016 at the age of 89. Diana loved her family, golf and the family cottage at Nellie Lake. She was especially proud of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She loved Christmas lights, going to the Dairy Queen, bonfires,

Tom Hanks movies, ABBA, walking, tinkering on the piano, knitting, sewing and in later years, needlepoint. Diana was predeceased by her husband Vernon, RCNVR; her parents Armand and Isola Gauthier and brother Gerald. She is survived by her children Pat (Jim Reddy), Hali-

fax; Jayne (Richard Bissonnette), Burnaby, BC and Vernon (Lynne Chouinard), Cooks Brook, NS; grandchildren Rory Miller (Susan Crocker), Shane Miller (Ali Byrne), Meghan Miller, Samantha Bissonnette (Stuart Adamson), Kirby Bissonnette and Hunter Jessup; and her great grandchildren Kate, Bryanna, Jules and Lochlainn.

*If desired, memorial donations in support of brain cancer research would be greatly appreciated. <https://donate.sunnybrook.ca/braincancerresearch>*

**Surgeon Captain Derek John (Piet) Kidd (ret'd)**, DSC, OMM, OSJ, CD, a veteran of WWII who



was recognized for his research in naval diving passed away in Victoria in April at age 95. Born in London, England he joined the RNVR in 1940 as a seaman and served in North Atlantic (Arctic convoys), Mediterranean and Pacific theatres. Following

the war he trained as an orthopedic surgeon in London, joined the RCN in 1954 and served as principal medical officer aboard HMCS Labrador (1954-56). In 1957 he was appointed chairman of the Defence Research Board. He later was officer-in-charge of the RCN Personnel Research Unit, Institute of Aviation Medicine, Toronto tasked with creating a Canadian naval research diving facility. His research (with Roy Stubbs) in hyperbaric medicine resulted in the invention of the analogue decompression computer as well as other devices for life support and management of casualties in the field. He retired in 1979 as chief medical officer, Maritime Forces Pacific. He was a member of the Canadian Naval Divers Association. Survivors include his wife Patricia, sons Derek (Darci) and Adam, and half-sisters Diana and Patricia; he was predeceased by his first wife Vera (1981).

**Isobel Rosemary McCain-McMillin** of Fred-



erickton, active in church, community organizations and charitable causes; a Life Trustee of the CNMT and widow of Commodore Andrew McMillin, a past chair of the Trust, passed away May 27 at age 89. She trained as a registered nurse and after marriage to Robert McCain settled in

Florenceville, NB. Following his death she later married George Gyetvai. She was predeceased by brother Gordon, son Kirk and husbands Robert, George and Andrew; survivors include her siblings David, Gordon, Donal, Maclure and Audrey and her children and their spouses.

**Ronald (Ronnie) Meyers**, a former member of the Navy and employee of the City of Halifax and well-known fastball pitcher passed away in Halifax May 27 at age 79. He was well-known as a pitcher for the Halifax Schooners and was inducted into the NS Sports Hall of Fame. He is survived by his wife Madeline, seven children and siblings including Life Trustee Michael, Halifax. Burial will be at sea at a later date.



**Commander Allison Hugh (Al) MacLeod (ret'd)**, who served as an army gunner during the latter part of the Second World War and would serve in the RCN for 28 years as a logistics officer at sea and ashore passed away July 12 in Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Building, Halifax at age 89. Following hostilities, he



attended Mount Alison University, joined the UNTD and following graduation transferred to the RCN. Among his favorite postings was with the US Navy in Bremerton and Seattle, Wash. Following retirement from the Navy he was employed in real estate, taught business and joined the federal public service as an economist and then material control officer at CFAD Bedford where he ended his lengthy career as acting superintendent at the Magazine Hill depot. He was active in a number of naval and military support organizations including the NS Naval Association of Canada (former NS Naval Officers Association) and the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. He was predeceased by his first wife Therese, son Robert and daughter Suzanne; survivors include daughter Heather, sons John, David, Paul and Doug and wife (separated) Arabel. Donations may be made to the CNMT/HMCS Sackville.

**Peter Mielzynski**, prominent in the Canadian beverage industry and a pioneer in the Ontario industry died April 7 in Burlington, ON at age 94. Born in Kusowo, Poland he immigrated to Canada from war-torn Poland in 1946. He worked in sales at Eaton's and with Encyclopedia Britannica and landed his first job in the wines and spirits industry at McGuinness Distillers in 1957. He became president and helped build McGuinness into one of the largest wines and spirits companies in Canada. After leaving McGuinness in 1978 he founded PMA (Peter Mielzynski Agencies) in 1979, one of the leading wines and spirits agencies in Canada. He also founded Hillebrand Estates Winery (now more commonly known as Trius Winery) in 1980 in Niagara-on-the-Lake and helped build the Ontario wine industry. He spent nearly 60 years in the Canadian wine and spirits industry creating and building companies and brands. In 2014 he was honoured as "Canadian Immigrant of the Year" through RBC. He is survived by his wife Cecile, sons Peter (CNMT Life Trustee), Robert, Andrew and six grandchildren.



**Captain Robert A.F. Montgomery**, RCN (ret'd), CD, QC and CNMT Trustee, passed away in



Calgary April 2, 2015 at the age of 86. He was the dearly loved husband of Margaret (nee Macleod), the proud father of Fraser, Heather and Scott (Sheila), as well as a fun loving and cherished grandpa. Bob was born in Toronto on July 5, 1928, the son of Archibald and Margaret Montgomery. He was educated at St. Andrew's College, Aurora, ON, Royal Canadian Naval College, HMCS Royal Roads, Victoria, B.C., Queen's University, Kingston, ON, and the University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. He was a Cadet at Royal Roads Naval College 1945-47, and served in various ships and Naval Reserve Divisions, including HMCS *Tecumseh* as CO (1967-1970), until 1982 when he retired as a Captain upon being appointed to the Court. The practice of law took him to Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary, finally ending his career as a Justice of

the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. He served his church, his community, his country and his profession in many different capacities. Through his unceasing love for the Navy he was fondly known to many as the "Commander". A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance was held at Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary 13 April 2015; interment followed at Queen's Park Cemetery.

**Ruth (Hurley) Oland**, active in a number of community organizations and mother of CNMT Life Member Richard Oland passed away in Halifax May 23 at age 87. Born in Glen Ridge, NJ she was a graduate of Trinity College, Washington, DC and worked at Graybar Electric-



al, New York City and with the Catholic Relief Services in Salzburg, Austria screening refugees in the post Second World War period. On returning to New Jersey she married Bruce Oland and moved to Halifax in 1956. She had an abiding interest in mental and brain disorders and served as president of the former NS Division of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (now known as the Canadian Association for Community Living) and the National Board and was active in the Children's Hospital Auxiliary and the Regional Residential Services Society. She was predeceased by her husband Commodore Bruce Oland, infant son Keith and brothers William and Richard; in addition to her son Richard a CNMT Director, survivors include daughter Deborah, several grandchildren, brothers James and Philip, and sister Margaret.

**Chief Petty Officer Dennis Beaumont Shaw** of Dartmouth, NS, a Royal Navy veteran of the Second World War who would later serve in the Royal Canadian Navy and was active in a number of church, community and military support organizations passed away March 20 at age 93. A native of Worcester, Eng he served in the RN in



the Mediterranean, Indian, Atlantic, Middle East and Pacific theatres of operation. After the end of hostilities he transferred to the RCN and served

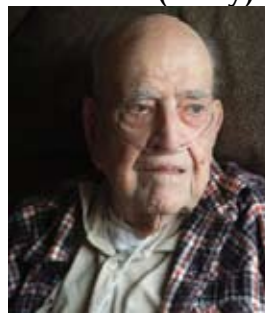
until 1971 at which time he became a training manager with the NS Power Corporation. He actively supported the Anglican Church of Canada, the Masonic Order, the Atlantic Chapter of the Canadian Naval Air Group and served as national president (1990), Shearwater Aviation Museum and the Royal Canadian Legion. During the 1940s he was instrumental in the formation of the Shearwater Players and produced, directed and appeared in a number of naval theatrical productions; he was also a popular master of ceremonies for local theatre productions. He was predeceased by his wife Helen; survivors include sister Doreen, son Robert, daughters Barbara, Joanne and Wendy; several granddaughters and a great-grandson.

