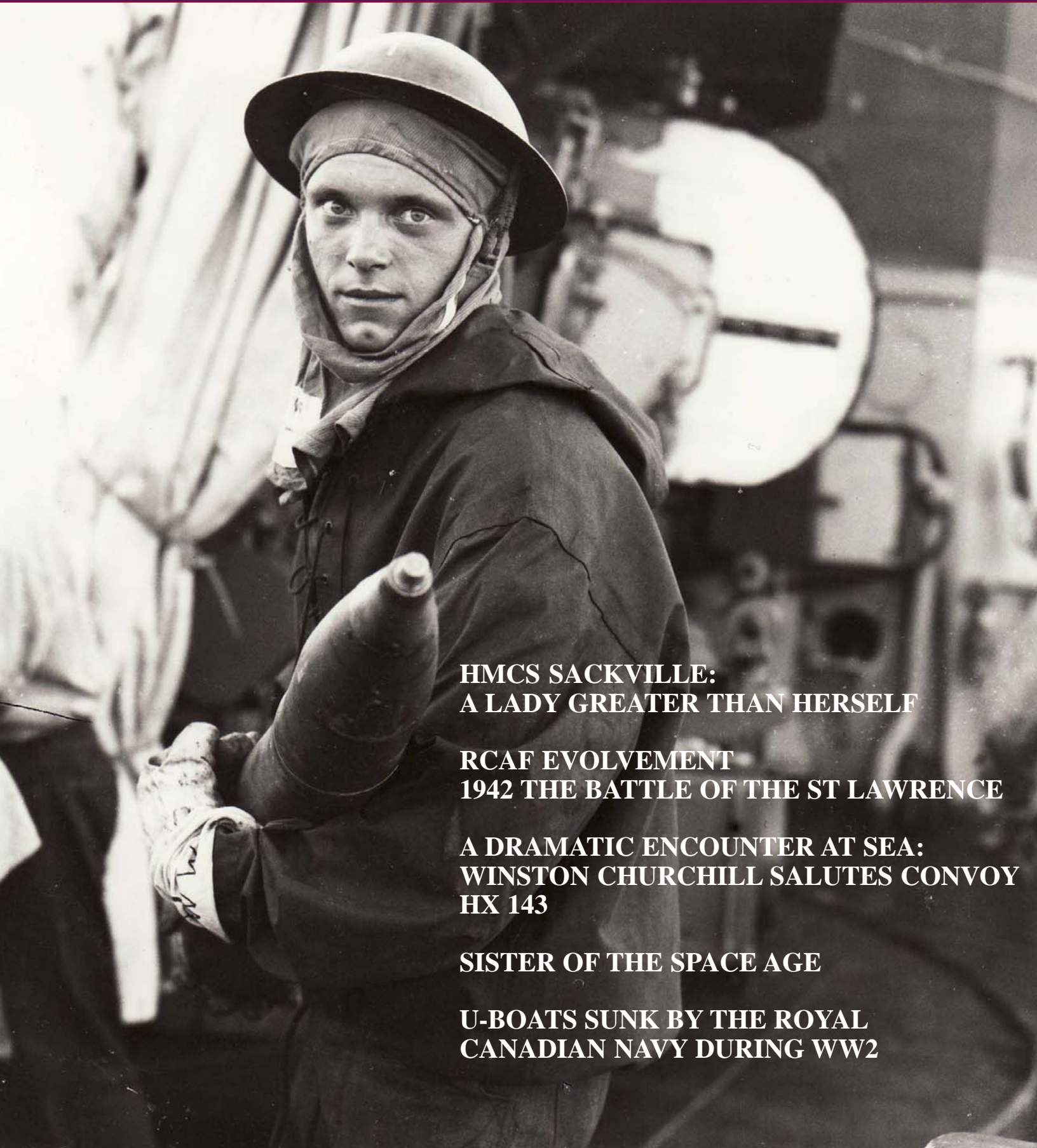


ACTION STATIONS!

HMCS SACKVILLE - CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL MAGAZINE

VOLUME 34 - ISSUE 1

WINTER 2015



**HMCS SACKVILLE:
A LADY GREATER THAN HERSELF**

**RCAF EVOLVEMENT
1942 THE BATTLE OF THE ST LAWRENCE**

**A DRAMATIC ENCOUNTER AT SEA:
WINSTON CHURCHILL SALUTES CONVOY
HX 143**

SISTER OF THE SPACE AGE

**U-BOATS SUNK BY THE ROYAL
CANADIAN NAVY DURING WW2**

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OUR COVER:

We have been unable to identify the Canadian sailor or the type of warship that he is sailing in on the front cover of this issue. We are hoping that one of you will remember this young lad and help us out with his details. *ed.*

*Photo courtesy of the
Department of National Defence*

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Actions Stations can be emailed to you and in full colour approximately 2 weeks before it will arrive in your mailbox. If you would prefer electronic copy instead of the printed magazine, please let us know.

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The Canadian Naval Memorial Trust publishes obituaries, not only of Trustees but of the wider naval and military family. When forwarding material to the editor please include a photograph.



FROM THE CHAIR - CANADIAN NAVAL MEMORIAL TRUST

Commodore ret'd Bruce Belliveau

With HMCS Sackville in her winter berth in HMC Dockyard, we have had the opportunity for the surveyors to poke about the ship and get a good look at the bilges and tanks in advance of a docking period in the fall. We are working closely with the Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) and developing the Provision of Services document to support this docking, which will be critical to the continued hull integrity of the ship. I am sure the Captain will have more to say on this in his report. Unfortunately with the change in security requirements for dockyard, it has been difficult to maintain our usual access to the ship for Friday lunches and other volunteer activities on board. However, through the good work of Doug Thomas and Jim Reddy, we have made workarounds with the good graces of HMCS Scotian to at least have a monthly lunch, the last being St Patrick's Day Lunch on Friday the 13th. From various reports and pictures, it would appear I missed an excellent event thanks to the work of the ship's team and of course Jack Kelly who arranged some excellent Irish libations to go with the Irish stew.

As a result of the security and access issues, it has been decided to move the ship to its summer berth downtown in advance of Battle of the Atlantic events and especially on Sunday to ensure easy access for the loved ones of those whose ashes will be committed to the sea. The ship will remain downtown from that point forward in preparation for our usual summer season and formal opening to the public in mid-June.

I was very fortunate to represent the Trust at an event at Halifax City Hall, 20 February 2015, to accept on your behalf the "Built Heritage Award 2014" from the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia in recognition of our collective efforts to preserve and maintain Sackville. We were one of five groups or individuals so recognized with Mayor, CNMT Trustees and many other dignitaries in attendance.

Much work continues on the Battle of the Atlantic Place project with outreach to all levels of government and continuing efforts to secure a champion for the project. Recently one of our stalwarts, Hugh MacPherson took a step back from frontline duties and I want to commend him for his heroic efforts in working a multitude of angles on the project. Fear not - he is still available for consultation.

As spring approaches (hopefully!!!), we are now seized with Battle of the Atlantic week commemoration events. This year we have a delegation joining from Northern Ireland and already seeing folks booking trips from across the country to join us. Let us all get out to the events and support the veterans that will be there. In particular I would invite Trustees to make an effort to introduce someone new to our world by inviting them to the Battle of the Atlantic concert, 28 April 15 at the Spatz Theatre in Citadel High School.

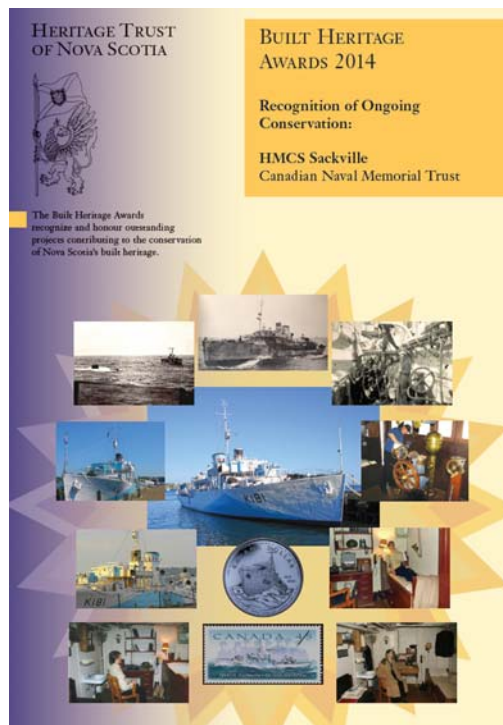
Tickets are already on sale at \$10.00 a seat and I am led to believe that this year's event will have a new and exciting format. If you can't make the concert, please support the trust by buying tickets for friends or relatives. If you have a bar account, tickets can be charged to it. The more we can showcase, the greater our following will become as we drive to the final home for Sackville. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Finally, I want to make an appeal for some of you to give our small core of "worker-bees" a hand. We can always use more summer guides, and we will run a training programme later in the spring for those of you who would like to learn more about the ship and the pivotal Battle of the Atlantic that she and her sisters helped win. Also, if you have some time and could help with "Action Stations!", the Gift Shop

or as a tour guide/escort/host/driver in support of the Royal Naval Association - Londonderry, Northern Ireland pilgrimage please contact our Executive Director to discuss at 902-721-1206 or email: execdir@canadasnavaalmemorial.ca



"The Heritage Awards recognize good practice in heritage conservation," said Heritage Trust's Awards Committee Chair, Laura MacNutt (R) pictured above with HMCS Sackville's Captain, Lieutenant Commander Jim Reddy (L) and the Chair for the Trust, Commodore ret'd Bruce Belliveau. The award to HMCS Sackville was the first time in the history of the Heritage Trust NS that a ship has been recognized.



THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Lieutenant Commander ret'd Jim Reddy



Captain's Rounds, 19 March, 2015

As we approach the end of a real, old-fashioned winter a robust encounter with "Sheila's Brush" bringing more snow and nasty weather in Halifax than we've seen in a long time, it has been a chore to attend to the the ship's heating systems and keeping the snow clear. But we shouldn't complain as we look back to the winter of 1943 and the accumulated ice and snow on the upper deck of HMCS Matapedia pictured below.



Herb Roberts collection, 1943

Sackville is nearing the end of an important hull-survey leading to her periodic docking this fall. She was docked last in 2007. The upcoming work had to be delayed two years because of a major overhaul to the syncrolift that took more than a year to complete. Fleet Maintenance Group, Cape Scott (Dockyard) surveyors probed every tank and machinery bilge space and by the next issue of *Action Stations!* there is expected to be a formal report that we can share. Currently the ship at 74 years of age appears sound, thanks in large part to very good Navy technical support over the years.

Even though our longstanding and traditional weekly Friday gatherings were curtailed this winter, the enthusiasm for our monthly lunches has been exceptional. Our Mess has also enjoyed far-off support. Trustee Roy Busby from Red Deer donated two bottles of our labelled Glenora product in support of the ship. The first bottle was raffled off in February

with the second drawing taking place during our next lunch on April 10th. At our March St. Patrick's lunch, we enjoyed the generosity of Oakville, Ontario's *Peter Mielzynski Agencies Ltd., Purveyors of Fine Wines & Spirits* who are also a significant sponsor of our popular calendar, copies of which are available in our gift shop.

The Trust's 2015 Battle of the Atlantic week activities promise to be larger than usual as we mark the 70th year after the end of WWII, recalling that the war at sea waged for six long years. This campaign saw the enemy come to our shores with U-boats penetrating deeply into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River and boldly coming ashore in Labrador to install a weather station. Information on our Battle of the Atlantic week program can be found on the last page of this issue. During the week we will be hosting 23 Trustees and family members from out of province, including RCNVR veterans John Hare, James Albert Robinson, Rodney Carson and original crew members of HMCS Sackville, Philip Clappison and Larry Hartman.

During this year's BOA observances we will also be hosting a delegation from the Royal Naval Association of Londonderry, Northern Ireland. We are looking forward to seeing our old friends from away who have treated us so well over the years.

We are also looking forward to our first formal event with the RCNA in Bridgewater whose Branch is named in honour of the late Admiral Desmond Piers. The evening will commence with a solemn candlelight tribute to the RCN and Merchant Navy ships and their sailors lost during the war followed by their Annual Battle of the Atlantic mess dinner.

Finally, for a most welcome injection of youth to our BOA program, we'll be visited by thirty cadets from Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Swiftsure of Brandon, Manitoba. We plan to embark Swiftsure for our annual Sunday service and committal ceremony.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



This year we are trying out something different and having our AGM at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia - home of the famous *Maude Lewis* exhibition and First Nations collection *Shifting Grounds* which explores indigenous art from the

Inuit in the Arctic, the west coast Haida Gwaii, the Woodland school in Ontario to the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet in Atlantic Canada. The meeting starts at 1:00 pm so you will have ample time to explore the collection, free of charge. Our traditional reception onboard starts at the usual time of 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm.