**Timothy John Walker**, son of CNMT Trustee Albert (Bert) Walker, passed away in Edmonton, AB Feb 24 at age 55. He was employed by ESRI Canada, a distributor of enterprise geographic information system solutions and active in the community, including the Edmonton youth basketball program. He was



predeceased by his mother Patricia; in addition to his father, survivors include his wife Debbie, children Jordan, Lindsay and Dayna; brother Mike and sister Kelly. Donations may be made to the Jerry Forbes Centre Foundation, Edmonton.

**Lawrence (Larry) Weldon**, RCNVR and Canadian Naval Memorial Trust Life Member passed away in Mississauga, Ontario in June at age 90. He was predeceased by his wife Beatrice (Bea) and brother Murray and sister Maxine; survivors include brother Maurice, sister Dorothy and a number of nieces and nephews.



*On occasion we miss the passing of a member of the Navy family. If you see that someone has not been recognized, please let us know. ed.*



HMCS Sackville (K181) 1942, Ozzie Jones

## THE SUMMER OF '42: A STORY OF HMCS SACKVILLE by Carl Anderson

For every ship, large or small, engaged in the Battle of the Atlantic, there are countless stories. This is the story of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) Flower Class corvette HMCS *Sackville*'s first summer as a convoy escort vessel - the summer of 1942, as recorded in her deck log, in official RCN documents, and by her commanding officer Alan Easton in his memoir *50 North: Canada's Atlantic Battleground* (1963).

### Part 3 - Board of Enquiry and Honours

HMCS *Sackville* arrived at her home port of St. John's two days after her engagement with enemy submarines on 3 August 1942. She belonged to Escort Group C-3 of the Mid-Ocean Escort Force which was next scheduled to join convoy HX 202 on 12 August. *Sackville* began to prepare by taking on fuel, provisions, and ammunition.

On 8 August a Board of Enquiry was convened in St. John's to establish the facts of *Sackville*'s attacks on three enemy U-boats while escorting the westbound Allied convoy ON 115. The Board consisted of its president, Captain E.R. Mainguy, RCN, and two Royal Navy Lieutenant Commanders, A.B. Alison and P.M. Bliss. Nine members of *Sackville*'s company were questioned, starting with her Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Alan H. Easton, RCNR.

Easton described how he had attacked three enemy submarines encountered on the surface on 3 August 1942. In response to the Board's questions he recounted his unsuccessful attempt to ram the first U-boat followed by three depth

charge attacks, the last of which was at the position of a diesel oil slick suspected to be from the submerged U-boat. He described the crash dive two hours later of the second U-boat and the depth charge attacks that followed. Responding to questions about the third submarine, Easton recounted his efforts to bring *Sackville*'s gun to bear on the U-boat and shelling the sub at close range, resulting in a 4" explosive shell striking its conning tower.

The Board then questioned eight other men who had witnessed the actions from different vantage points. Three witnesses described that after *Sackville*'s depth charge attacks on the first submarine it was "blown to the surface" just by the ship's starboard quarter, the forward part of the hull coming up out of the water at a very steep angle. Witnesses also stated that a depth charge exploded under the sub as it plunged beneath the surface again. The men could add little to Easton's testimony about the second U-boat because it had crash dived when it was discovered and there was no evidence *Sackville*'s depth charge attacks had caused any damage. When questioned about the shelling of the third U-boat, witnesses described seeing *Sackville*'s 4" shell explode on impact with the submarine's conning tower and the presence of a cloud of yellow smoke.

After deliberation, the Board submitted its findings to Captain (D) on 13 August 1942. In the Board's opinion HMCS *Sackville* probably sank the first U-boat, did not damage the second, and "caused considerable damage to the conning tower of the third U-boat but probably did not sink it." *Sackville* departed St. John's on

11 August to join the fast eastbound convoy HX 202 which was picked up the next day in heavy fog. Escort Group C-3 shepherded the convoy to a mid-ocean meeting point where HX 202 was exchanged for the westbound convoy ON 121 which had been brought to that point by seven Royal Navy escorts. Group C-3 then put about for the return voyage to Newfoundland. HMCS *Sackville* detached from ON 121 on 22 August with steering problems and proceeded to St. John's where she arrived the next day.

*Sackville* put to sea for engine trials on 30 August and exercises on 1 September. With Escort Group C-3 she then joined convoy SC 98 eastbound from Sydney, Cape Breton, to Liverpool. For the next nine days, *Sackville* screened the convoy on its port bow and port beam. At times heavy fog was encountered and on 8 September the ship was rolling heavily in very rough seas and gale force winds. Upon entering Loch Foyle on 11 September, *Sackville* went aground, or, as her log keeper wrote, she "tutched bank". She got herself off without assistance by going slow ahead with helm hard to port, and then proceeded ahead at half speed while her bilges and tanks were sounded. No water was seen but her asdic dome appeared to be leaking. Safely back in the channel, *Sackville* took on fuel from a tanker at Moville near the mouth of Loch Foyle, and proceeded on the 12th to Londonderry where ratings and officers were given four days leave. Lt. Easton later learned that his navigation error was due to *Sackville's* uncorrected chart showing channel buoys that had in fact been removed. He had not been the only skipper to make that mistake, and fortunately the bank had been sand rather than something much less forgiving.

The summer of 1942 was coming to a close. *Sackville* returned to St. John's on 28 September with the westbound convoy ON 131. She spent the fall of that year on escort duty with Group C-3 making two further round-trips between Newfoundland and the United Kingdom. Of the 358 ships escorted across the Atlantic that fall by Group C-3 (196 eastbound, 162 westbound), only two ships were torpedoed, of which only one sank.

HMCS *Sackville's* only casualty of 1942 was on the last day of her final eastbound convoy of the year. On 14 October convoy HX 210 was battling strong wind and rough seas about 30 n.m. SSW of Barra Head, the southern tip of Scotland's Outer



Lieutenant Commander Alan Easton

Hebrides. *Sackville's* log keeper wrote "2120 hrs, heavy roll to port, much water in waist." Nearly an hour later *Sackville's* after lookout, Able Seaman Gordon Cartwright, was reported missing. The ship was searched, but he was not found. Easton wrote in 50 North that an inspection of the quarter deck revealed the starboard bulwarks were bent inwards, the plating of the Lewis gun platform was flattened, and the port life raft was missing. A huge wave must have swept the stern of the ship from starboard to port, damaging her superstructure and sweeping Able Seaman Cartwright overboard. *Sackville*, *Agassiz*, *Wetaskewin*, and *Galt* searched for the missing man, but within an hour the heavy seas and strong wind forced them to abandon their efforts. The escort force

force made port in Greenock, Scotland, the next day, and a memorial service was conducted for AB Gordon Cartwright aboard HMCS *Sackville* on Friday 16 October.

On 16 November, as *Sackville* joined the slow eastbound convoy SC 109, Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa announced that King George VI had approved awards for three RCN Flower Class corvettes: HMCS *Sackville*, HMCS *Buctouche*, and HMCS *Pictou*.

*Sackville's* awards were for her action against the enemy on 3 August 1942 while escorting convoy ON 115. The honours recognised the courage, skill, and devotion to duty of *Sackville's* commander, her gunners, depth charge parties, and an engine-man during the action. Commanding Officer Lt. Alan Herbert Easton, RCNR (Temp), was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for:

*"distinguished services before the enemy ... when a U-boat was sighted on the surface [and] he immediately shaped course to ram and through skilful handling of his ship and devotion to duty contributed to the almost certain destruction of one enemy U-boat and the probable damaging of another."*

Prompt action manning the ship's 4" gun during the actions merited awards for Acting Leading Seaman Kenneth Allyne Medford, RCNVR, (Distinguished Service Medal), Lieutenant Anthony George Osburn, RCNVR, (Mention in Dispatches), and Able Seaman George Joseph Saunders, RCNVR, (Mention in Dispatches). For training and leading the ship's depth charge party and depth charge re-loading party during the actions Sub-Lieutenant Neil Henley Chapman, RCNVR, and Acting Stoker Petty Officer James Henry Allison, RCNR, each earned Mention in Dispatches. For his devotion to engine room duties and prompt response to engine orders during the

enemy engagement, Engine Room Artificer 4th Class Robert Innes Stuart, RCNVR, was awarded a Mention in Dispatches.

Following the safe delivery of convoy SC 109, HMCS *Sackville* returned home to Halifax on 26 December 1942 after her last westbound convoy of the year, ON 152. She proceeded to Liverpool NS on 13 January 1943 to commence a two-month long refit. On 10 April 1943 Lt. Easton



turned over command of HMCS *Sackville* to Acting Lt. Cmdr. Angus Hetherington Rankin, RCNVR. Then, very much reminiscent of the start of her Summer of '42, HMCS *Sackville* spent two weeks working up in St. Margaret's Bay NS, then sailed east to St. John's to begin North Atlantic ocean escort service once more.

## Epilogue

In January 1943 the U.S. Committee on Assessment of Damage to Enemy Submarines reviewed the evidence of *Sackville's* probable sinking of one submarine and damaging another. In the case of the U-boat brought to the surface by *Sackville's* repeated depth charge attacks just after midnight of 3 August 1942, the committee concluded that "although the testimony concerning evidence of wreckage is slight, the circumstances of the attack being conducted at night preclude to some degree all observers seeing the same thing. The committee was impressed with the accuracy of the attack, which, combined with the circumstantial evidence of the attack and the testimony of an Able Seaman decided the committee to award a probably sunk." This submarine, whose "almost certain destruction" on 3 August was cited in Lt. Easton's DSC, was much later identified as U-43, which in fact survived the attack and returned to France in mid-August after an unsuccessful patrol.

In the case of *Sackville's* "probable damage" U-boat, the U.S. Committee "considered that a 4" shell hit on the conning tower at a range of 100 yards or less would cause sufficient damage to influence the submarine to return for repairs." That submarine was later determined to have been U-552, commanded by 28-year old Lt. Erich Topp on his last war patrol. U-552 had sunk 17 Allied ships in the seven months leading up to its encounter with HMCS *Sackville*. The submarine survived the damage to its conning tower inflicted by *Sackville's* explosive shell but cut short its patrol and returned to France for repairs. Topp survived the war and later served in the Federal German Navy.

After leaving HMCS *Sackville* in April 1943, Lt. Cmdr. Alan H. Easton assumed command of the RCN Corvette HMCS *Battleford* (K165) on 6 July 1943. He later commanded the River Class Frigate HMCS *Matane* (K444) and the escort destroyer HMCS *Saskatchewan* (H70). Easton was awarded a Mentioned in Dispatches for his action in HMCS *Saskatchewan* during a running battle with German patrol boats in the approaches to Brest, France, in July 1944. He returned to Halifax in August 1944 and relinquished command of *Saskatchewan*. Lt. Cmdr. Alan Easton was posted ashore for treatment of ulcers and subsequently left the Royal Canadian Navy in October 1944.



## CNMT MEMBERSHIP UPDATE SUMMER 2016

Welcome Aboard to our newest members.

### LIFE MEMBERS

Jane M. Biggs, Westphal, NS  
 Richard Bissonnette, Burnaby, BC  
 Douglas Cleough, Truro, NS  
 Duncan Elbourne, Halifax, NS  
 Jim Lovett, East Lawrencetown, NS  
 Jonathan McCann, Lunenburg, NS  
 Mary Olsen, Dartmouth, NS  
 John Pickford, Hammonds Plains, NS  
 Terrance Rowell, Dartmouth, NS  
 Lawrence Weldon, Mississauga, ON  
 Meredith Westlake, Orleans, ON

### ANNUAL MEMBERS

Alix Bovair, Halifax, NS  
 Bruce Buchanan, Woodstock, ON  
 Eric Bullock, Halifax, NS  
 Sandra Carson-Drakes, Toronto, ON  
 Robert Creer, Dartmouth, NS  
 Norm Duinker, Halifax, NS  
 William Factor, Halifax, NS  
 Margaret Ferguson, Dartmouth, NS  
 Lisa Haydon, Bedford, NS  
 Thomas Lizotte, Cow Bay, NS  
 L.R. Verne Lunan, Upper LaHave, NS  
 Bev Lundahl, Regina, SK  
 Andrew J. Munro, Middle Sackville, NS  
 Ray Murray, Lower Sackville, NS  
 Frederick H. Seeley, Victoria, BC  
 Janet A. Shirley, Halifax, NS



# In the News



## **Dr. Marc Milner and the Battle of the Atlantic** *by Ryan Melanson, Trident Staff*

**A**s the anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic approached, a capacity crowd packed into the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on April 20 to hear from one of Canada's most influential military historians.

Dr. Marc Milner, Director of the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick, visited the museum for a free public talk titled *Canada's Atlantic War*. It touched on a number of topics over two hours, including the different ebbs and flows of the campaign, attacks on shipping in Canadian waters, Halifax as a key naval port, the rise of Canada's shipyards, and the RCN's role in naval intelligence and shipping control.

Milner is the author of a number of books on Canada's military history, including *Canada's Navy: The First Century*, *New Brunswick and the Navy: Four Hundred Years*, *Battle of the Atlantic* and many more.

And while most might think of naval combat and large convoy battles when considering the war in

the Atlantic, Milner focused on a less sexy subject for his presentation, even somewhat downplaying the strategic importance of the battles themselves, despite the bravery and heroics of those involved.

"Historians tend to focus on the convoy battles, while forgetting that most convoys crossed the North Atlantic without incident," he said, describing convoys as a last line of defence for merchant mariners and their much-needed cargo. Outside of rare occasions when convoys actually sought out U-Boats for battle, or a brief period in 1943 when they were used as bait, the primary means of defending ships during the Second World War was to successfully avoid the enemy all together.

That's where the RCN found its greatest success, with some of that work being done by personnel in Halifax, Milner says, working with the Directorate of Naval Intelligence and Plans in Ottawa. "I do believe it's true that one of our most critical contributions is actually through naval control of shipping and naval intelligence. We do a really

outstanding job at it. It's a quiet story that doesn't get a lot of attention."

For a largely civilian crowd, Milner described a complex system involving recording ship movements on huge rolodexes, tracking enemy and allied movements, issuing routing instructions, and the gathering and dissemination of massive amount of intelligence.

For the most part, it worked, he said, contributing to Allied victory by maintaining a crucial supply line between North America and Great Britain through the North Atlantic, despite some

4,600 Canadians who lost their lives.

Kim Reinhardt, General Manager at the museum, said she was thrilled to be able to host Milner on such an appropriate occasion, and was also happy to see such a large turnout, with extra chairs even being brought out to accommodate. Milner thanked the crowd for turning out, and said he was also pleased to see Canada's role in the Atlantic getting the interest it deserves.

"It's important. It was the one battle of the whole of the Second World War that was uniquely influenced by Canada, and we made decisive contributions at every stage."

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## **Sister Ship for HMCS Sackville** by *Natasha Leduc, Public Affairs Officer, CFB Halifax*



*ORP Blyskawica engaged in battle*

Our Navy is rich in history and we have the ships to prove it, specifically HMCS *Sackville*, commissioned in 1941. But we are not the only ones who wish to work on the preservation of our ships. The Polish Canadian Society of Nova Scotia and the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Halifax came together with the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust on May 18 at CFB Halifax to share the story and cultural importance of ORP *Blyskawica*.

*Blyskawica*, the most celebrated of all Polish historic ships, was commissioned in 1937. Although

she ceased active operations in 1967, she remains in service fulfilling ceremonial and educational roles for the Polish Navy. Throughout her long lengthy career, *Blyskawica* has received many high honours, including the Golden Cross of Vertuti Militari, Poland's highest military award. Although each ship served in different Theatres in World War II, *Blyskawica* shares similar experiences with *Sackville*, both having been in multiple actions with the enemy. Cumulatively, they escorted more than 110 convoys.