For more information on "What's on" at the gallery, see: http://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/en/AGNS_Halifax/exhibitions/default.aspx



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Lieutenant Commander *ret'd* Doug Thomas

Do You Hear There?

How can you support CNMT and HMCS Sackville?

First – let me acknowledge that you are already supporting the Trust and its aims: by becoming a member and by being knowledgeable about our aims and objectives: to preserve HMCS Sackville for future generations, to progress the Battle of the Atlantic Place Project, and to educate Canadians about the amazing national accomplishment which was the huge expansion of the Royal Canadian Navy in World War II.

A small team of volunteers does a lot of the day-to-day work to keep our organization going, and we need your support for some of our initiatives and also for some of you to step-up and give that team a hand in several areas. For example, two of our initiatives are revenue generators to help support ship operations:

Naval Heritage Calendar: We develop and publish a unique calendar to appeal to those who have experienced and/or appreciate our naval history. We need more of you to buy our calendars – for yourself and as a gift to friends and relatives. We also need feedback to enhance future issues: suggestions, photos, and short items to enhance and broaden its appeal. We are currently working on the 2016 issue.

The 18th Annual Battle of the Atlantic Memorial Concert, 28 April 2015: The Trust runs an annual concert, headlining the Stadacona Navy Band, supported by talented local vocalists. Musical selections are new each year, and it is a fabulous evening of entertainment for only \$10 (plus service charge) from Ticket Atlantic, online and at Superstore Kiosks. Tickets will also be available at the door on 28 April. We need you to attend, preferably with friends and neighbours, and help us fill the Spatz Theatre at Citadel High. If you can't attend, you may consider sponsoring a ticket for a Veteran or Sea Cadet to take your place. If you can participate in this way please send a cheque in the amount of your sponsorship to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. Donations over \$10 are entitled to a tax receipt.



Ken Isles, President of the Nova Scotia Branch of the Naval Association of Canada (NS-NAC), recently presented a cheque for \$4000 to the Trust, which will be used to enhance the interpretation of our ship. This cheque is the result of an application by NS-NAC for a grant from the NAC's Endowment Fund, and is an excellent example of the commitment by the NAC to the preservation of HMCS Sackville. The NS Branch (then NSNOA) was prominent in the campaign to save Sackville from being broken-up, and to preserve her for future generations as a memorial to those lost at sea in the Battle of the Atlantic. Many members of the NS Branch are also members of CNMT, and these Endowment Fund grants to support CNMT now total well over \$20,000.



Sackville's Commanding Officer, Jim Reddy (right) accepting the the NS-NAC donation from Ken Isles, President of the Nova Scotia Branch on behalf of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust.

For CNMT members who are not aware, membership in your local NAC Branch is now open to everyone with an interest in the Navy and the Maritime Security of our Nation. Please contact me if you want more information about this fine organization.

Action Stations:

Someone, somewhere in this country, with good desktop publishing skills is needed to relieve Pat Jessup as Editor of this excellent publication you are reading. There is an experienced Editorial Committee, including Pat, to help a new Editor with Action Stations – we need someone who is skilled with laying out a publication after receiving input: the Editor does not need to live in Halifax. If you are interested, or would like to know more before committing yourself, please contact Pat Jessup: pr@canadasnavalmemorial.ca

The Stadacona Band - Royal Canadian Navy, under the leadership of Lieutenant Commander Ray Murray, performs courtesy of Rear Admiral John Newton, Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic.

CROSSED THE BAR

Nursing Sister Joan Bichan (née Heslip) served in burn units in Britain as a member of the WRCNS during World War II, later marrying Lt William James Bichan, RCNVR, who had survived the loss of HMCS Skeena off Reykjavik. Following a post-war career as a civilian nurse in Canada and the raising of a family, Joan enjoyed a long retirement which included walking across England at age 78 and founding the Landscape School of Painting in Collingwood, Ontario. Joan passed away in Toronto one month short of her 96th birthday on September 24, 2014.



William Edward (Ted) Clayards, RCN, a graduate of the first class at Royal Roads Military College who would serve in the Pacific and Atlantic theatres during WWII followed by service during the Korean War, died in Saanich, BC January 12 at age 91. He later served as RCN liaison officer to the USN at Key West, Florida during the Cuban missile crisis, with his last appointment as Executive Officer of Royal Roads Military College. In civilian life, he served in the public service at HMC Dockyard, Esquimalt, including executive assistant to the Base Commander. He was a board member of the Maritime Museum of BC, Naval Officers Association and the Royal Canadian Legion. He was predeceased by his wife Marilyn; survivors include his son Brock and daughter Jocelyn.



Captain (Navy) James (Jim) Guthrie Dean, RCN, CD, of Ottawa, a career naval officer and combat systems engineer, died in Ottawa January 3, 2015 at age 77. Following retirement from the Navy he served with CFN Consultants and was an active amateur radio enthusiast holding positions at the local, national and international levels. Survivors include his wife Sandra and sons James and Peter.



Leona Reva Freeman, active in a number of community and national organizations, including the sisterhood of Beth Israel Synagogue, Canadian Hadassah Wizo, the arts sales and rental agency of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the Auxiliary of the IWK Health Centre died in Halifax Feb 15 at age 88. She is survived by her son Lawrence Freeman, QC, and daughter-in-law Honourary Captain (Navy) Myra Freeman, sister Joyce Gordon and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; she was predeceased by her husband Harry, a veteran of the D-Day Invasion.



Wayne Gammie, RCN, passed away at his home in Fergus on January 24, 2015 at the age of 67. Beloved husband of Carol Gammie (nee Bowyer). Wayne spent over 25 years in the navy, including in HMCS Kootenay. He is survived by his daughters Marj (Bill) and Jackie (Scott), and son Doug (Monika), by brother Gordon (Gail), and sister-in-law Pat (Mike), and several grandchildren, nieces and nephews. One week after Wayne passed, his wife off 44 years, passed away as well.



Nicholas Robin M (Bob) Lee, a master mariner with an extensive national and international career passed away in Halifax March 11 at age 80. A native of London, Eng he was a graduate of Pangbourne Nautical College and sailed the seven seas with international and Great Lakes shipping companies before joining the Canadian Coast Guard. With CCG and Transport Canada he served as district surveyor Maritimes Region and in other senior positions before taking early retirement and moving to Jamaica where he served as director maritime affairs and surveyor general for the Maritime Authority of Jamaica. On returning to Nova Scotia he served as a consultant with the Department of the Environment promoting wider awareness of among shipping interests of marine environmental issues affecting marine life. He held both British and Canadian unlimited certification as a master mariner. He was a Freeman of the City of London and a member of a number of organizations including the Society of Naval Architects and Engineers, International Association of Marine Economists, the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, Scotia Festival of Music and an active supporter of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. Survivors include his wife Fay, daughter Christina Dorothy Lee (John Delos Reyes) and grandchildren, Chelsea Euphemia and Miles Nicholas Delos Ryes. Donations in his memory may be made to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, Missions to Seafarers or Scotia Festival of Music.

Lieutenant George B. McKee, RCN, CD, MMM, who enrolled in the Navy in 1950 and served for more than 40 years died in Dartmouth, NS February 15 at age 81. His career included serving in HMCS Haida during the Korean War and as coxswain in HMCS Ottawa 1976-79. He was commissioned in 1980 and retired in 1990, transferring to the Cadet Instructor Cadre. He was active in several community and military support organizations including the Masonic Order and the Atlantic Chief and Petty Officers Association. Survivors include his wife Ann, daughter Lesley, son Andrew and sister Joyce; he was predeceased by brother Fred and sister Jean.





Naomi Miller, mother of Vice Admiral Duncan (Dusty) Miller (ret'd), a past Chair of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and Canada Court Judge Campbell Miller, passed away at her residence at the Oakland Grange, Littlehampton, Sussex, Eng January 18 at age 91. She was born in Winnipeg but emigrated to the UK as a teenager.

She became a registered nurse and nursed in London during WWII. In 1945 she married Cyril (Bill) Miller, an RAF officer, and after having two sons the family returned to Canada. In addition to her sons, survivors include five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren..



Lieutenant Herbert Edgar Warman, RCN, CD, whose 28 year naval career included service during WWII and the Korean War passed away Feb 12 in Halifax at age 90. He is is remembered by Trustees of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT) as an active supporter of the restoration and operation of HMCS Sackville over the years. With

Sackville, he was involved with a number of technical and administrative support activities including the In Memoriam book and ship photography. Herb joined the Navy at 19 in 1944 and following the end of hostilities undertook special assignment with with the USN. He served at the Albro Lake Radio Station, Dartmouth prior to serving in HMCS Iroquois, Huron and Haida during the Korean War. This was followed by posting to HMCS Labrador operating in the Arctic. He was commissioned in 1960, served at National Defence Headquarters and was posted to the Newport Corner Radio Station, NS as commanding officer. Following retirement from the Navy in 1972 he commenced a second career with the industrial engineering branch of the Ship Repair Unit Atlantic, HMC Dockyard, retiring in 1988. In addition to the CNMT, he was a member of a number of community and military support organizations, including the Royal Canadian Legion Somme Branch (Life Member), Nova Scotia Naval Association of Canada (National Silver Award recipient) and the Korea Veterans Association of Canada. He is survived by his wife Jane, daughters Wendy and Sandra, sons Colin and Ian and a number of grand and great-grandchildren. Donations in his memory can be made to several organizations including the CNMT.



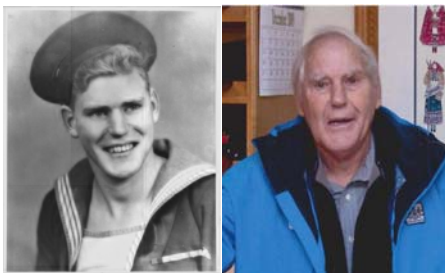
Jean-Claude Moraze, well-known Halifax chef and a familiar face onboard HMCS Sackville who along with his wife Jean catered numerous functions in our ship over the years died January 29 at age 76. In addition to his wife he is survived by son Marc Anthony and sisters Josette, Collette, Clotilde (Hollie) and Beatrice.

Lieutenant Commander Gary W.W.Mueller, RCN, of



Ottawa, a 1971 mechanical engineering graduate of the Royal Military College whose 29 year career included service in Canada, England and Germany, passed away January 17 in Ottawa. In civilian life he worked in insurance and investments with London Life. He is survived by his wife Mary, children Edward and Natalie and sister Karen.

Arthur Herbert Priest, RCNVR, who joined the Navy at



HMCS Discovery in 1942 and served as an asdic operator in several corvettes and frigates including HMCS Sackville and Carlplace died in Vancouver

February 23 at age 92. Following hostilities he worked with Canada Post for 35 years. Survivors include wife Evelyn and children Lori and Brian.

Chief Petty Officer Harold (Mac) McClure Upton, RCNVR, a veteran of the Battle of



the Atlantic and 'D-Day' invasion passed away in Toronto Feb 15. He was a significant supporter of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust - HMCS Sackville over the years and an active volunteer with Sunnybrook Hospital and the Royal Museum of Ontario. He was predeceased by his wife Grace;

survivors include a number of nieces and nephews.



Lieutenant (N) H. Douglas Stewart, RCN, of Dartmouth, NS, who served 38 years in the RCN as an electronic warfare officer, passed away January 1, 2015 at age 82. Survivors include his wife Joyce; sons Michael and Barry and brothers Robert and Alan; he was predeceased by daughter Cynthia.

The Canadian Naval Memorial Trust expresses its condolences to Vice Admiral ret'd Robert Stephens and his wife Clotilde on the recent loss of their son Christopher who passed away in Cambridge, England. Christopher is survived by his parents and brother Michael and predeceased by his sister Jeanne. Donations in Christopher's memory can be made to the Jeanne Stephens Foundation.

HMCS SACKVILLE: A LADY GREATER THAN HERSELF

Commander ret'd George Borgal



HMCS Sackville seems almost hidden amongst the piers and jetties of one of the greatest natural harbours of the world, stationary in her moorings amongst the constant background of movement and busyness of more modern, larger and much more powerful vessels. To the surprised passer-by who happens upon her, either at her winter berth in HMC Dockyard or her summer berth near the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, she seems an oddly painted relic of another age, a museum ship perhaps, or at least an historic curiosity. But to the informed observer, she projects a presence much greater than her small size might suggest – she’s a national treasure that symbolizes, notwithstanding her age and modest size, the greatness a nation can achieve in meeting an exceptional challenge.

At the most obvious level, Sackville is exactly what she appears to be: a classic second world war Corvette. She is, in fact, the last remaining example in the world of a 269 strong class of ocean escorts, 123 of which were Canadian. Corvettes were designed to be relatively inexpensive and rapidly constructed coastal escorts with minimal armament and sensors, pending the construction of more powerful and sophisticated warships then on the drawing boards. But economies and operational exigencies of the day meant that she and her many sisters were destined to become the backbone of the trans-Atlantic convoy’s escort force throughout the war’s critical years. Looking peacefully at rest today and neatly dressed in her Western Approaches camouflage scheme, Sackville and the hundreds of her sister escort ships painted a very different picture when briefly seen in wartime ports such as Halifax, St John’s, and Londonderry. Escorts were constantly at sea and subjected to the extremes of North Atlantic weather, thoroughly wet and uncomfortable inside and out, and showing the rust and grime of the day-to-day strain of safeguarding convoys on the Atlantic with tired resignation. There was little time, opportunity or interest in making things pretty – efficiency and effectiveness in the pursuit of deterrence were what was

paramount. With her crew of as many as 100 from all walks of Canadian life packed into 205 feet of riveted iron, Sackville’s job was to ensure the ‘Safe and Timely Arrival of the Convoy’, the escorts’ perennial mission. In her Atlantic escort career Sackville did this successfully 30 times, all energy focused on defending convoys from attack. During one trip alone, in August of 1942, Sackville engaged three U-boats in quick succession, two of which being damaged to such a degree that they were fortunate to survive.

Looking at Sackville now, it’s hard to imagine this small ship and crew engaged in such a dangerous dance with weather and enemy. It’s also hard to imagine just how many ships of the Royal Canadian Navy were her partners in these struggles, and even with most escorts at sea, how crowded our ports were during the all-too-short rests between convoys. Sackville’s experience was reflected many times over by the hundreds of other Allied warships defending the thousands of convoys trudging eastward against a determined foe or returning westward for more cargo.

It is this reflection that makes Sackville much more than simply the icon of the warship classes she represents. She is Canada’s oldest surviving fighting warship, and an enduring symbol of an entire Navy. Her decks and spaces are poignant witness to the service and sacrifice of those who risked all during those half-dozen years of incredible struggle. She connects us to the responsibility Canada assumed by 1944 for the safe escort of all North Atlantic trade convoys, and the Allied recognition accorded when command of the Northwest Atlantic was placed under Rear Admiral Leonard Murray - the only Allied theatre of war ever commanded by a Canadian. The Battle of the Atlantic was the first and most crucial of a sequence of Allied frontlines defended and won. Sackville is among the last representatives of an impressive wartime growth that become, at war’s end, the third largest of the Allied navies in numbers and arguable the third largest in the world in operational effectiveness.



It was therefore very fitting when, by Cabinet decision in 1985, Sackville was declared Canada's Naval Memorial, honouring in perpetuity the memory of all those who served, and especially the more than 5000 members of the RCN, RCAF and Merchant Navy who perished at sea with the loss of 26 Canadian naval ships, 72 merchant ships, and numerous maritime aircraft. In this respect, she symbolizes for Canada and Canadians the sacrifice of all those who did not return, and the leadership, spirit and perseverance of all those who continued day after day. She is well deserving of her epithet: 'Soul of the Navy'.

Sackville has a further relevance larger even than the tradition and values of the RCN that she so well reflects and honours. Lying sedately in Halifax, she is silent evidence of the incredible expansion of Canadian industry, ingenuity and determination at a time when a great national effort was needed and Canada's economy and infrastructure were severely challenged. Shipbuilding, for example, witnessed a remarkable expansion on the East Coast, St Lawrence, Great Lakes and West Coast, and by 1945 was our second largest industry. More than 1,200 naval and merchant ships of different classes were built in support of the RCN, merchant navies, the Royal Navy, and the United States Navy, along with thousands of small craft. Recognizing that the commitment to the war effort was a whole-of-country response, most RCN ships bore names of communities across the country, as does Sackville. Britain's survival and the ultimate Allied victory in Europe were entirely dependent on ships such as these, providing security for the supply of men, materials, equipment and food from North America. Sackville is eloquent testimony to a generation that was supremely challenged, fought with great courage and advanced Canada onto the world stage. She is a direct link to an extraordinary national achievement, reminding us in a tangible way of Canada's transformation from a largely agrarian nation in 1939 to the industrialized global player and respected voice in the international community of nations she became following the War.

As a nation we do not have a strong tradition of celebrating our national accomplishments publicly and proudly, and Canada's role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest and most decisive campaign of the Second World War and a defining moment in our history, has been no exception. However, under the initiative of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, owners and operators of Sackville, a project has been launched to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday in 2017 with a building on the Halifax waterfront designed to commemorate this extraordinary national achievement in a way that all Canadians can proudly share. Conceptually, Battle of the Atlantic Place will be an innovative and interactive centre dedicated to describing the years and conditions on both sides of the Atlantic leading up to the war; our nation's involvement in the Battle of the Atlantic and how this commitment impacted families, business, industry and commerce; the personal stories of what it was like to serve at sea and how families at home coped and filled in for the men who left; the political stories of the key national and Alliance leaders; and how strategic

concerns and decisions affecting the war effort and the personal lives of those affected. The consequences of the Battle in terms of the political, economic and operational choices available will be explored, as will how Canada changed to become a post-war leader. But most of all, Battle of the Atlantic Place will be about us as a people, and how we as a nation rose to meet an extraordinary challenge.

Follow our journey and contribute your own stories at <http://battleoftheatlanticplace.ca/index.php>.

Editor's note:

The Trust will be incorporating HMCS Sackville into Battle of the Atlantic Place, preserving her place in our historical narrative and her relevance to future Canadians. She and an RCAF Canadian-built Canso Flying Boat, representative of all Canadian warships and maritime aircraft, will be incorporated into a specially designed Convoy Hall allowing visitors to sense what it was like to be in a convoy and 'walk the decks' as did those whose experiences and stories are honoured.



Anti-Aircraft Gun and Crew in Action
by Lieutenant Commander Donald C. Mackay
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art
CWM 19710261-4197

The 20-mm Oerlikon gun, in single and twin mountings, was widely used by Allied forces during the Second World War. It had a higher rate of fire than the 2-pounder pom-pom which was the main anti-aircraft (AA) gun installed in the early corvettes, and was much more effective than the .303 Lewis or .50 calibre machine-guns initially-fitted in RCN ships. Used primarily as AA weapons on almost all warships, from motor launches to battleships; Oerlikons also proved effective in engagements against surfaced German submarines, keeping enemy crews below decks and away from their own guns.

HMCS Sackville had the first of her two major refits at Liverpool, NS from January to May 1943; it was at this time that her bridge wings were extended so that single a 20-mm Oerlikon gun could be fitted on each side, replacing the original twin .303 Lewis machine guns which were of World War I vintage.

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC - RCAF EVOLVEMENT

1942 THE BATTLE OF THE ST LAWRENCE

*Lieutenant Colonel ret'd Mike Black, Past Commanding Officer, 404 Squadron and
Lieutenant Colonel ret'd Bart Konings, Past Commanding Officer, 407 Squadron*

On the 19th of April 1942, U-553, a type VIIC U-Boat, commanded by Korvette Capitan Karl Thurman, departed St. Nazaire France for its seventh War Patrol.



Crew of U-553 celebrate successful mission on return to St. Nazaire.

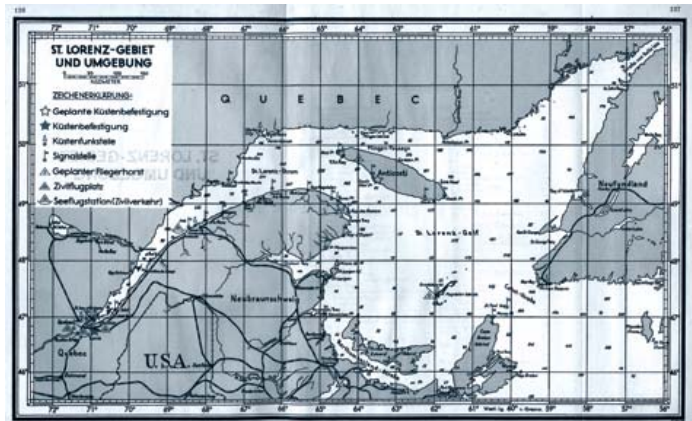
Heading westerly, U-553 entered Canadian territorial waters on or about the 8th of May. Proceeding South of Newfoundland through the Cabot Strait, it entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence to its war patrol area, the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. On the 12th of May at 0542, Thurman attacked and sank the British steamer, SS *Nicoya* which would signal the start of the Battle of the St. Lawrence and the first invasion of Canadian territories since the war of 1812.



Survivors of the 5,364-ton Nicoya outward bound from Montreal to Liverpool with a cargo of frozen beef, steel, glass and Hawker Hurricanes for an embattled Britain. Most of Nicoya's 87 crew and passengers reached safety, landing at the Gaspé villages of Cloridorme and L'Anse-à-Valleau.

U-553 would be followed by a number of other U-Boats during the next six months of 1942, bringing the war to Canada and within sight of its citizens living on the shores of the Gaspé. While U-111 had been in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1941, its mission had been restricted to a reconnaissance of convoy activities in the Gulf and the Strait of Belle Isle.

The sinking of the SS *Nicoya* was the start of the Battle of the St. Lawrence, which would see its heaviest engagements until the closing of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the fall of 1942. A total of 6 U-Boats were sent into the Gulf on War Patrols, whose actions resulted in the loss of eighteen merchant vessels, one ferry and two RCN escorts. U-Boat activity would occur in 1943 and late 1944 but not to the extent of that in 1942.



Map of the Gulf of St. Lawrence used by German U-boats. Canadian War Museum, George Metcalf Archival Collection: 19730174-002_B

The possibility that German submarines would enter the Gulf and conduct operations was recognized in 1939, but for the first two and a half years of the war not much emphasis had been placed on this area as Eastern Air Command (EAC) had its hands full just to meet its requirements in its Operational Area of the East Coast as well as providing escort to the Strategic North Atlantic Convoy operation.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence is the world's largest estuary consisting of about 236,000 square km. It is accessed from the Atlantic through the Strait of Belle Isle, the Canso Strait and the Strait of Canso. At the start of the War a convoy system had been established between the ports of Quebec and Sydney, Quebec and Labrador, and Corner Brook and Sydney.

At the beginning of 1942, the establishment of a seaplane base at Gaspé was far from complete. Neither the RCN nor the RCAF had adequate assets in the St. Lawrence and the Gulf to provide escort to all of the convoy operations. Coordination of activities between the RCN and RCAF were in essence non-existent as there was no combined operations



center. A coherent plan to meet a possible U-Boat threat had not been developed. Communication with the bases and detachments in the Gaspé was poor, relying at times on commercial telegraph systems. An Aircraft Detection Corps, mainly composed of volunteers, covered the entire area and was tasked with providing information on U-Boat sightings. Unfortunately, their reports were usually sent to the police, which delayed any immediate reaction by EAC. For the most part the reports were unreliable as the area was teeming with sea life which could be easily confused with a submarine periscope. EAC aircraft were not equipped with either the Leigh light or radar and thus were restricted to daylight operations in visual weather conditions. Some night-time patrols were under-taken when there was sufficient moonlight. Moreover, the Torpex depth bombs were set too shallow, which during an attack caused more damage to the aircraft than to the submarine.

U-553 appeared soon after navigation opened on the St. Lawrence. It was sighted and attacked south of Anticosti Island by a United States Army Air force B-17 on the 10th of May without success. On the 11th of May two Cansos, from 5 Squadron, swept the Gulf during the day in miserable weather. Nothing was sighted. The first confirmation that U-553 was in the area was the torpedoing and sinking of the SS Nicoya late at night on the 11th of May followed by Thurman sinking SS Leto on the early morning of the 12th of May and the survivors landing on the shores of the Gaspé. Thurman had no other victories and only surfaced at night. U-553 departed the area on the 22nd of May.

Because of the limited range of the aircraft, the Air force response required frequent redeployment in this scattered area. When U-553 appeared these were not available for action in the Gulf as the EAC squadrons were under conversion to more capable aircraft, in preliminary stages of organization, or under manned. While some area reconnaissance support was provided by the Ansons and Hudsons attached to the various RAF operational training units in Charlottetown, Greenwood, Debert, Summerside, Chatham and Mont Joli, their crew capabilities were limited as they were not trained in Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations.

The two sinkings by the enemy action in Canadian waters and particularly the St. Lawrence, resulted in a call by the politicians in the Gaspé and Quebec region for a greater emphasis on home defence and a redistribution of air and naval resources to the gulf. Wisely, the government of the day maintained its emphasis by the RCN and the RCAF on the support of the Strategic North Atlantic Convoy operations.