The Honorary Consul of Poland, Jan Skora, Cdr Jerzy Lubkowski and LCdr Walter Jarosz from the Polish Navy, and George Borgal from the Trust met in Halifax for talks as a follow-up to the Trust's visit to Poland last October. Following these talks, Trust and Polish Navy representatives agreed to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding to 'sister' their historic ships with the objectives of supporting the promotion of each other's cultural and historical traditions, discussing best practices and techniques for ship preservation, and sharing reciprocal membership privileges between Trustees and 'Friends of *Blyskawica*'.

As summarized by the Trust: "These ships share similar stories, as well as the collaboration of our Navies in the Second World War. We want to ensure that in the future we help each other out in the preservation of our ships and in reinforcing their cultural and historical significance."

## BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC SUNDAY 2016 - HALIFAX *by Sandy McClearn*

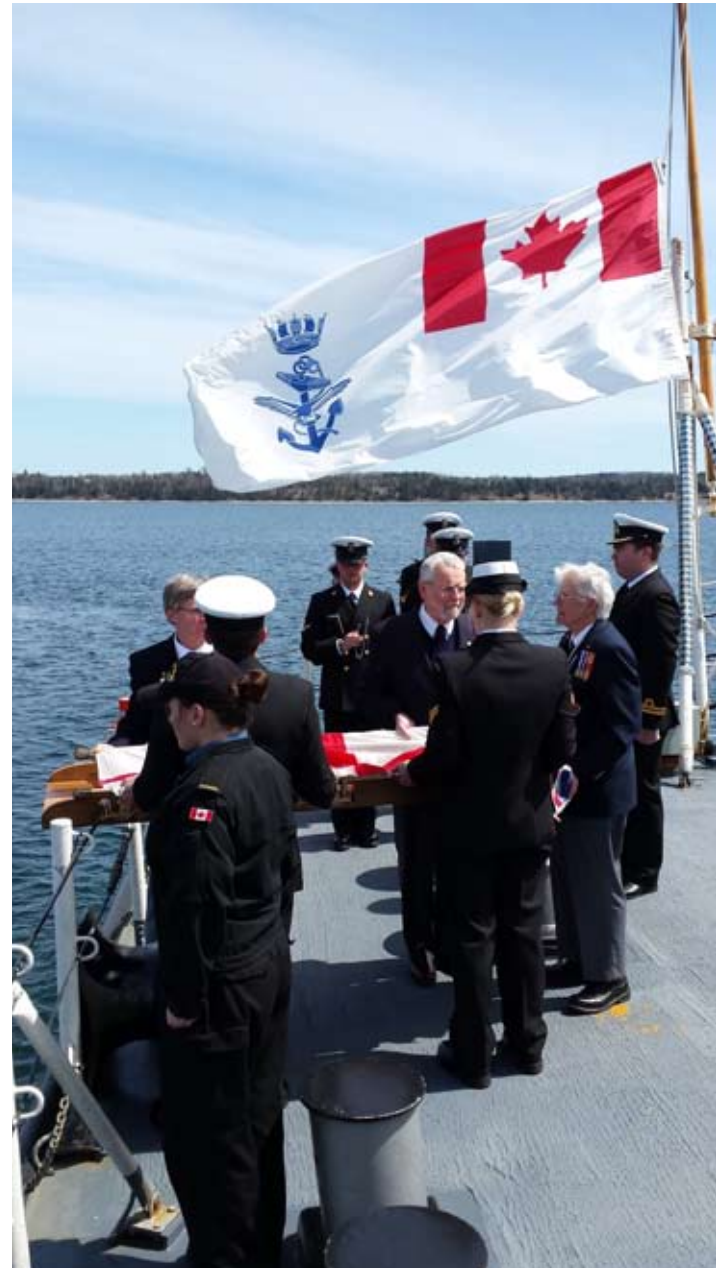
On Battle of the Atlantic Sunday, one did not need to look too far in the approaches of Halifax Harbour for reminders of the importance of seaborne traffic to Canada, as well as our ongoing dedication to helping make sure that it continues to pass unmolested. The modern equivalents of the freighters and convoy escorts that plied the North Atlantic during the Second World War were both evident Sunday morning, with the outgoing HMCS *Charlottetown* passing the inbound container ship *Allise P.* Seventy-five years ago, both ships would have had the added complication of passing through the gate of an anti-submarine net that spanned between York Redoubt and McNab's Island, a firm delineation between the safety of Halifax Harbour and the dangers of U-boats at sea.

The submarine nets ran between the previous lighthouse on McNab's Island in the background, and York Redoubt from where the photo was taken. The two gate vessels in the centre of the image were responsible for opening and closing the gate in the nets to allow authorized ships to pass. They were First World War Battle class trawlers and were painted red and green to correspond to Port and Starboard for incoming ships. The submarine nets were installed by Foundation Maritime, and their Foundation Jupiter can be seen in the foreground. *Ocean Eagle*, formerly an Admiralty Saint class tug named *St. Arvans*, was a tug owned by the Federal Government that was put under control of Foundation Maritime for the duration of the war. This photo is on display at the Canadian War Museum.

The first Sunday in May sees the commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic that ended 71 years ago, and this year I was privileged to accompany HMCS *Montreal* for the service and committal ceremony held off Point Pleasant Park, the latter being an opportunity to commit the ashes of veterans to the sea. Arriving in Halifax by ferry that morning, I was treated to seeing a few of the ships "dressed overall" for the occasion, including HMCS *Athabaskan* (herself being the third ship of that name, the first having been lost off the coast of France during the Second World War). Families of departed veterans as well as other passengers embarked *Montreal* and gathered on the

flight deck, where we received a briefing from the ship's CO (via loudspeaker) and the Cox'n (in person). After departing the jetty in HMC Dockyard, *Montreal* headed out to her destination off Point Pleasant Park. On our way down the waterfront, CSS *Acadia* (and the former HMCS *Acadia*, as she served the RCN during both World Wars) paid respect by dipping her ensign as we passed.

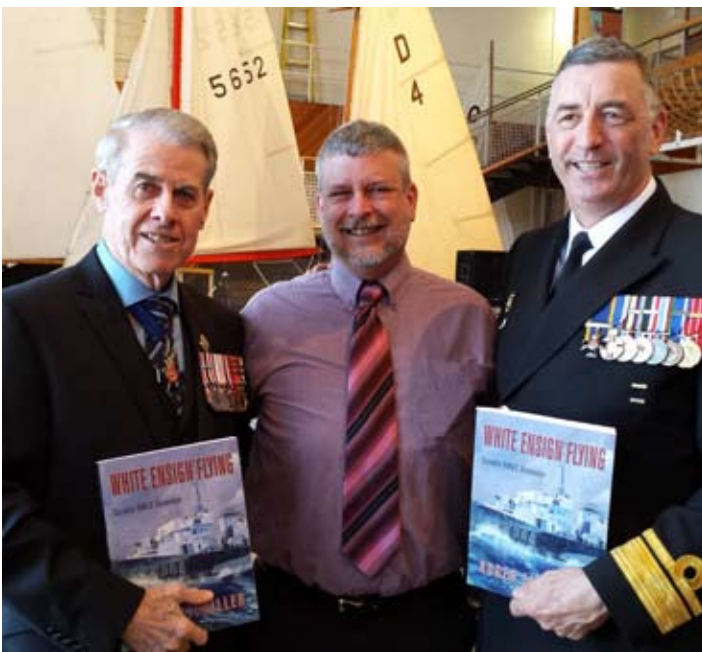
After arriving off Point Pleasant Park (where another service was already in progress at the Commonwealth War Memorial), members of the ship's company manned the starboard rail facing Point Pleasant Park. Padres Lt (N) Sebastien Dupont and LCdr (ret'd) Andrew Cooke held



a commemoration service at the aft end of the flight deck to remember the personnel and ships lost during the Battle of the Atlantic. During the service, the ship's bell was struck for each of the RCN ships lost during the war. After the service, the ship's ensign was lowered to half-mast and the ceremony began to commit to the sea the ashes of twenty-five veterans. During this ceremony the ashes are placed on a plank and covered by the flag of their service, and the ashes are piped overboard as the box slid down the plank. With the committal ceremony over, food was served in the ship's hangar, and *Montreal* returned to HMC Dockyard to disembark the families of the deceased.