U-132 commanded by Ernst Vogelsang entered Canadian waters through the Cabot Strait in late June and proceeded to his assigned area of Cap Chat. Air patrols by two Cansos from 117 Squadron were conducted on the 5th of July in support of Convoy SQ 16 with both aircraft landing in Gaspé. Support to Convoy SQ 15 was planned, but the Convoy sailed early without advising EAC. On the 6th of July U-132 engaged SQ 15 and sank three ships. The Cansos

out of Gaspé were ordered to fly on the 6th but could not due to fog. The only significant air action against this submarine on this day was by a flight of four Kittyhawks of 130 Squadron and two Fairy Battles of # 9 Squadron flying out of Mont Joli, Quebec. HMCS Drummondville, a Bangor Minesweeper, did attack U-132 causing it to crash dive. On the 7th of July a Hudson from 119 Squadron sighted and attacked a contact off Sept Isles, which turned out to be a false contact as U-132 was well north. On the 20th of July Vogelsang attacked and severely damaged the SS Frederica Lensen which was part of Convoy QS 19 before departing. The lack of air support due to a late communications and a failure in executing established plans resulted in the redeployment of three Hudsons from 119 Squadron and three Hudsons from 113 Squadron to Mont Joli, where they remained for the balance of the navigation season.

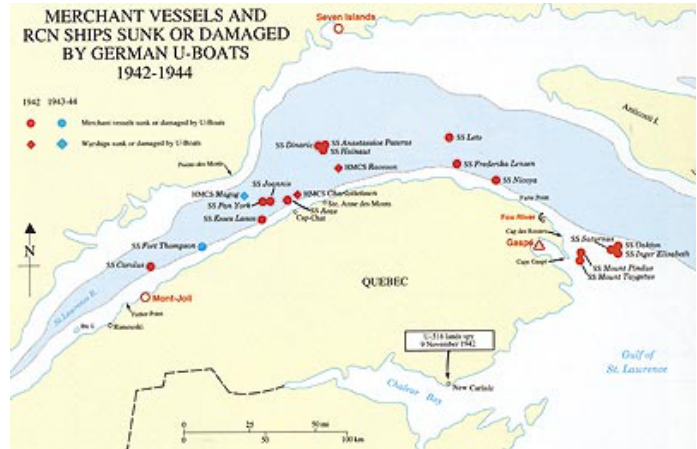
In August of 1942, Admiral Donitz, as a result of Allied success against his U-Boats on the East Coast, deployed three submarines to the Strait of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, U-517 commanded by Paul Hartwig, U-165 commanded by Eberhard Hoffman and U-69 commanded by Ulrich Graf. One other U Boat U-106 was deployed by Donitz to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Eastern Seaboard on the 22nd of September.

Both U-517 and U-165 would create havoc in the Gulf by sinking nine ships and two escorts between the 27th of August and the 16th of September 1942.

U-517 had sunk two ships on the 27th and 28th of August and was lying in wait 100 miles southwest of the Strait of Belle Isle sinking the freighter SS Donald Stewart in the early morning hours of the 3rd of September. At daybreak the first actual air attack in the Gulf was made by a 10 Squadron Digby flown by F/O Sanderson on U-517. The attack did no damage to the submarine as it been submerged for 20 seconds but did damage to the aircraft as the depth charges exploded prematurely.

Recognizing by the 7th of September that there were two submarines operating in the area, EAC reinforced the 119 Squadron Detachment at Mont Joli and used the Hudsons and Ansons of the Greenwood and Debert OTUs. However, not every convoy was screened and without radar and poor weather conditions aircrew were unable to detect the subs. Convoy QS 33 only received some air coverage due to poor weather and although a number of sorties were flown in the general area, U-517 and U-165 sank four ships and the armed yacht HMCS Raccoon, on the 6th and 7th of September. EAC replied by establishing a "Special Submarine Hunting Detachment" at Chatham, New Brunswick composed of Hudsons from 113 Squadron in Yarmouth. Adopting aircraft camouflage and high altitude search patterns, the EAC aircraft were starting to make an impact as U-165's captain reported that air patrols made it difficult to contact convoys east of Gaspé and south of Anticosti.

The very aggressive posture of the submarines furthered their success. On the 11th of September U-517 sank the



Flower Class Corvette HMCS Charlottetown in broad daylight. The U-boats would score three more victories before they departed the Gulf in late September. However, the revised tactics had an effect, as increased air patrols by EAC and in particular 113 Squadron resulted in seven sightings and three well executed attacks on U-517. The last attack on 517 occurred on the 27th of Sept, when F/O Belanger (on the left in the picture) and his Digby crew made three near miss attacks.

As U-517 and U-165 departed they were replaced by U-69, a Minelayer, and U-106. Even though there was a reduction in convoy cycles and an increase in air cover, both of these scored victories including the ferry SS Caribou by U-69 on the 14th of October with a loss of 136 lives.

The enormous effort to defend the Gulf by both the RCN and the RCAF in 1942, would eventually be classified not as a defeat but a strategic victory. Indeed between May and October of 1942 of approximately 5126 operational flights conducted by Eastern Air Command a total of 1590 or 31% were over the Gulf. While no U-boats were sunk and ships, escorts and lives were lost and despite less than adequate number of capable resources that were required for this extensive area, convoy escort and air patrols had been effective in limiting the damage that could have been done. As Minister Macdonald would inform the house in 1943, the RCN and RCAF had done well in limiting the loss to three tons for every thousand tons that had been shipped on the Gulf in 1942. German records would indicate that more than any other single factor, the increases in air patrols in the latter part of September had kept the U-Boats at bay.



Eastern Air Command Lockheed Hudson on patrol with white camouflage paint scheme on the aircraft's belly.

Courtesy of the Shearwater Aviation Museum

DAD WAS AN RCAF STOKER

Commander (Ret'd) Patrick Charlton



My father, Donald Patrick Charlton, was born in the early 1920's and raised in central Halifax. Now, many readers may have only known him by his nickname, Chick. Chick Charlton was well known in the Maritime area for his sports abilities in baseball and hockey.

In the early 40's, Dad was a diesel machinist apprentice in HMC Dockyard. He joined the RCAF in February 1943 as a Machinist Watch Keeper and was assigned to the RCAF Marine Branch based in Shearwater. He served in a number of vessels over the next three years: M305 Arresteur and M306 Detector, both high speed rescue vessels, and in August 1944, Dad joined M456 Eskimo, a 51 metre supply and salvage vessel built in Lunenburg, NS.



Onboard Eskimo

During the course of his wartime service, Dad served over 500 days in RCAF Marine Division vessels. When he wasn't at sea, he played for the RCAF Marines & Flyers hockey team in the Halifax Senior League and during the summer months, could be found on a baseball diamond, as a catcher. He was discharged from active service in February 1946 and was awarded The 1939-

45 Star, The Atlantic Star, the 1939-45 Volunteer Medal (with Bar) and the War Medal 1939-45.

Later in 1946 Dad joined the Moncton Hawks of the old Maritime Big Four Senior Hockey League. The Hawks won the Maritime Title that year, defeating the Cornwall Ontario team in the Eastern Canada Quarter Finals. Unfortunately, the Hawks lost to the Hamilton Tigers in the semi-finals. In 1947-48, he played for the Halifax Crescents moving to the Glace Bay Miners in 1948-49. During the off seasons of 1946 to 1948, Dad played baseball. He was a member of the Halifax Arrows in 1946 - 1947. The Arrows won the Maritime Senior title defeating the Marysville Royals in 1946. Following his stint with the Arrows, he played with the Halifax Capitals in 1947-1948. They won the Maritime title in 1948 defeating Saint John, NB.



I am very proud to say that Dad was inducted into the Nova Scotia Sports Hall of Fame in 2000 and into the City of Moncton Sports Wall of Fame in 2009. He was one heck of an athlete throughout his life, and he was extremely proud of his wartime service as an RCAF Stoker.



RCAF marine crew in Pat Bay, BC.
Photo: Comox Aviation Museum

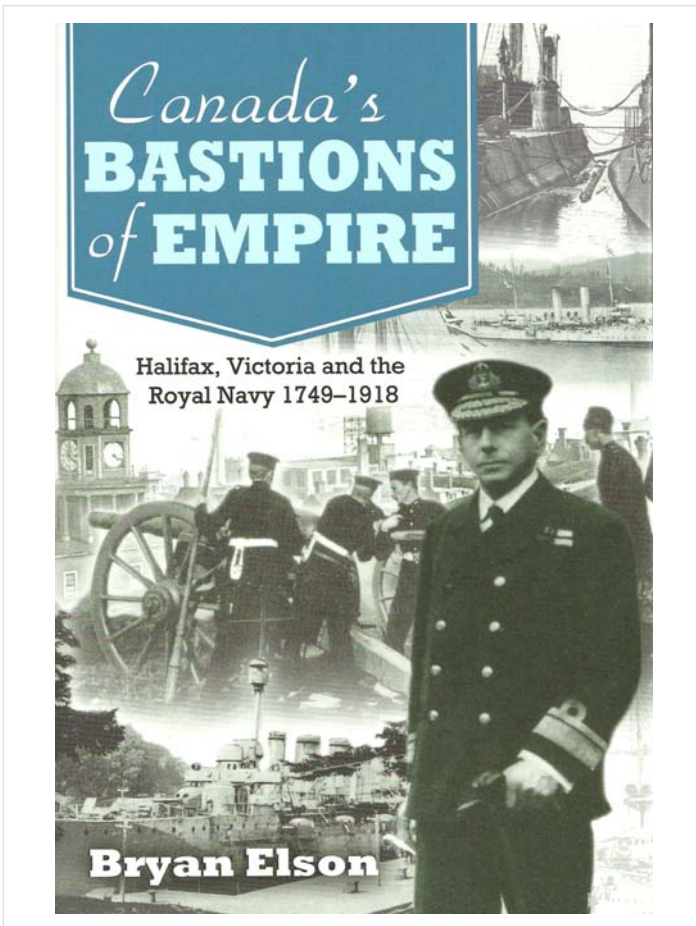
(Commanding Officer, Atlantic Coast), wrote that RCAF boat handling left "little to be desired." He went on to note: "My officers have frequently remarked that the boats were handled, generally, as efficiently as if manned by naval personnel."

"The most colourful task of RCAF marine craft was that of rescue. "Crash boats" stood by at flying boat bases, waiting in the manner that fire engines stood ready at airfields to answer an infrequent call. High-speed launches were often detached to monitor heavily travelled air routes, spending a week or more at sea maintaining a "listening watch" for any reports of ships or aircraft in distress."

<https://legionmagazine.com/en/2011/08/the-role-of-the-boats-air-force-part-46/>

Western Air Command and Eastern Air Command's Marine Branch fleet provided an invaluable service to the RCAF during the war recovering downed air personnel from the sea, towing training targets and shuttling crews, fuel, cargo and munitions to the marine airframes.

Hugh Halliday observed in the *Legion Magazine*, 30 August, 2011 that "the professionalism of Marine Branch members was often noted. On Feb. 9, 1942, Rear-Admiral R.C. Jones, RCN



Canada's Bastions of Empire: Halifax, Victoria and the Royal Navy 1749-1918 by Bryan Elson (available in our gift shop)

Reviewed by Colonel ret'd John Boileau

When Britain (and by extension Canada) declared war on Germany on Aug. 4, 1914, it automatically triggered the War Stage of the Defence Scheme, which included mobilization of the active militia. While many people are familiar with the various mainland and island forts and batteries that ring Halifax Harbour for its defence, few realize that a defensive perimeter was also established around Halifax to protect the city and harbour from a ground attack.

This perimeter consisted of a series inner camps and outer field works sited on or near major roads leading into Halifax. The responsibility for the Dartmouth side was assigned to the Halifax Rifles, while the Princess Louise Fusiliers were allocated the Halifax side.

The Rifles dug trenches, placed barbed wire and constructed blockhouses and dugouts at positions on the high ground south of Lamont Lake, facing eastwards along what is now Highway 7, and on the shore road to Eastern Passage, about where the NSCC is today. Additional wired and entrenched positions were prepared on McNabs and Lawlor's Islands. Meanwhile, the Fusiliers carried out similar defensive measures to the west. At the junction of the Prospect and St. Margaret's Bay Roads barbed-wire trenches protected a machine-gun post, while two log blockhouses backed with stone and earth were constructed to the east of Long Lake, in the area of the junction of the Old Sambro and Herring Cove

Roads. A rapid-fire 1-pounder gun occupied a wired, entrenched position at Herring Cove. Comparable preparations occurred at Esquimalt, near Victoria.

These fascinating facts are only incidental to the main narrative that Bryan Elson tells in Canada's Bastions of Empire. That story is the response of Halifax and Victoria, the country's two naval bases, to "threats, both actual and imaginary," as the First World War approached. To set their reaction in context, Elson first outlines the development of both locations as cities and fortified naval bases from their beginnings.