## Roger Litwiller



Author/Artist/Paramedic Roger Litwiller from Belleville, ON (middle) presenting copies of his book to the Honourable JJ Grant, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia (L) and Rear-Admiral John Newton (R).

This has been one of the most memorable Battle of Atlantic weekends for me. We have been back at our daughters for some time now and the adrenaline is still pumping. I will have to write a blog over the next few days just to release the emotions and exhilaration that I am feeling.

I had some wonderful conversations with families and members of HMCS Montreal's ship's company. Also with the many Trustees on board. I was able to give a complete set of my books to Cdr Monaghan for the ships library.

Again, thank you so much for today. I know you are exhausted from this weeks activities, but please be assured that you have done an incredible job!

All the best,  
Roger Litwiller

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rogerlitwiller](http://www.facebook.com/rogerlitwiller)

Email: [litwillerroger@gmail.com](mailto:litwillerroger@gmail.com)

Website: [www.rogerlitwiller.com](http://www.rogerlitwiller.com)

## A BELL FOR ST. JOHN'S *by Pat Jessup*

In 2005, the first of the Battle of the Atlantic bells - the *Convoy Bell* - was consecrated in St. Columb's Anglican Cathedral in Londonderry and brought back to Canada following the dedication. This bell is used daily in the Chapel of Remembrance in Stadacona's St. Brendan's Multi-Faith Centre. The second bell - the *Newfie-Derry Bell* - was consecrated in St. John's Anglican Cathedral in 2007 and transported to the UK in HMCS *Toronto* later that year. This bell is on public display in historic Londonderry and used throughout the year at ceremonies at the Cathedral.

The original intent of the bell initiative was to place bells in locations of strategic significance to the Battle of the Atlantic - symbolically triangulating the communities of St. John's, Halifax and Londonderry. In order to complete the triangle, a third and final ship's bell of comparable dimensions as the previous two is needed.

This proposed bell, already named the *Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) Bell*, would be a fitting tribute to the NEF based and established in St. John's in 1941 when the RCN assumed responsibility for the protection of convoys in the western zone of the North Atlantic. Under the overall authority of the Commander-in-Chief, Western Approaches, the NEF escorted convoys from Canadian ports to Newfoundland and then to a meeting point south of Iceland.

The plan is to consecrate the *NEF Bell* during the ceremonies in Londonderry in May 2018. Following the ceremony it would be transported for installation in St. John's as a modern reminder for generations to come of the vital role played by the NEF in support of the war effort in the UK and Russia.

The port cities of St. John's, Halifax and Londonderry share a common bond through the Battle of the Atlantic. The consecration of the *NEF Bell* during the 2018 pilgrimage would complete the symbolic triangle created by the bells and bring great honour to our veterans ranging in age from 87 to 96 on what could be their last Newfie-Derry Run.



## DORIS 'DORY' ADELINE (SMELTS) HOCKING - W719 by CPO1 (Ret'd) JoAnn Cunningham

Dory was born in Elgin, Manitoba in 1922. She was training as a nurse in Winnipeg when she decided to join the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS). Her service number (W719) indicates that she was among the early recruits selected for naval service. Dory started her basic training at HMCS *Conestoga* in Galt, Ontario on 15 December 1942. "Shortly after my arrival, I received a letter from my father, (stating) that my brother Edgar was officially declared dead in the Hong Kong battle of 1941 - so my time in *Conestoga* was a blur."

Initially recruited as a cook, Dory heard of a new trade offered to women and on 17th January 1943 she commenced a three-month course in wireless communication and Morse code. This course was conducted at the Guild of All Arts in Scarborough, Ontario which was a suitable location for this clandestine work. There were 51 Wrens in her graduating class of Wireless Telegraphists, Special Operations [W/T SO]. Dory stated that she was paid 90 cents a day while on course, but earned an extra 35 cents a day by walking their dog, Barry, down to the nearby country store to pick up the mail. Dory's first posting after completing her course was at HMCS *Bytown* near Ottawa followed by a month at HMCS *Ste. Hyacinthe*, Quebec. Dory stated that she and some other Wrens were stationed in a cottage in the Gatineau Hills where they listened for enemy transmissions from U-boats which were known to be in the St. Lawrence River early in the war.

In February 1944, Dory was assigned to HMCS *Coverdale*, a secret Naval Wireless Station just across the river from Moncton, N.B. Here the Wrens lived and worked in four specially equipped huts in a field which the Defence Department had purchased from a pig farmer. Dory recalled that this was a very aromatic posting. The Wrens in *Coverdale* worked in rotating shifts. They would use earphones to listen to messages sent by neutral, non-military ships, naval ships, and German land bases which sent out endless

codes. The Wren listeners were always hoping to hear U-boat transmissions and were sometimes rewarded by intercepting a submarine sending a weather report, an Enigma code, or reporting a first sighting of an Allied convoy. These U-boat transmissions, along with their triangulated bearings, were forwarded to Enigma code breakers working in Bletchley Park, England. Dory stated that the Wrens were treated well by the citizens of Moncton and recalled that they had free bus passage from Coverdale to Moncton when they were off duty. The Wrens were also able to enjoy the dances held at the RAF Depot in Moncton, a welcome change from long hours spent at their listening posts.



Eventually Dory and some of her peers were posted to Deming Island, close to Canso, Nova Scotia to operate the newly developed LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) equipment. This top secret work was tedious and because the green light emitted by the radar scopes was very hard on the eyes, the watches were only four hours long. There were two LORAN stations in Nova Scotia, one in Deming Island and the other in Baccaro on the southernmost point of Nova Scotia. Each of these two stations was manned by a complement of 24 Wrens, 2 sailors who were Radio Artificers, and a Wren Officer. The two stations in Nova Scotia triangulated with a station in Nantucket, Massachusetts which allowed Allied ships and planes to navigate by chart to any predetermined destination while maintaining radio silence.

Dory served in both Deming Island and Baccaro. When off watch, the Wrens were required to clean up the galley, help the cook prepare the next meal, scrub out the foc's'le and heads, and shovel snow when required. They were also obliged to complete small arms training in their free time. The LORAN stations were equipped with a Bren Gun, a revolver, some rifles, Sten guns, and 2 boxes of explosives. In the event of an enemy attack, the Wrens were directed to blow up the equipment first and then worry about get-

ting themselves out. In these remote locations, the Wrens would get three days off after they had worked for nine days. In their time off, they would entertain themselves by walking, bike riding, writing letters home, playing cards, or walking the beach. In Baccaro, visits to Shelburne and Yarmouth were popular, and sailors from Shelburne would come to Baccaro for Friday night dances where the record player provided the entertainment.

When the war ended, Dory made her way from Baccaro to HMCS *Peregrine* in Halifax. She enjoyed a brief trip to New York City on her way back home to Manitoba. Dory was discharged from the Navy on 3 April 1946 at HMCS *Chippawa* in Winnipeg.

Dory loved her time in the Navy and kept contact with many of her Wren friends using a round-robin letter chain which circulated among the friends for many years. In 2003, Dory wrote: "Baccaro offered to me a chance to walk a sea shore every day. The reason I joined the Navy was to be by the sea away from the Prairies."

After the war, Dory was attending a ball game in Carberry Park near Brandon, Manitoba. There she was introduced to Bill Hocking from Ontario. The couple eventually married and Dory and Bill were loyal Royal Canadian Legion members in Mitchell, Ontario where the couple resided for many years. Bill passed away in 1981 but Dory remained active. In May 2014, as pictured below, she laid a wreath at the Mitchell cenotaph to commemorate the National Day of Honour which recognized the efforts and sacrifice of those who served in Afghanistan.



In June 2014, Dory was very pleased to receive the Bletchley Park Commemorative Badge

awarded by the British Government for her vital wartime service with the "Y" (Wireless) Listening Service. Dory's friend, Wren Elsa Lessard, was instrumental in ensuring at least twenty-five surviving Canadian Wren listeners were awarded the badge and commendation for their wartime work.



Dory passed away peacefully on 18 December 2014 with her son Bruce at her side.

As part of the 1 May 2016 Battle of Atlantic service conducted onboard HMCS *Montreal*, Dory's ashes were committed to the deep as a 4-man piping party piped the side and HMCS Sackville's chaplain LCdr (ret'd) Andrew Cook gave the blessing.



#### Author's Note:

*As a member of the Nova Scotia Wren Association, it was a great honour for me to attend the Battle of Atlantic service on behalf of Bruce Hocking and his family who live overseas. Dory was returned to a place she loved and served so well throughout her wartime service. I thank Mary Adamson Owen (W5304) from the Toronto Wren Association who sent me a chapter from her book describing life at Baccaro. Former Wrens Joan Balch and Elsa Lessard helped me research the story of Dory's wartime service. Thanks are also extended to Susan Christie, Dory's neighbor, who provided the photo of Dory in uniform and a copy of the 2009 interview Dory gave to Clare G. French, Past President of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 128, Mitchell, Ontario.*

*Photo: Mona Ghiz, Maritime Forces Atlantic*

## BOOK REVIEW



Canadian author Elinor Florence has written a unique wartime novel called *Bird's Eye View* that is proving very popular with military history buffs, book clubs, and readers of all ages.

"This is the only novel ever written about a Canadian woman in uniform during the Second World War," Elinor says. "That's disappointing when you realize there were 50,000 of them. The contribution made by women in wartime has been sadly neglected."

*Bird's Eye View* tells the story of a young woman from Saskatchewan named Rose Jolliffe whose home town becomes a British Commonwealth Air Training Base. Fired with patriotism, she joins the air force and sails overseas to England. There she becomes an interpreter of aerial photographs, spying on the enemy from the sky, searching out camouflaged munitions factories and bomb targets on the continent.

Rose keeps in touch with the home front through frequent letters from her mother. And throughout

the war, she has a bird's eye view of the Canadian experience -- at Dieppe, in the skies over Germany, on the beaches of Normandy -- and finally, when our country shared in the Allied victory.

"The war as seen through a woman's eyes makes the book particularly appealing to female readers, and the wealth of detail about aerial photographic interpretation engages the historians as well," Elinor says.

The book is fact-based fiction, drawing heavily on Elinor's research skills. She is a career journalist who grew up on a former wartime airfield near North Battleford, Saskatchewan, worked for newspapers in all four western provinces, and was a regular contributor to *Reader's Digest*. This is her first novel.

Elinor now lives in the small Rocky Mountain resort of Invermere, B.C., where she pursues another passion -- her blog called *Wartime Wednesdays* tells true stories of Canadians during wartime, featuring original interviews with veterans and descriptions of life on the home front. You can visit the blog on her website: [www.elinorflorence.com](http://www.elinorflorence.com).



On a recent trip to Halifax, author-extraordinaire Elinor Florence took time from her busy book reading schedule to visit our good ship.

## IRISH EYES ARE SMILING *by Pat Jessup*



Over the years, interest in our wartime-themed pilgrimage to Ireland has gained momentum and this year several Trustees embarked on yet another unforgettable no-host pilgrimage to Londonderry, Northern Ireland and Bunclara in the Republic as guests of the Royal Naval Association (RNA) and Ulster Canadian Initiative.

For those of us coming from the Atlantic coast the trip seemed somewhat daunting having just spent a week commemorating the Battle of the Atlantic in several events in Halifax. We kept our complaints to ourselves when our friends from out west arrived having spent many many hours in transit. Once comfortably settled in at the City Hotel on Friday, our RNA hosts put out the welcome mat with an informal Meet and Greet at the Royal British Legion in Waterside - a neighbourhood of Londonderry on the east side of the Foyle River. And what an evening it was! All signs of travel fatigue quickly vanished as we rekindled old friendships and met new acquaintances over nibblies and refreshments. Our walk back to the City Hotel took us past 'The International Sailor' statue - unveiled in May 2013 by HRH Prince Michael of Kent during our last pilgrimage - and over the magnificent 'Peace Bridge' spanning the Foyle. We were delighted

to have in our party BOA veterans Jim Robinson from Edmonton and Don Bowman from Regina, along with their families. Halifax attendees included *Sackville's* current captain Jim Reddy and past captain Sherry Richardson. Trustees from away included Tammy and Dan Bowman, Regina, SK, Rhonda Moravec, Edmonton, AB, John and Anna Dugan, Red Deer AB, Marilyn and Sandra Carson, Warren, Manitoba, Walt and Laura Nicholls, Petrolia, ON and George and Gwynneth Bain, Belfast NI. During the war, HMCS *Sackville* visited Londonderry and County Donegal several times while on convoy duty escorting ships across the Atlantic.

This year's pilgrimage was a glorious event with exceptional hospitality. At every turn we were treated like family. This was particularly so on Friday in Fahan where our group partook in the hauntingly beautiful SS *Laurentic* ceremonies at St. Mura's Church of Ireland and the Catholic cemetery in Cockhill to remember the twenty one Newfoundlanders lost when the ship was sunk by enemy action in Lough Swilly in 1917. Every aspect of these two commemorations was exceptionally well planned, thoughtful and heart felt by Donny McNeil, an ex-pat from St. John's, Newfoundland and currently living in Bunclara.

At noon we enjoyed a substantial luncheon at Fort Dunree hosted by John McCarter, Chairman of the Fort Dunree Military Museum, who ensured that everyone was comfortable, well fed and well received with his kind and welcoming remarks. Also in attendance, we were pleased to meet The Canadian Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, the Honourable Kevin Vickers, whom we remember from that very dark day in Ottawa

when Corporal Nathan Cirillo was fatally shot at the National War Memorial and on our Parliament Buildings were attacked in October 2014.

The addition this year of an animated bus tour around Inishowen was inspired and enjoyed by all. Lieutenant Commander Rónán McLaughlin of the Irish Navy presented a passionate, well-informed and entertaining perspective of County



*A tribute to Canada in Londonderry's Guild Hall*



*Trustees George and Gwynneth Bain from Belfast and Ambassador Vickers at the Bunrana ceremony.*



*Colour Party at Fahan ceremony with Trustee Walt Nicholls parading the Canadian Flag.*



Donegal that could only come from someone whose roots are firmly embedded in this wonderful part of Ireland. A visit to windswept Malin Head, the most northerly point in Ireland, allowed us to scan the waters that were once infested with U-boats awaiting convoys bound for England. Today, a large number of these boats sit at the bottom in the immediate area, a destination for historical marine divers.

While the weather was occasionally inclement, nothing could dampen the spirit of our group on Saturday as we stood on the banks of the Foyle to watch the wreath "casting" ceremony from Her Majesty's Ship *Pursuer* (above) an Archer-class P2000 patrol and training vessel of the Royal Navy based in HM Naval Base Clyde. Sackville's captain participated in this poignant ceremony in memory of those Canadians who sailed down these very waters over seventy years ago.



*Newfie-Derry Bell during Sunday's BOA ceremony at All Saints Clooney in Waterside.*



*Don Bowman, Walt Nicholls and Jim Robinson exchanging salty dips during the Londonderry Pilgrimage.*

We are home safely from the most incredible visit I have ever experienced. Dad was tired, but made the trip well. He had many special moments over there, but I think particularly important to him was meeting the other veteran, Jim Robinson. They had many opportunities for lengthy chats. It was really good for Dad. Jim's daughter, Rhonda, and I have become fast friends and will continue to stay in touch. It was wonderful to finally meet someone who was the daughter of a veteran and understands me. Thank you so much for all your hard work both before the trip in preparation and during our visit.

I am planning to give a copy of Dad's book to Brad Wall, our Premier, as a thank you for the letter of greeting. I also think the book might help to raise his awareness and appreciation for projects you have on the go....if I can be of service in this regard, I would be pleased to do so. I was thinking that the gift of Dad's book might be an opportunity to open the door to a dialogue.

Dad has indicated that he won't be planning to come to the Halifax gathering next spring..... but if I can manage it, I would love to join you.