Of necessity, this entails the "one fundamental geopolitical constant" underlying the entire story: the potential threat to Canada from the United States should war break out between Britain and America. The threat was real. Since it had won its independence from Britain, the new country had expanded in every direction, gobbling up vast swaths of territory from France, Spain, Mexico and Russia. By the end of this expansionist era, the only part of the continent that did not belong to the Americans was Canada.

But it was not without trying. During the American Revolution, the Americans unsuccessfully laid siege to Quebec and would have attacked Halifax had it not been so heavily defended. A few years later, the Americans mounted several invasions at various points along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence border areas during the War of 1812, most of which failed and did not result in any new territory.

After the Civil War, the Americans possessed the largest, best trained and most experienced army in the world. Many expected them to follow through with their long-held dream of divinely-mandated expansion they called Manifest Destiny-North America as one nation-the United States. This perceived threat was one of the factors that led to Confederation.

Yet when war came, it wasn't with the Americans; it was with Germany. But fortuitously many of the preparations for the defence of Halifax and Esquimalt were already in place in accordance with long-standing plans.

Elson does a masterly job of weaving the reader through the naval and army defensive preparations during the 19th century on both coasts, as changes in armament due to larger guns, breech-loading weapons and rifled barrels advanced rapidly, requiring these ports to continuously upgrade their defences, all set against the geopolitical background.

Readers who enjoy political, military or local history will find something to please them here. It is a worthy addition to Elson's two previous books, Nelson's Yankee Captain: The Life of Boston Loyalist Sir Benjamin Hallowell (2208) and First to Die: The First Canadian Navy Casualties in the First World War (2010).

John Boileau writes frequently about military matters. He spent 37 years in the Canadian Army. This review first appeared in the Halifax Chronicle Herald on February 16, 2015, and is reprinted with permission of the author.

A DRAMATIC ENCOUNTER AT SEA: WINSTON CHURCHILL SALUTES CONVOY HX 143

Trustee Carl Anderson



The invasion of Poland by Germany in September 1939 brought Britain and its Dominions, including Canada, into the second European war of the twentieth century. By June of 1940 German forces occupied continental Europe from France to Norway so that following the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkerque, Britain faced a solid wall of German-occupied territory across the English Channel and North Sea. The Royal Air Force had turned back the German Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain in the summer and fall of 1940, but in early 1941 the Blitz continued and the threat of a German invasion remained. Britain stood alone. The sea lanes reaching across the North Atlantic from the Americas were her lifeline, bringing much of her food, fuel, and war materiel from Canada and the neutral United States. By mid-1941 the convoy system was firmly in place for ocean shipping, but the rapidly expanding German U-boat fleet was winning the Battle of the Atlantic.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and United States President Franklin Roosevelt decided to meet in secret in early August 1941 to confer on the conduct of the European war. It would be the first of eleven such meetings over the next four years. They chose to rendezvous at sea in Placentia Bay, on the south coast of Newfoundland.



Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt during meeting on the quarterdeck of HMS Prince of Wales during the Atlantic Conference, 10 August 1941. Immediately behind them are Admiral E J King, USN and Admiral Stark USN. © IWM (A 4817)

Churchill and his entourage sailed to Placentia Bay in the Royal Navy's King George V-class battleship HMS Prince of Wales, escorted by the destroyer HMS Ripley and the Royal Canadian Navy destroyers HMCS Restigouche, Assiniboine. Roosevelt came in the US Navy cruiser USS Augusta, escorted by the battleship USS Arkansas, cruiser USS Tuscaloosa, eight US destroyers, and several auxiliary vessels.



HMS Prince of Wales dwarfs USS McDougall in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland while receiving President Roosevelt, August 10, 1941. Exactly four months later, on December 10, 1941 "POW" was lost with 327 members of the crew to Japanese aircraft in the South China Sea.

For four days, August 9-12, the British and US leaders conferred, and their discussions produced the joint resolution that became known as The Atlantic Charter. Churchill and his party then departed Placentia Bay in Prince of Wales with her escorts. On Friday 15 August 1941, while 400 nautical miles WSW of Iceland, Prince of Wales overtook an eastbound convoy. John Winton, in *The War at Sea*, wrote that, on the voyage home from this meeting the Prime Minister was told that there was a huge convoy ahead of Prince of Wales and only just off her course. He insisted on seeing it.

What happened next is best described by eyewitnesses. The London *Daily News* reporter Henry V. Morton, who accompanied Churchill, wrote in his book *Atlantic Meeting*, "Mr. Churchill was longing to see a convoy. He used to go down to the Map Room time after time and measure the distance of the nearest, and so keen was his desire to see the life blood of Britain in circulation that the Captain and First Sea Lord knew that sooner or later his wish would have to be gratified. And this happened on Friday, 15 August.



The Prime Minister Winston Churchill gives the 'V for Victory' sign to a passing ship from the deck of HMS Prince of Wales as she leaves Reykjavik, Iceland, August 1941.

There was a magnificent convoy of seventy-two ships ahead of us. They had, of course, been plotted on the map for some time and, as we rapidly overhauled them on Friday, Mr. Churchill, now restored to health, pointed out that only a slight deflection from our course would take us into them. It was therefore decided to do this, and a wireless warning to the corvettes was accordingly sent out."

The convoy, HX 143, had departed Halifax for Liverpool on 5 August and consisted of 73 merchant ships in 12 columns. The ships were escorted by the armed merchant cruiser HMS Wolfe, destroyer HMS Burnham, and four Canadian corvettes- HMCS Agassiz, Galt, Levis, and Mayflower. There were 52 ships of British registry, 11 Norwegian, 5 Dutch, 3 Swedish, 1 Polish, and 1 Greek. Typical of the convoys at that time, they carried general cargo (21 ships), oil, gasoline, or benzene (21), foodstuffs (16), iron and steel (7), and phosphates (6).

Morton continues, "The first I knew of it was when I met the signal officer in the ward-room during the afternoon. He was poring over a code book and seemed rather worried. He explained his problem." "The signal I'm to make to the convoy" he said, "is 'The Prime Minister wishes you the best of luck.' But there's no signal for the Prime Minister in the International Code. The nearest thing is 'The Chief Minister of State,' which doesn't sound a bit right to me." "Is there a flag for church?" I asked. "Yes." "And hill?"

"I see the idea- Churchill." He came back later with the message changed to "Good Voyage, Churchill." "I shall spell out Churchill," he said. "There can't be any mistake then."

It was not until eight-thirty that evening that we ran into the convoy. I was in the ward-room at the time. The telephone rang and [Lieut. Cmdr.] George Ferguson spoke from the bridge, telling me to go out on the quarter-deck at once.

I ran out and saw an amazing sight. We were racing through the middle of the convoy. There were tramps, tankers, liners and whalers, salty old tubs and cargo boats of every type, age and size on each side of us, the nearest only two hundred yards away, the crews clustered on decks and fo'c'sles, waving their caps in the air and cheering like mad.



Part of the Churchill Signal flying at the upper yard of HMS Prince of Wales. © IWM (A 4990)

Never had I seen anything like it in my life. After days on a lonely ocean, to come into this fleet of seventy- two ships travelling in long lines and covering many square miles of the Atlantic would have been exciting even in peace-time. It was like meeting a town at sea, Blackburn or Oldham, with all the chimneys smoking.

Now and again a siren tried to give us the V sign in Morse, but came to grief on the dots. Men in shirt sleeves, sailors, a few passengers, stood clustered wherever they could see us best, waving away, laughing and shouting at the top of their voices, but the wind carried their words from us. I expect it was, "Good old Winnie!"

Guarding this mighty fleet were eight little grey corvettes lifting on the swell, snapping round the flanks of the convoy like sheep-dogs, scurrying up in [the] rear to hurry on a laggard, and dashing off into the open as if they had smelt the big bad wolf.

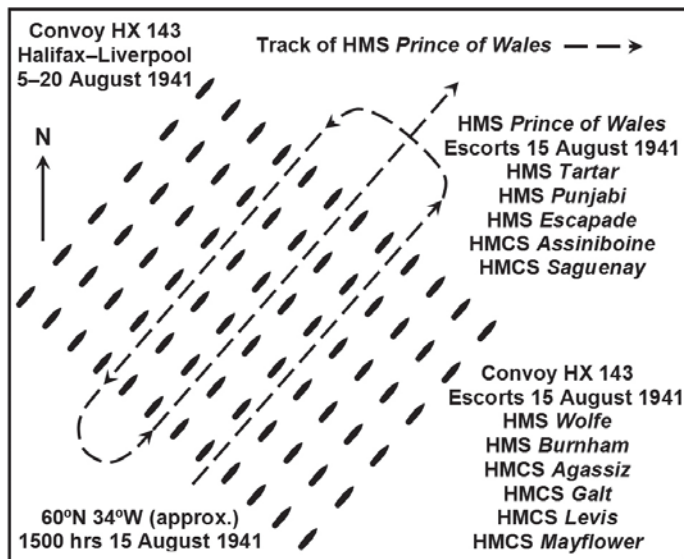
We went through with our destroyer screen at twenty-two knots. The convoy was doing eight. If they were thrilling to us, we must have been equally thrilling to them as we shot

ahead with our painted guns levelled and twelve coloured flags and a pennant flying from our main foremast. The pennant at the lower yard showed that the signal was made in the International Code. A three-flag hoist above it read, PYU - "Good Voyage," and a nine-flag hoist on the port side spelt Churchill.

As each ship read the message we could hear the sound of cheering as we came level with them, we could see skippers laughing inside wheel-houses, trying to wave with one hand and touch off the siren with the other; and upon our bridge Winston Churchill waving his hand in the air, making a V with the forefingers of his right hand, was cheering as madly as any of the men who were cheering him.

As he looked over the sea from the altitude of the bridge, he could see the whole convoy moving towards England. We saw it spread out for miles over the Atlantic, moving in six [twelve] columns. He saw ships with aeroplanes tied to their decks, he saw cargo-boats wallowing to the plimsol line with food and munitions, liners deep in the water with every kind of war material and tankers heavy with petrol- a stupendous and heartening sight for the leader of an island at war.

Having passed through them, we turned and saw our white wake streaking backward, and we saw the ships tossing in the tidal wave of our wash. Then, to our surprise, the Prince of Wales with her destroyers began to describe a circle, and we raced back behind the convoy. ... The Prime Minister insisted on seeing it all over again!



Track of HMS Prince of Wales

So on we came a second time, the bright message still at our masthead, our grey guns levelled; the sea curving in two white lines from our bows; and they saw in us the majesty of British sea power as we saw in them the gallantry of the Merchant Navy. It was a grand meeting on the high seas in war-time. I doubt if there has ever been a finer. It symbolized the two great forces which have made Britain and her Empire great and powerful in the world; the two forces we must thank when we eat our bread in freedom at this hour. As I watched those merchant ships so heavily loaded pass by, I

wished that every one at home in England could have seen them too. No one, seeing those brave ships loaded with help for us passing through the battlefield of the North Atlantic, could ever again waste a crust of bread or think it smart to scrounge a pint of petrol.

Again the cheers sounded as the Prince of Wales went past. V flags were hoisted by tramps and tankers, the deep sirens of liners and the shrill yelps of tramps sent out one dash and three misguided dots into the air of evening; and, once again, we saw the tiny cheering figures on decks and fo'c'sles as we raced across the grey sea on our way. And, looking back at them with pride and gladness in our hearts, we saw the convoy fade in the growing dusk to black dots on the skyline; then they disappeared and there remained only a smudge of smoke to tell that seventy-two ships were going home to England.

Mr. Churchill watched them until the dusk and the distance hid them from view. "A delectable sight" he said.

Sub-Lieut. Alan G. C. Franklin, RNVR, an officer in Prince of Wales, wrote in his memoir *One Year of Life*, Friday 15th August 1941. We were in the doldrums of a normal, uneventful voyage, the only 'incidents' being odd alterations of course which the evidence of the [ship's] War Room dictated. Another thing that huge chart with every ship plotted on it showed- an eight-knot, seventy-two ship, eastward bound convoy was ahead, just off our course. That was enough for the Prime Minister. He had to see it.

It was the high spot of the voyage home. In the evening we overtook them. The Prince of Wales went straight through the middle of the convoy, our escort taking the outer lanes. The merchantmen were doing eight knots to our twenty-two. So relatively we sped by at fourteen knots. From her signal halliards flew the signal in the international code, 'Good Luck- Churchill'.

Those seventy-two ships went mad. It was a great moment for everyone both in the convoy and the Prince of Wales, but for none more than for the Prime Minister. Quickly every ship was flying the 'V' flag; some tried a dot-dot-dot-dash salute on their sirens. In the nearest ships men could be seen waving, laughing and- we guessed though we could not hear-cheering. On the bridge the Prime Minister was waving back to them, as was every man on our own decks, cheering with them, two fingers on his right hand making the famous 'V' sign.