Take care and be safe.  
Tammy Bowman

On Saturday evening we were honoured at the Deputy Mayor of Derry City and Strabane's pre-dinner reception in the historic Tower Museum before our formal Battle of the Atlantic dinner at the City Hotel. The evening can only be described as exquisite experience shared with good friends, a relaxed atmosphere, an outstanding meal, an elegant and evocative guest speaker followed by dancing and soulful Irish music. The highlight of the evening was the special message sent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and read by Commander Peter Campbell, President of the RNA, Londonderry Branch.

Battle of the Atlantic Sunday brought us to Waterside once more to march in the Church Parade to All Saints Clooney for the service and wreath laying. Following the service the Parade formed up for the March Past with the Lord Lieutenant of County Londonderry, Dr. Angela Garvey taking the salute from the dais.

All in all it was a hugely successful pilgrimage and we are greatly indebted to our Royal Naval Association hosts Robert Buchanan, Eddie Lavery and Frank Brown and Donny McNeil from the UCI for their ongoing support and enthusiasm of our visits.

Unfortunately Captain (Navy) Maurice Aucoin, the Naval Advisor from the Canadian High Commission in London could not attend this year but he did support our team by providing Canadian wreaths for our ceremonies. These were greatly appreciated and added a unique Canadian "look" the various services.

Planning is underway for our next visit to coincide with the dedication of the Newfound Escort Bell. If you are interesting in attending mark 18 - 20 May, 2018 on your calendar. It is never too early to sign up.



*Laurentic memorial Church of Ireland, in Fahan.*



*The landmark Peace Bridge connecting historically divided communities on the west and east sides of the Foyle River.*



*Stiking up the Band for the Sunday's Battle of the Atlantic parade to All Saints Clooney in Waterside.*

## THE SEA AT OUR GATES *by Rear Admiral John Newton, CMM, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic*



*Rear Admiral Newton, British and Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans, His Worship Mike Savage, Steiner Engeset and Peter Stoffer following 2016 Merchant Navy ceremony at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.*

**M**y daily commute is a walk down memory lane. Everywhere, I am reminded that Canada's enjoyment of peace hasn't always been such. Trudging across Halifax, I note the "prefabs" of the World War II era, small bungalows to house the population explosion of shipyard workers, sailors and merchants. There is no mistaking the messaging of austerity from an era when a global economy, unfettered maritime trade and prosperity were not assured.

The Halifax Forum is all that remains of a once massive exhibition complex. At the turn of the 20th century it featured the stately Dominion Exhibition Hall that hosted national fairs. It must have seemed as if that world of productivity and invention collapsed with the hall on 6 December, 1917 in the Halifax Explosion. No matter the seemingly protective expanse of ocean, distant conflict had washed ashore.

At Monaghan Lane, I am reminded of my wife's grandfather Jim Monaghan, an artilleryman of Halifax's storied Siege Batteries. He survived the Great War including Vimy Ridge. Like many who returned, he was infused with a sense of duty to make his community better and life more enjoyable. The sports facilities, playgrounds and pools of the Commons,

beach facilities on the Arm and Navy League all benefited from his public service.

The Halifax Explosion story is visibly evident in the tidy rows of "hyrdostone" duplexes that speak to the people's will to rebuild with strength and resilience against future upheavals. Inside the walls of Stadacona, the elegant Admiralty House belies Halifax's wartime experiences. A vestige of the War of 1812, it withstood the destructive eruption of the munitions ship *Mont Blanc* in 1917. As the naval hospital in that era, it immediately became a ground-zero casualty clearing station as sailors, troops and medical corps of wartime Halifax set to the grim task of rescue and relief.

Where Russell Street plunges to the port, cool air from the sea is a refreshing brace, the frequent fog reminding residents that the Atlantic is unforgiving in all seasons. The shipyard fills my view as it has for generations of Haligonians. Ribs, plates and superstructure assembled by the riveter's hammer and welder's torch grew on the slipways, steel giants to convey our trade, defend our interests and bring crews safely home. Today a fleet of offshore patrol ships is under construction by the most modern techniques, large ships by any measure to be tasked to missions

worldwide, but none more important than exerting Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic domain.

As I walk and tend to my duties, stories are offered to me, my uniform telegraphing kinship to veterans and family members entrusted with the oral record. At the recent funeral of Lieutenant Colonel Philip Vaughan, a former army engineer who built the navy's versatile Syncrolift dock, I met an amazing woman. Mary Hope was a Royal Canadian Navy Nursing Sister in the 1950s. She was wearing her navy-issued leather shoes, an exclamation mark on her recollections of military service that were rewarding in all regards.

At dinner with the CEO of the Greater Halifax Partnership, I am reminded of Ron Hanlon's long service as an exceptional naval constructor in the post-war era. Dennis Shaw's story of wartime service in the Royal Navy, and then in the Royal Canadian Navy came to me via another professional connection. Sadly, Dennis passed away very recently, a tireless community leader who never stopped supporting the veteran's community while promoting the value of a strong naval and maritime aviation capability for Canada.

Councillor Gloria McCluskey recently showed me a picture of her late husband Tom, jauntily posing aboard HMCS *Malpeque*. Taken at the

height of the Battle of the Atlantic in 1942, the under-aged lad from PEI did his duty in the engine room knowing that if torpedoed, he stood little chance of escape. Her family is not apt to easily forget what it means to be a maritime nation. Gloria's father was a pipefitter in the Dartmouth shipyard, turning out ships that escorted and convoyed food, fuel and materiel to England and Russia, and cleared the invasion lanes on D-Day. He helped build the fleet in which Tom would do his duty and would be seriously injured, and in which Gloria's first cousin, Lieutenant Cashman Mason would die aboard HMCS *Valleyfield*, torpedoed with 125 fatalities on 6 May, 1944.

I cannot fully appreciate the hardship of their era although I see the evidence of it everywhere. Moreover, I cannot fully grasp the horrors witnessed or fears suppressed by the brave generations who came before me. Over my career, I have learned of the campaigns and battles on the sea at our gates. They help me understand the forces that shaped our country and the leadership role that Canada's navy can play at home and abroad. The personal stories inspire all sailors to be ready and willing to serve whenever we are called to duty.

The Royal Canadian Navy remembers the Battle of the Atlantic on the first Sunday in May for these many reasons.

## A Wish Fulfilled

This year we were joined by 91 year old BOA veteran and Mississauga resident, Lawrence Weldon, a stoker onboard the minesweeper HMCS Port Hope during the war. Mr. Weldon's trip was sponsored by the Colorado-based Wish of a Lifetime organization, a charity that grants wishes to seniors. Mr. Weldon's wish was to return to Halifax to attend the committal ceremony of his wartime shipmate - Bert Travis. Unable to embark in HMCS *Montreal* Mr. Weldon participated from ashore during the Navy's ceremony in Point Pleasant Park. The two men were shipmates during the war and remained close friends afterward.

Media coverage of Mr. Weldon's return to Halifax was extensive and can be found online.

Sadly Mr. Weldon passed away mere weeks after his visit to Halifax.



Mr. Weldon and family at the BOA ceremony in Point Pleasant Park. HMCS *Montreal* is in the background.

## SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER VICE ADMIRAL HARRY PORTER PASSES AWAY



Vice Admiral Henry Allan (Harry) Porter CMM CD, who commenced a distinguished naval career as an 18 year-old RCNVR ordinary telegraphist at the beginning of the Second World War, rose to Commander Maritime Command and later Comptroller-General Canadian Armed Forces passed away at Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Building, Halifax March 13 at age 94.

Commanding in stature and known to friends and associates as unfailingly courteous and hospitable, Harry Porter was one of Canada's most respected senior naval officers. Following retirement from the Canadian Forces he continued his career in the public service and private industry while actively supporting a number of community and military support organizations.