Soon we were through them and well ahead, when to everyone's surprise we did an eight-point turn, and shortly after another. Mr. Churchill wanted an encore. He just could not see enough of those incomparable officers and men of the Merchant Navy, perpetually in the front line of the Battle of the Atlantic.

So, on the flank of the convoy, we dropped astern of it, did a further sixteen-point turn, and then steamed through its ranks once more. If dusk had not been approaching I believe we should have done it again and again!

Capt. R. E. Bayley, in one of the HX 143 merchant vessels, recalled: “We were on the starboard wing, keeping station to fog buoys for some time... the fog cleared a little and... the Indian lookout on the starboard cab came running at me pointing... there emerging from the light fog on the starboard quarter was a battleship!”

She seemed huge and infinitely menacing but since the convoy was holding its course... and we had no orders I assumed that she was friendly... she came upon the starboard wing with no more than a cable [600 ft.] between us... my old cap and stained duffel coat were in sharp contrast with the impressive array of gold braid, full uniform, collars and ties. The officers looked cool and competent and the whole effect of this magnificent vessel was exciting and impressive.”

The British Under Secretary of State Sir Alexander Cadogan, a member of Churchill's party, wrote in his diary, Saturday, 16 August: “Yesterday evening, about 8, we sighted a convoy of 72 ships, in good formation. We went right thro' the middle of them (they doing only about 7 knots), turned back again thro' another part of the line and then up through them again. It was a remarkable sight. The forest of funnels looked almost like a town. The evening was fine and it was a beautiful and inspiring sight (though it is disturbing to see what a target they offer, and how little protection they have). They were in 13 columns of 6, and keeping very good formation. Good luck to them.”

The last word goes to Prime Minister Churchill himself. In an address to the British people over the BBC on 24 August 1941, he described his dramatic encounter with HX 143:

“And so we came back across the ocean waves, uplifted in spirit, fortified in resolve. Some American destroyers, which were carrying mails to the United States Marines in Iceland, happened to be going the same way too, so we made a goodly company at sea together. And when we were right out in mid-passage one afternoon, a noble sight broke on the view. We overtook one of the convoys which carried the munitions and supplies of the new world to sustain the champions of freedom in the old. The whole horizon, bold broad horizon, seemed filled with ships. Seventy or eighty ships of all kinds and sizes arrayed in fourteen lines, each of which could have been drawn with a ruler. Hardly a wisp of smoke. Not a straggler, but all bristling with cannon and other precautions on which I will not dwell, and all surrounded by their British escorting vessels, while overhead the far-ranging Catalina air boats soared, vigilant protecting eagles in the sky. And then I felt that hard and terrible and long drawn-out as this struggle may be, we shall not be denied the strength to do our duty till the end.”

Prime Minister Churchill expressed his admiration for the merchantmen and their naval escorts so eloquently that he might be forgiven for misidentifying as British the four Royal Canadian Navy "sheep-dog" corvettes HMCS Agassiz, Galt, Levis, and Mayflower.

After a one-day stopover in Iceland, Prince of Wales sighted HX 143 again on 17 August as the convoy approached British waters, where it arrived without loss. Less than four months later, however, on 10 December 1941, HMS Prince of Wales and the battlecruiser HMS Repulse were sunk off the Malay Peninsula in the South China Sea after being bombed and torpedoed by Japanese airplanes. Sub-Lieut. Alan Franklin was among the survivors.

A year and a half later in mid-1943, despite the growing skill and numbers of German submarines in the Atlantic, Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Navy escort ships, aided by Allied code breakers and long-range aircraft, gained the upper hand and ultimately won the Battle of the Atlantic.



Sir Winston Churchill had a great affection for Canada and visited here nine times for both pleasure and business during his life. As Britain's wartime prime minister he visited 4 times, (5 if you count his shipboard meeting with Roosevelt in Placentia Bay): twice while en route to meet the President in Washington (December 1941 and May 1943) and twice to attend the Quebec Conferences (August 1943 and September 1944).

CREW MEMBER PURRFECTED DIRECTION FINDING

Lou Howard, MID, RCNVR

HMCS Sarnia had a cat nicknamed Huff Duff (or HF/DF for High Frequency Direction Finding). When we returned to Halifax harbour from convoy escort at the end of February 1945, Huff Duff jumped ship and two days later we had to sail again without him.

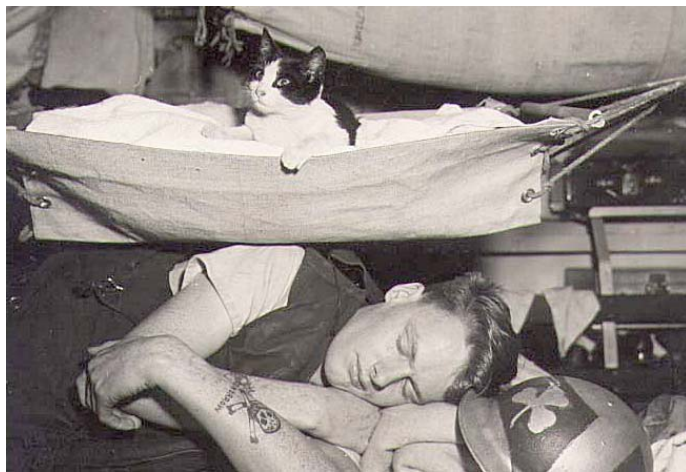
Well, there was a lot of rumbling from the crew - usually a superstitious lot - as they wondered whether the cat knew something bad about this trip and they were not aware. Five days later we returned and had to tie up three ships out from a jetty completely different jetty from the one that we had sailed from.

At about 2000, the duty quartermaster rapped on the wardroom door to report that an AWOL crew member had returned and asked what should be done.

The duty officer went to the quarter deck and there was Huff Duff. To get to our ship, the cat had to pass over two other ships, as we were the outside ship, but also we were at a different jetty.

Huff Duff was brought into the wardroom, reprimanded by the duty officer for being AWOL, and immediately brought up to the captain's cabin, where Lieutenant Bob Douty solemnly conducted a hearing with four of us from the wardroom as witnesses. When the order came to "off caps" the cap removed from Huff Duff's head was a rum tot measuring cup. Huff Duff was found guilty and the punishment was 30 day stoppage of leave.

On our next convoy escort, the whole ship was more at ease because Huff Duff was on board and at his post as usual.



Editor's Note: While we couldn't locate a photograph of Huff Duff we did find this one of HMCS Iroquois's feline settling for a catnap in customized hammock. During the war, it was not uncommon to have a cat or dog aboard. Cats in particular were valued for keeping the rodent population at bay, but both brought comfort and companionship to the sailors. Even Prime Minister Winston Churchill had a fondness for cats as seen in the picture below as he stoops to stroke Blackie, the ship's cat of HMS Prince of Wales, while the ship was alongside in Argentina in 1941. Blackie is famous for surviving the sinking of the Prince of Wales by the Japanese in December and taken ashore to Singapore with the survivors.



Convoy EG9 rafted together May 1945 . L-R: HMC Ships Loch Alvie K428, Waskesiu K330, Monnow K441 and Nene K270 . In foreground RCN sailor on stern of HMCS Coppercliff - National Archives of Canada PA191026



HIGH FREQUENCY DIRECTION FINDING

HF/DF was a very useful U-Boat detection device, and was fitted in destroyers early in WWII, spreading to other escorts as the availability of cathode ray tubes improved. The idea was to detect transmissions from surfaced U-Boats as they reported their position and sighting-reports to U-

Boat Command HQ (BdU) and other U-Boats in order to coordinate attacks on convoys. This bearing, or a submarine probability area if two or more bearings were reported and plotted, would permit a course alteration to avoid a U-Boat, or to dispatch ASW forces to detect, hold-down, or attack the enemy submarine.

SISTER OF THE SPACE AGE

Rear-Admiral John Newton, Commander Joint Task Force Atlantic and Maritime Forces Atlantic



Photo: Corporal Anthony Chand, Formation Imaging Services

In a navy there are events that build institutional memory and foster fellowship. The loss of a ship in action or the heroic deeds of a crew are examples. Paying off ships that have served with distinction evokes similar feelings.

My first ship was HMCS Iroquois, DDG 280 - flagship of the Tribal Class, sister of the space age, the rabbit-eared destroyer and custodian of Battle Honours from World War II and the Korean conflict. From Iroquois come my fondest memories.

Indeed, the entire serving leadership of the navy learned on her deck plates. Commander Royal Canadian Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Norman, Deputy Commander RCN and Commander Maritime Forces Pacific all served in Iroquois. The RCN Command Chief, Maritime Forces Pacific Chief and Maritime Forces Atlantic Chief served in her too. Her influence can be felt in the important offices of the Vice Chief of Defence Staff and Chief of Defence Staff where Command Chief Warrant Officers fondly remember their own Iroquois stories.

I joined a ship of expert sailors charged with excitement from a perilous rescue. On 4 December, 1983 Iroquois rescued all 20 crewmembers from the freighter Ho Ming foundering in a gale. For their actions, 12 Iroquois crewmembers were awarded the Star of Courage and six the Medal of Bravery.

The ship was amazing Canadian technology. It deployed a sonar into the depths from a launching system in the stern. We always seemed to be recovering the submersible in far worse conditions than we launched it; the threat of losing it created a constant tension between the Bridge and the launch crew. It was a frightening place to venture at night, bathed in red light and angry waves boiling at your feet.

Our two helicopters flew countless anti-submarine sorties against an active Soviet navy. The coordination between the combat operators in the ship and aircrew demanded close attention; flying always seemed to occur at night and in gales. A great Canadian invention, the Recovery Assist, Secure and Traverse System made all this possible for its needs to be stated that Iroquois rolled wildly. It was a punishing ride that left us exhausted after long watches, unable to sleep even when we did crawl into our racks.



The Captain of Iroquois of that era went on to become Acting Chief of Defence Staff during the difficult 1990s; a leader held in great respect in the Canadian Forces. Prominent even after military service, Vice Admiral Murray would serve as Deputy Minister to Veterans Affairs and Fisheries and Oceans.

Iroquois endured long deployments, sailed frequently with NATO and was flagship for the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (1987) under Commodore Lynn Mason. Later, in Command of Maritime Forces Atlantic he influenced leadership values as the navy moved quickly to introduce women into combat roles. In turn, Vice Admiral Mason was appointed Deputy Chief of Defence Staff and then commander of the navy.

Our Second in Command was a no-nonsense Lieutenant Commander. Greg Maddison worked relentlessly on our officer like qualities, taught us how to generate naval readiness and concepts like service before self. Later, as Commander Standing Naval Force Atlantic with his pennant flying from Iroquois he led the squadron to the Former Yugoslavia and formulated the operation to starve the flow of armaments that fuelled civil war. He too would command the navy then spent four busy years as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff overseeing all Canadian Forces missions.

In time, Iroquois was modernized with command and control and powerful air defence systems that assured the security of naval task groups deployed globally into increasingly tense situations. Called to action immediately after 9/11, she was flagship of the Task Group deployed as the vanguard of the Canadian commitment that became the Afghanistan mission. Then Commodore Drew Robertson would go on to command the navy, refining the statements of requirements for the Joint Support Ship and Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship projects.

In 2003, while deploying back to the Arabian Sea, Iroquois' helicopter crashed but her alert crew saved a far worse calamity. The ship's commander, Paul Maddison would later command the Royal Canadian Navy. Preceding that, he was the navy's Deputy Commander and worked hand-in-

glove with Vice Admiral Dean McFadden to set the navy on its current course of organizational transformation and fleet renewal.

Most recently, the latest generation of Iroquois sailors deserve no less special mention. They diligently husbanded their iconic ship and kept very busy helping generate the combat readiness of the rapidly modernizing Halifax Class while executing continental defence tasks. For the countless officers and non-commissioned members who had the privilege of serving in Iroquois, others in our navy shared similar experiences in Algonquin, Protecteur and Preserver. We are all intensely proud of each of these storied ships. It is assured that we will exert intelligent and resolute influence over naval affairs shaped by our lessons learned operating these exceptional ships over the past 44 years.

HMCS IROQUOIS LINEAGE

The first ship in the RCN to bear the name Iroquois was a Tribal-Class destroyer, built in the United Kingdom and commissioned in 1942 (she was a sister ship to HMCS Haida which is preserved as a museum ship in Hamilton, Ontario). During the Second World War, she saw much action while attached to the British Home Fleet, variously escorting convoys to Gibraltar and to Murmansk (Russia), and in patrolling the Bay of Biscay after the D-Day invasion. Returning to Canada after the war, she was extensively modified to anti-submarine destroyer-escort standard and re-commissioned in time to perform two tours of duty in the Korean War. She was paid off in 1962.

BATTLE HONOURS

Following RCN tradition, the battle honours earned by the first-of-name Iroquois have been perpetuated by the present ship of that name, which has herself earned a theatre honour for operations in the Arabian Sea. These honours would all be perpetuated to any future ship of this name.

ATLANTIC, 1943	NORWAY, 1945
ARCTIC, 1943-45	KOREA, 1952-53
BISCAY, 1943-44	ARABIAN SEA

CONNECTIONS:

HMCS IROQUOIS (II) AND HMCS SACKVILLE

by *LCdr Doug Thomas*

The current HMCS Iroquois, to be paid off on 1 May, and Canada's Naval Memorial, HMCS Sackville, have many connections. Among the more interesting is the number of former Captains of Iroquois who have had a prominent role with the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and The Last Corvette.

Ted Kelly (Captain RCN, ret'd) Trustee and Chair of the Battle of the Atlantic Place Project Working Group, was her CO from July '79 to 1981. He was relieved by Lynn Mason (VAdm RCN, ret'd) who served in that capacity until 30 June 1982, is a Life Trustee and was heavily and successfully involved in Trust membership drives. Cal Mofford (Cmdre RCN, ret'd) captained Iroquois for several years from January 2001, is a Trustee, Acting Chair for several years and more recently Chair of the Project Fundraising Committee. Other former COs of Iroquois

who are stalwart members of the Trust include Vice-Admirals (RCN, ret'd) Larry Murray, Gary Garnett, Paul Maddison and Captain (RCN, ret'd) BR Brown.

Current Trustees cherish the warm relationship we have enjoyed with Iroquois, the occasions when we have hosted members of her ship's company in our Mess, and have been hosted in return. In 2013, Cdr. Matthew Coates, then-CO of Iroquois, transported to Halifax and presented to us a fine framed copy of a hand-drawn chart from the Fort Perch Rock Marine Radio Museum near Liverpool, England illustrating WWII ship losses in the Labrador Sea. That chart now is prominently displayed in Sackville's Mess.

Iroquois has served the Nation very well since she was commissioned over four decades ago in July 1972. To paraphrase the biblical quote, we say: "Bravo Zulu, thou good and faithful servant" and to all those who have served in her "Fair winds and following seas."

RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Herb Roberts like many Prairie boys joined the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserves (RCNVR) during the war. Much later in life and after story telling event at the Crow's Nest in St. John's in 2007 Herb was inspired to put pen to paper to record his wartime experience during the Battle of the Atlantic. We are priveleged to have a copy of Herb's recollections and will be publishing his narrative in issues to come. Herb Roberts passed away in Victoria, 2 Sept., 2009.

A DECISION TO VOLUNTEER

I was 17 years old and in grade 11 when war broke out on September 3, 1939. Grade 11 was considered junior matriculation in those days and only those going on to university went on to grade 12. There were only about 10 students in this class and only one female. Most women finished in grade 10 or earlier. Lord Kitchener High School drew students from East Transcona and North Kildonan which was quite a large catchment area but as you can see from the numbers most people had already left school to seek employment.

We had a very diverse collection of people that included a wide variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. I remember debates over the Spanish Civil War that started in 1936. There was quite a bit of newspaper coverage of the outbreak and progress of the war; because Hitler was using this as a practice area for "Blitzkrieg" tactics it was a source of controversy. From these days through to the outbreak of World War II, and because of the many backgrounds in the school there were sometimes heated arguments between those that thought that Hitler was doing the right thing and those vehemently opposed. Probably about 80% of the people were opposed to what Hitler was doing. I recall discussing the war with my father in the early days and he was of the conclusion that it would not have much effect on us in Canada.

I remember talking to school friends about what service we would like to get into. Flying was the most desirable at that time. I guess it was just assumed that we would join up when we got to be 18 years old. I probably didn't think too much about it. The first year of the war was what was called the "Phony War" when not much was happening. Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister continued to pursue a policy of appeasement; bombing raids from England at the time consisted of dropping leaflets rather than bombs. After the invasion of Poland not a lot happened until the invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940 followed by Belgium, Holland and France in May 1940. Churchill became Prime Minister at this time and the real war was started. It should be noted that Hitler had already authorized unlimited submarine warfare in February 1940 which obviously had an impact on the Canadian Navy. Once these events occurred we all became much more aware of the major threat to Britain and perhaps North America and more people headed to the recruiting centres.

We were part of the British Empire. This was still a big thing at that time. So, because Britain was at war we were

of the view that it was our duty to support them in their defense. The motivation to join was simply that we had an obligation to Britain. So, after graduating and spending most of the summer working in market gardens and a survey company for much of the winter, it was off to war.

I remember getting called up. I was out surveying in May 1941 at a site just outside of Winnipeg near Transcona where a cordite plant (explosives for weapons) was to be built. A car drove up in the morning with a recruiting officer who asked if I was Herb Roberts. After I acknowledged this he asked me to get in and go to HMCS Chippawa right away to have my final medical. I was to be shipped to Halifax by Friday of that week.



Herb Roberts collection

A YOUNG RECRUIT

I applied to the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserves in December 1940 through the recruiting centre of HMCS Chippawa in Winnipeg. I originally wanted to be a part of the Royal Canadian Air Force: I had applied to the RCAF in the fall of 1940. There were big line-ups for volunteers because of all the publicity around the air Battle of Britain. I did not get any response so by November I gave up and went to HMCS Chippawa to sign up for the navy. One week later I was accepted into the RCNVR. Five months later I was on the train for Halifax where I took training at HMCS Stadacona II as a telegrapher.

It is funny how things work: while in Halifax I received a letter that had been forwarded from my folks; it was my notice to apply for acceptance into the RCAF. Of course, it was too late. I carried on and graduated from signal school in September 1941. (This was the last class at this location. Subsequently the training was done at St. Hyacinthe Quebec.) I had several options for training but had selected signals and telegraphy largely because this is the role my

father had been trained for during WWI with the Canadian Army. He indicated it was a good service to be in so I followed in his footsteps.

After signal school I was drafted to Radio Control Office in Halifax doing 8 hour shifts while living off-base. This was only for a short time until I was posted in December 1941 to the Matapedia, a Flower Class Corvette. I was on this ship for almost 2 years until November 1943. Over this period we mainly worked out of Halifax, St. John's, Boston and New York as a part of the mid-ocean escorts to Iceland and Ireland or on the "Triangle Run." The turn-around point was St. John's where the "mid-ocean" escorts and the "Triangle Run" escorts were provisioned. We seemed to spend more time there than at our home base of Halifax. Boston and New York (Staten Island) were always a welcome stop as we awaited new convoy assignments.

THE FIRST VOYAGE

My first trip aboard the Matapedia (K112) took us from Halifax to Iceland about December 21 or 22, 1941. I had only been aboard for a week and had just been acclimatized to the ship. I was one of three telegraphers on board. This was an eventful first trip as many onboard, including the Radar Operator became seasick. The RO was so ill that he was out of commission from the time we left harbour until we reached Iceland. I recall that he spent most of the time under a table in the radar room. Several of the officers felt that he might die because he had not eaten or taken significant liquids during the trip except for some force feeding. He was taken off in Iceland and assessed by doctors onboard the large Destroyer Tender HMS Hecla, who could not find anything wrong. Seasickness, at the time, was not recognized as an illness and ill as he was, he had to get back on board for the return journey.

It was even worse coming back. A day out of Iceland we hit a hurricane with reported winds of force 8 to 12 during a four day period. Where I worked in the radio room, located just behind the wheelhouse, there was no ventilation or air circulation in this room. Radios were built with vacuum tubes in those days and they, unlike today's transistors, generate a lot of heat, so I would occasionally open the door for fresh air. I was on the first watch after leaving Iceland between 2000 and midnight. Opening the door was not the right thing to do at that time. Just as I opened the door, the ship took a monster wave over the entire bridge. It took out all the windows in the wheelhouse (located just below the bridge), soaked all the charts, as well as all the electrical equipment in the radio room. This situation was resolved through the heroic actions of the Captain, Lieutenant Herman RCNR (a former schooner skipper from Lunenburg) and our navigating officer, Lt. Gordon RCNR, who had previously worked on merchant ships on the Great Lakes. Lt. Gordon climbed up on the mast in front of the bridge and stood there while seaman handed up planks that he was able to secure to provide temporary protection for the wheelhouse." All while the storm continued. He saved the day. It took three days to dry out all the radio equipment before it was operational again. And it was not until after repairs in Halifax that the boat was really functional again. While the corvettes

were a very wet and lively boat they did prove to be very seaworthy. And we did live to talk about it!

THE THREAT OF ICE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

Ice was one of the great hazards of the North Atlantic run. It was dangerous both as icebergs and as encrusted ice on the ship. This would occur in gales when the temperature was below freezing. Sea ice, depending on salinity will freeze about -2C.

The Matapedia had one horrible adventure with ice build up. I can't remember the date or year but we were returning to St. John's and still about 2 to 3 days out when we ran into a storm. It was hard to believe it could get so cold so fast. Within 3 or 4 hours we were completely covered in ice. For example, a life line ran from the fo'c'sle to the stern and was about 1/2 in. thick. (This was a line that you could be strapped to or hang on to if you had to be on deck in rough weather). Well it built up to have ice 5 or 6 inches thick. The entire crew was employed at chipping ice in a cycle of 2 hours on and one hour off continuously. The threat of course is that with the heavy weight of the ice topsides the boat would "turn turtle". Even when we returned to St. John's we still had tons of ice buildup above the water line.



*Anyone for a gunnery shoot?
Herb Roberts collection
HMCS Matapedia, 1943*



*HMCS Oakville vs U-94
Marc Magee*

U-BOATS SUNK BY THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY DURING WW2

J. David Perkins, RCN

THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Historically, it can be said that the Allies won the Battle of the Atlantic on the 24th of May, 1943, when the German C-in-C Navy, Grand Admiral Karl Donitz, issued the order to withdraw his submarines from the North Atlantic shipping lanes. Forty-one U-boats had been destroyed during that fateful month, the highest monthly loss suffered by the U-Boats since the beginning of the war – a loss rate so severe it was no longer worth sending the boats to sea

For over three years a bitter battle of attrition had raged along the North Atlantic sea lanes between the Allied escort forces and Donitz's U-boat wolf packs. The battlefield stretched from the Western Approaches off the west coast of Ireland to the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.

Throughout the storm lashed winter of 1942-43 the balance seemed to be turning in Germany's favour as shipping losses reached historic levels. During the month of November, 1942, one-hundred and twenty-six ships totaling 802,160 tons were lost. During the spring of 1943, however, the cumulative effects of improvements in long-range air cover, naval intelligence, escort tactics, radar and anti-submarine weapons swung the balance inexorably in the Allies' favour. By the end of May, 1943 the U-boats offensive in the North Atlantic had ground to a near-halt and would never recover sufficiently to imperil Allied war plans.

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

It is a fact of war that the only real foundation for victory is the destruction of the enemy's forces. In the Battle of the Atlantic, this meant sinking U-boats.

During WWII Canada's navy was responsible for nearly half of the convoy escort duties in the North Atlantic. This being so, it could be presumed that the RCN sank a proportionate number of enemy submarines. Such is not the case, however. Given the number of warships that Canada assigned to the North Atlantic escort duties, the number of convoys escorted and the number of contacts made with the enemy, results lagged far behind expectations. So far as maintaining the sea-borne lifeline to Britain was concerned the main objective of the escorts during the early stages of the battle had to be the preservation of the convoys.

Although this was best achieved by destroying U-boats it was not always possible to do so. Suitable warships were in short supply and their capabilities somewhat limited. Frequently outnumbered, the escort forces were hard put keeping the U-boats at bay, never mind sinking them.

For the British, experience had brought about a higher rate of success. This was achieved through a critical analysis of their tactics, the development of independent submarine hunting groups, modernization of the escort forces and the updating of equipment. Regrettably, this was not so with the Canadians who found themselves a year or more behind the Royal Navy in almost every respect.

The RCN escort forces, however, were technically independent of the RN and Canada was running its own show. For the British Admiralty, which was in overall command of the North Atlantic convoys, this was a frustrating situation.

THE CANADIAN RECORD

During the whole of the war RCN warships sank, or participated in the sinking of, only 33 enemy submarines. These included 30 German U-boats (out of 292 sinkings in which Allied surface ships participated) and three Italian submarines, two of which were sunk in the Mediterranean. This represents approximately eleven-percent of the Axis submarines destroyed by Allied surface forces in the Atlantic. Not surprisingly, the Admiralty analysts produced statistics which showed that a significantly higher proportion of merchant ship losses was taking place in Canadian escorted convoys.

Canadian ships were well built and they fought as hard as anyone else's, but they lacked the modern refinements that would have made them fully effective. The Canadians were not achieving the success their numbers and efforts warranted.