A native of Chemainus, BC, Porter commenced his training at HMCS Naden in 1939, transferred to the RCN in 1940 and was commissioned in 1942. He served as signals officer and First Lt in HMCS Kootenay 1942-1944, followed by HMCS Hyacinthe signals school staff. In 1946 he commenced training with the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy and qualified as a pilot. In 1949 he was appointed officer-in-charge of the Communications School HMCS Stadacona followed by HMCS Magnificent as communications officer. He was appointed CO of HMCS *La Hullose* in 1952, HMCS *Lauzon* in 1953 and officer-in-charge of the Communications School at HMCS *Cornwallis* in 1954.

Promoted Commander in 1954, he was appointed Director Naval Communications at Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ), Ottawa in 1955. In 1958 he served as Commander Fourth Canadian Escort Squadron followed by several appointments at NSHQ, including Director Naval Training and Naval Adviser to Chief of Personnel. In 1965 he

was appointed CO HMCS *Bonaventure*, followed by Director General Equipment Requirements at CFHQ. Promoted Commodore in 1966, he served as Senior Canadian Officer Afloat, followed by appointment as Commander Maritime Forces Pacific 1969 and Commander Maritime Command 1970. He was promoted vice-admiral in 1971, appointed Comptroller-General and later served as Assistant Deputy Minister (Evaluation) before retiring in 1974.

Following retirement, he served as president of the Canadian Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Association. From 1976 to 1986 he served as chairman of the Nova Scotia Police Commission and then as consultant to the president of Halifax Shipbuilding Industries Ltd. He was active in a number of organizations including the Boys Scouts of Canada, the Naval Officers Association of Canada (including co-chairing with the late Cmdre Bruce Oland NOAC's very successful AGM in Halifax in 1985 during RCN's 75th Anniversary), Shearwater Aviation Museum and the Royal United Services Institute-NS.

Survivors include his life partner Jackie, daughter Lucinda Cronk, three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; he was predeceased by son Alan and sister Jean.

A funeral service for Admiral Porter was held in St Brendan's Chapel, CFB Halifax Stadacona.



*HMCS La Hullose, entering Liverpool late in the war. Commissioned in May 1944, La Hullose served mainly with Escort Group 25 in British waters and participated in the sinking of U-1302 in March 1945. Ordered back to Canada for tropicalization for Pacific service, she was paid off in December 1945. Recommissioned in 1949, La Hullose was converted to a Prestonian Class frigate in 1957 and was in service until 1965 when she was sold for breaking up. (Imperial War Museum, A-28098)*

## KEEL-LAYING *by Commander ret'd Colin Darlington*

The laying of the keel of a ship is one of the significant dates in that ship's life. The date in effect marks the birth of the ship. It has been years since there was a keel laid for a ship of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). The keel for what became Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Summerside* was laid 28 March 1998. Now, on 9 June 2016, the keel was laid for what will become HMCS *Harry DeWolf*, first of the patrol ships of the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) project. This event was the first of a number of traditional naval ceremonies in the coming years as the RCN obtains ships under the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

The keel of a ship is the "primary fore-and-aft part of a ship's frame. It runs along the bottom connecting the stem and the stern." In a wooden or older steel ship, the keel extends the whole length of the vessel. Attached to it are the stem (the foremost steel part forming the bow), sternpost (the upright structural member at the stern) and the ribs of the vessel. This definition reflects how ships were customarily built. Nowadays a ship may be built of modules, or blocks, fabricated separately with fittings and equipment inside, then brought together to form the hull and superstructure of the ship. In the case of the patrol vessels, each is composed of three 'mega-blocks' made up from a total of 62 smaller blocks. It can be the lowering of part or whole of the large block onto a cradle on the building ways that is the 'keel laying' for a modern naval vessel.

A keel laying is a significant date because it customarily marks the start of full production of a ship. For a civil ship, the date locks in applicable construction standards. Naval construction is allowed more flexibility, and aspects of the building can be changed after a keel-laying. Much activity, such as design, ordering of material, and initial fabrication, takes place prior to laying of the keel, so in many respects that date is one of convenience for a warship. And the laying of a keel is no guarantee that the ship will be launched and completed. Ships can and have been cancelled, or converted into another type of ship, before being launched. For ship fans, the date of a keel laying is of interest, for the duration between it and the date of launching of a ship is an indication of government support to the project, of the complexity of the engineering

and logistics involved, and of the efficiency of the shipbuilder.

A keel-laying ceremony is an informal affair arranged, for the most part, by the ship's builder. Traditionally, after gathering and a short address, a section of keel is lowered into place onto a cradle on the ways. The sponsor of the ship or senior naval representative then declares the keel "well and truly laid." Mementoes (e.g., silver plates, silver hammers) may be presented – these become part of the official artifacts of the ship.

A keel-laying ceremony traditionally invites good luck in the construction of the ship and throughout her life. Chaplains of various faiths say a few words of blessing that the ship may be protected, and older customs may take place. Elders of other nations may attend. In some navies, one custom has the senior naval representative laying a silver dollar under the keel before it is laid. In other navies, a coin may be laid by the sponsor or the youngest or oldest tradesperson of the shipyard. In the US Navy, the sponsor may be invited to weld her initials onto a metal plate which is placed in the ship. A silver hammer may be used to drive a silver nail into the keel. Whatever the customs, the intent is to keep the ceremony short, simple and in accordance with the traditions of the sea.



*Carl Risser, a journeyman ironworker who has been employed with Irving Shipbuilding for more than 46 years lays a 'three dollar coin' on the keel of Irving hull 103, 8 June 2016. Mr Risser is part of a long line of Halifax shipbuilders and the second of three generations of Risser to work at the Halifax Shipyard – both his father and his sons have worked and work there as well. He is well respected by all at the shipyard.*

The coin used 9 June 2016 was one of a set from the Canadian Mint. Coins do not have to have a specific relationship with the ship's name; authorities and, in this case, the DeWolf family, approved the selection of a coin depicting a wolf's head. The set was of four denominations. The three dollar coin was presented by Rear-Admiral John Newton, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic, to Carl Risser of Irving Shipbuilding, to be placed on the keel. Mr Risser was then presented with the two dollar coin. The four dollar coin will be presented to the sponsor. The five dollar coin will remain onboard, held by the Commanding Officer as an artifact of the ship.

During a keel-laying a ship is referred to by her builder's hull number in preference to her name, as the ceremony at which the ship is named occurs later with the launching of the ship. And it has not been unknown for a ship's name to be changed whilst she is still under construction. The ship-builder's number for a ship is the sequential number of hulls built by that company. What

will become HMCS *Harry DeWolf* is Irving Shipbuilding hull number 103. Typically, a plaque with the builder's name and number is affixed to the back bulkhead of the ship's bridge.

The keel-laying of Irving hull 103, to become HMCS *Harry DeWolf*, was a welcome event, a sign of rebuilding the RCN. In the interest of a robust shipbuilding industry and a strong Navy, it is hoped that Canada will maintain a continuous program of building ships, beyond current projects, and that there will be many more laying of keels for HMC Ships in accordance with the customs and traditions of the Navy and the sea.

*Colin Darlington is a retired naval officer of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and a Life Member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. This work is the sole opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Canadian Department of National Defence, the CAF, or the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia. The author may be contacted by email at: RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.*



## Mail Call



*Mail delivery to a River-class destroyer, possibly HMCS St Laurent alongside in Halifax, June 1941. June 1941. LAC*

**I** am proud to be a Life Trustee of HMCS *Sackville* - Canada's Naval Memorial.

Canada, with a population of barely 11 million and a minute industrial base, responded to a war at sea in a miraculous manner. The results were extraordinary. From almost nothing, Canada in a few short years became a maritime industrial

power and became the decisive factor in the Battle of the Atlantic - of which almost five thousand of whom gave their lives in the struggle.


Let us not forget the sacrifice of that great generation of Canadians who did so much to build the Canada we enjoy today. I feel privileged to support HMCS *Sackville*, a national treasure.

Rick Bissonnette, Burnaby, BC

**M**any many thanks for the most respectful and dignified service for our loved one, Leading Seaman Crawford "Carl" Harlan LaVoie, held on May 1st aboard HMCS *Montreal*.

The two young ladies assigned to our family were so professional and caring. You provided a peaceful closure for our family and fulfilled our loved ones wishes. Your kindness was really appreciated.

*The LaVoie Family*



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