THE PROBLEMS

The RCN's poor record was a direct result of the exceptionally rapid expansion that took place between 1940 and 1943. Inexperience, bad manning practices, the absence of a tactical doctrine, the lack of tactical training facilities and outdated technologies being the most important.

The commander most affected by the situation, Flag Officer Newfoundland Force, Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, was well aware of the situation but nothing he could do would make Ottawa take action. Neither Naval Service Headquarters nor the Government could be persuaded to recognize the problem, let alone take corrective action. This was a depressing commentary on the state of the Canadian escort forces and a damning indictment of NSHQ's inability to appreciate the difficulties being faced by the officers and men of Canada's hard-pressed escort navy.

In the end the decision was taken from the Canadian authorities. In January 1943, as the battle reached its most desperate stages, the Admiralty, with reluctant NSHQ consent, reassigned four Canadian escort groups, brought them under British Command and withdrew them from the North Atlantic. These ships were given less demanding convoy escort duties in UK and European waters which provided an opportunity for the British to give the Canadian ships the training and equipment they needed to make them fully effective.

THE SOLUTIONS

During the summer of 1943 two, modern, large scale, Canadian-run naval training facilities were opened – HMCS Cornwallis, the Anti-Submarine School at Deep Brook, Nova Scotia, and the Sea Training and Work-Up base HMCS Sommers Isles in Bermuda. Meanwhile, the process of modernizing the corvettes was accelerated while well equipped, properly worked-up, Canadian-built frigates were being commissioned in ever increasing numbers.

The results of these improvements can be seen in the statistics. Beginning in 1943 and continuing to the end of the war these show a steady increase in the rate of RCN successes at a time when the number of U-boats at sea was in gradual decline. Better results were being achieved even though fewer encounters were being made. By the end of the war Canada's anti-submarine forces were ranked among the best in the world.

CAPTURED U-BOATS

Canadian warships did not capture any U-boats during the war. In 1942 HMCS Oakville managed to put two men, armed with .45-cal pistols, aboard U-94 after she had been depth-charged to the surface but the boat sank from under them. Two years later HMCS Chilliwack also came close when she put a boarding party aboard the badly damaged U-744. This U-boat also sank. Two Type IX U-boats, U-190 and U-889, surrendered to Canadian air and naval forces at sea several days after the German capitulation. Newspaper reports often describe these incidents as "captures" but that is simply not true.

CPO2 Dave Perkins served in surface and submarine fleets from 1954 to 1979. An avid historian he wrote several books and papers on the evolution of the Canadian submarine service. He passed away in 2006.

Editor's note: The following first-hand observations from the surrender of U-190 are in part from riveting recordings found on the Memory Project site at <http://www.thememoryproject.com/>.

"At the end of April, we ran out of food and fuel. We left the Halifax area and were about 300 miles southeast of Newfoundland when we received the order by radio from the German high command to surface, to tell the world in open language who we were and where we were, throw our ammunition overboard and wait for things to happen. In other words, for us, the war was over at that time".

*Werner Max Hirschmann,
Engineering Officer U-190*

"The war ended on the 8th of May, 1945 and we were coming back from Londonderry, Northern Ireland, to Newfoundland as an escort. And of course, one of the exciting parts on that date was listening to the radio of what was going on in Halifax, including the V-E Day riots of May 7-8. After two or three days our ship, HMCS Victoriaville, received a message to rendezvous at a certain spot to receive the surrender of a German U-boat [U-190]. We were then about 500 miles off Newfoundland at the time.

We got most of the U-190 officers in our ship and a mixture of senior ratings and other ranks. Our crew was a bit nervous naturally and wondering what it would all be like in such a situation. But once things settled down, we realized that the officers, most of them that we dealt with of course were naval officers like us. The fellow that was the first officer in the submarine reminded me of Errol Flynn, a popular Hollywood actor at that time. On that day, the German commanding officer, Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Erwin Reith surrendered "unconditionally my crew and my boat" to our captain, Skipper Lt. Lester Alton Hickey, RCNVR. The word unconditionally was interesting because that's what British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had stipulated very clearly at V-E Day, that it would only be unconditional surrender.

German sailors had sunk our ships during the Battle of the Atlantic and we thought they were terrible people. But we soon realized they were individuals who were doing their job; a fraternity of the sea if I can call it that. The German crew members were naval officers and sailors the same as we were. I wasn't excusing what they did, particularly in recalling the sinking HMCS Esquimalt off Halifax Harbour April 16 several weeks before the war ended. I didn't like them in that regard but realized that it was the Nazi government against the Allies, fundamentally".

*Lieutenant Kevin Power
HMCS Victoriaville*

TRUSTEE NEWS

Debbie Findlay, a director and financial administrator of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and Municipality of District of St Mary's councillor was recognized as past chair of the Sherbrooke Village Old-Fashioned Christmas Committee and accepted a 2014 Crystal Tourism Award of Excellence on behalf of the committee. The presentation was made at the Tourism Association of Nova Scotia annual conference and gala. Communities, Culture and Heritage Minister Tony Ince congratulated Debbie and other committee members "...for their tremendous work in making historic Sherbrooke Village such a festive place during the holidays." The Sherbrooke



Village event celebrates rural Nova Scotia Christmas traditions including carolling, festive dining, craft market, concerts and theatre. Danny Barrett (pictured), vice president of Bay Ferries – sponsor of the Crystal Tourism Awards of Excellence — presented the award to Debbie.

"Old Fashioned Christmas" has been named as one of the top festivals in the province and attracted over 5,800 visitors in 2013 and is now recognized alongside the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, Celtic Colours, Atlantic Film Festival, Halifax Jazz Festival and other signature events across the province.



In his first try at co-writing a super hero movie for Disney - "that would tug at your heart" and be at the same level as the blockbusters the *Lion King* and *Frozen* - Robert Baird, son of Life Member Mel Baird, was part of the screenplay team that won the Academy Award for "*Big Hero 6*", the best animated movie of 2014. *Big Hero 6* is a 3D computer-animated action comedy inspired by the Marvel Comics superhero team of the same name and which also was nominated for the Annie Award for Best Animated Feature, the Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature Film, and the BAFTA Award for Best Animated Film. Seems that the sky is the limit for Robert who's previous accomplishments in filmography also include *Monsters University* and *Monsters, Inc.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9k6yVhz40>

THE MAILBAG

The December issue of Action Stations was as usual full of interesting articles. Of particular interest to me was the article on page 19 entitled "HMC Dockyard Synchronlift named after distinguished Submariner".

As a UNTD cadet I spent two summers in the Dockyard in the early 1950's. Then it was my good fortune to be a member of the engineering design group that designed the supporting structures of the Synchronlift and also the design of the Sub Shelter in the 1980's.

The Synchronlift system was originally designed by Pearson Engineering Inc. of Miami Florida. They do not include the letter "h" in the spelling of the system name as it appears in the headline of the article. Normally I do not criticize anyone for misspelling a word because I am probably the worst speller in the world. So please forgive me for bringing this to your attention.

So in the future you can knock the "h" out of the word Synchronlift.

Arthur H. Abbott P.Eng.



HMCS Sackville on the Dockyard synchronlift, 2007.
Photo courtesy of Sandy McClearn,
Smugmug: <http://smccllearn.smugmug.com/>

Editor's note: Mea culpa. Very much appreciate your input, in particular your editorial comments. The "h" is forever gone. Thanks!

MERITORIOUS SERVICE

VETERINARIAN OF THE YEAR

Long-time Trustee Dr John Dugan of Red Deer, AB has been named Veterinarian of the Year by the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association for 2014. The award recognizes "...those who make outstanding contributions to veterinary medicine or veterinary science" and is considered one of the highest awards that the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association can bestow on one of its members. John has been practicing for 61 years and was selected over almost 2000 other veterinarians in the province. "I could have been knocked over by a feather when they announced my name" remarked John, "I was caught flat-footed."



After graduating from the University of Guelph he set up his clinic in Red Deer at a time when he was the only veterinarian in the ecommunity. He finds it incredible that he has been in practice for 61 years. "The years have just flown by!" He has seen many changes in animal care but one that never changes is the relationship between pets and their owners. "The human-animal bond is very important. For some older people, that is all they have."

Many of you will remember John and his wife Anna coming with us twice to Londonderry and last year here in Halifax for Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies. We are looking forward to seeing him again this year.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE – WINTER 2015

Welcome aboard to our newest members. The winter timeframe has been busy as we launched the Naval Memorial Ambassador program and refined the details of the new Convoy Class category for groups and military units. In addition, we continue to seek out new avenues and audiences for membership.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Gerard Doyle, Dartmouth, NS
Robert Bell, Dartmouth, NS
Andrew Campbell, Dartmouth, NS
Scott Campbell, Nepean, ON
Cameron Chisholm, Herring Cove, NS
Laura Chisholm White, Halifax, ON
Martha Dunbar, Dartmouth, NS
Sabrina Dzafovic, Calgary, AB
Charles A.E. Fowler, Halifax, NS
Marc Richard, Montreal, QC
David Tysowski, Ottawa, ON

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

George Blakley, Cranbrook, BC
John Clarry, Toronto, ON
Tim Friese, Halifax, NS
Justin Heron, Vancouver, BC
Tracy Leal, Victoria, BC
George Marshall, Amherstburg, ON
Margo Marshall, Quebec, QC
Laura Nicholls, Petrolia, ON
Michael Tower, Sackville, NB
John Ward, Ottawa, ON

TRUSTEE WALT NICHOLLS SUPPORTS VETERANS AND PROMOTES THE CNMT IN ONTARIO

Trustee Walt Nicholls from Petrolia, Ontario, the proud son of a RCNVR veteran - also named Walt, an asdic operator in HMCS Jonquiere - recently presented an overview of Battle of the Atlantic Place to the delegates of the Ontario District Convention of the Royal Canadian Legion in London. Walt took the time to encourage fellow Legionnaires to support the project amplifying Dominion president Tom Eagles's 29 September brochure lending Legion support.

Walt enjoys spending time with Veterans and has spent numerous hours traveling the 200 km round trip to Parkwood Institute in London where he visits with the resident Veterans, and most importantly, offers them his companionship and compassion. This is most evident on



Walt (R) visiting Veteran Ken Thayer at Christmas

Christmas morning when Walt and his wife Laura join approximately 15-20 other volunteers to deliver gifts to the

Veterans. The gifts are purchased with money generously donated to a central fund by Legion branches throughout the local areas. Walt takes the time, however, to not only help deliver the gifts, but also to sit with the veterans, listening to their stories, asking questions, and looking through their photo albums or books with them long after the other volunteers have left to go home to their families and friends. In some cases, Walt is the only visitor a Veteran may have that day.

Laura, a new CNMT Trustee is a Life Member of The Royal Canadian Legion, currently the Zone A-4 Commander in Ontario Command, the Zone Poppy Chairman and is actively involved in her own Legion Branch. Laura also volunteers for the local Alzheimer Society and is the First Vice-President of the local hospital auxiliary."

UPCOMING EVENTS

While we have had a quiet winter alongside in the HMC Dockyard our summer calendar is already filling with activities, official visits and ceremonies. This year is particularly special as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the War at Sea. We hope to see you at our commemorative events during *Battle of the Atlantic Week* as listed below. Any questions, please call: 902-462-3089. *ed.*

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC EVENTS IN HALIFAX

Saturday, 25 Apr	5:30 pm	Admiral Desmond Piers Naval Association Battle of the Atlantic Dinner, Bridgewater \$25
Monday, 27 Apr	2-3:30 pm	Battle of the Atlantic reception at Government House
Tuesday 28 Apr	7 pm	Battle of the Atlantic Memorial Concert, Spatz Theatre, Halifax \$10
Thursday, 30 Apr	7 pm	Battle of the Atlantic Dinner CFB Halifax, Officers' Mess, \$40
Friday 1 May	7-9 am	Fleet BOA pancake breakfast, \$5
	6 pm	Pre-dinner reception onboard HMCS Sackville
	7 pm	Canadian Naval Memorial Trust - HMCS Sackville, Battle of the Atlantic Dinner, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic \$65
Saturday, 2 May	11 am	Merchant Navy BOA ceremony, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
	1 pm	Meet and Greet – Old Triangle Ale House, No host
Sunday, 3 May	11 am	Battle of the Atlantic at-sea ceremony onboard HMCS Sackville
	11 am	Battle of the Atlantic ceremony at Point Pleasant Park
Tuesday, 12 May	11:30 am	Talk on Battle of the Atlantic by Dr. Roger Cartwright, HMCS Sackville's After Seamen's Mess

THE LAST WORD



"PORT 20"

John "Kevin" Power at the conn aboard HMCS Victoriaville, April, 1945. Hear Kevin's account of the surrender of U-190 at <http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/1707:john-kevin-power/>

Return Undeliverable
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PO Box 99000 Station Forces
Halifax NS B3K 5X5

