

HMCS SACKVILLE - CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL ACTION STATIONS

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Letter to the Editor...

What a wonderfully informative and enjoyable magazine the Action Stations is. We had read several articles on line but seeing the finished product is so much better. We are both people who like "a book or magazine" over a lap top.

Thank you again for all you do.

Cheers
Cheryl and Keith

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On the Cover...

"Somewhere over the rainbow...
HMCS Sackville,"
reflecting a successful
2023 for Canada's Naval
Memorial with more time
available for residents
and visitors to view and
tour "The Last
Corvette."
Doug Struthers photo



From the Chair

Capt(N) (ret'd) William Woodburn

Dear Trustees,

I hope this edition of Action Stations! finds you in good health and able to take full advantage of the beauty and bounty of Autumn. I suspect many of our members were touched in one way or another by the myriad natural disasters and man-made events that came our way this past summer. I sincerely hope everyone is faring well. Regrettably, some of these ruinous events continue to occur. I'm sure you share in my dismay witnessing the horrific events currently unfolding in the Middle East and continuing to unfold in the Ukraine. As I mentioned in our Spring 2022 Edition, the terror of war faced by the men and women who served our country in the 20th Century, and continue to do so today, speaks deeply to the critical and on-going need to learn from our collective past, reinforcing once again the important role HMCS *Sackville* has played, and will continue to play, in achieving this venerable ideal.

Our newly minted Strategic Plan, "Charting a New Course - Embracing Canada's Naval Achievements Through the Preservation of HMCS *Sackville*", captures the very sentiment of learning from history and is expressed through our vision:

"To inspire generations of Canadians to appreciate the accomplishments and sacrifices of the RCN during the Second World War that helped make the world a better place."



British High Commission, Ottawa arranged for HMS BELFAST Association "Salutes HMCS *Sackville*" plaque to be presented to Canada's Naval Memorial during International Fleet Week. Taking part in the presentation in the ship's mess, from left: Captain (N) (ret'd) Bill Woodburn, Chair CNMT; Commander Edward Moss-Ward, CO HMS Portland; Commander (ret'd) Gary Reddy, CO HMCS *Sackville*, and Wing Commander Adrian Mellors, UK Air and Naval Advisor, British High Commission.

I am extremely pleased to say that our inaugural strategic plan fittingly came into effect on Canada Day, thanks to the hard work of your Board of Directors and so many others. Even though it's early days, the plan has already had a significant impact on several fronts, not the least of which has been the ship's success on the Halifax Waterfront. As I write this, over 40,000 visitors have toured the ship this summer, representing 40,000 opportunities for our crew and volunteer guides to share the many stories we have to tell. The positive feedback we've received is captured nicely by one of our visitors who stated on-line:

"A must see and beautifully restored and maintained piece of Canada's Naval history. As the Sackville is the last in the world of her kind,

she is an absolute must see! The staff onboard are very friendly and very knowledgeable. There is recorded audio in many of the locations but not all were operating when I visited. Admission is by donation only."

Indeed, this has been an extraordinary summer for the Trust in many ways, but I would like to take a moment to highlight for you two events that made a profound impression on me. The first was a visit by The Rolling Barrage. This is a foundation dedicated to combat the effects of PTSD and provide awareness and a community of support for veterans, members of the CAF, RCMP, first responders, the safety community, and emergency health care providers. This annual cross-country motorcycle journey visited HMCS

Sackville on the 4th of August and was comprised of 75 participants. To mark the occasion the flag of The Rolling Barrage was hoisted in *Sackville* during a visibly emotional event for all who attended. It was such a privilege for us to support such an exceptional cause.

The second highlight was the honour given HMCS *Sackville* by the RCN to serve as the backdrop for the Opening Ceremony of Halifax's Inaugural Fleet Week. At this event HMCS *Sackville* was proud to receive from the Commanding Officer of HMS Portland a plaque from HMS Belfast, made from steel from the ship's original mast. This was to

commemorate the 80th Anniversary of *Sackville*'s achievements during the Battle of the Atlantic. Prior to the Opening Ceremony we had the privilege to give a guided tour to the Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Bill Blair. To our delight, the MND showed a genuine interest in the ship and at the end of his tour expressed his appreciation, summing up his experience by stating those who once served on the ship would be very proud of what we've accomplished.

All-in-all 2023 is turning out to be a rewarding but equally challenging year for the Trust. We've set our course, identified the goals

we need to focus on, and have taken our first steps to evolve into a modern, progressive, and highly successful charity operating within the tough competitive environment of not-for-profit organizations. I must admit I'm excited about what we've achieved and what lies ahead, but I realize too that there is much to accomplish. Your team has turned-to to ensure this happens and for that all of us should be very appreciative. I truly look forward to what we are going to achieve together.

Respectfully,
Bill Woodburn
Chair

From the Captain

Cdr (ret'd) Gary Reddy

Dear Trustees and Friends of HMCS *Sackville*,

HMCS *Sackville* has enjoyed a very successful 2023. The crew's desire since completing refit was to see HMCS *Sackville* spend more time in the public eye. With the addition of heat pumps, we were able to move to our downtown berth – Sackville Landing – on 1 May 23 with the intent to remain until Christmas/New Year. Because of our concern for winter storms, cold, water, and KHM / Fleet support we will return to HMC Dockyard on 28 Nov 23. Although a month short on our goal, we will have spent 7 months at our downtown berth. Once in dockyard, Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) will be able to progress priority maintenance.

There were many highlights for HMCS *Sackville* in 2023. The most important involved the many visitors who crossed our bow. Our staff was completely engaged and told

the story of *Sackville* to many who did not know what the ship stood for. It was always a joy to have a Battle of the Atlantic (BoA) veteran or children of parents who served visit the ship. Thomas Walford, RN, made a special trip, as did others, to walk the decks for a last time and to reflect on what they

or their parents did for our freedom.

I would be remiss in not thanking MP Andy Filmore for his tremendous support to *Sackville* with the Canada Summer Jobs programme. We are so thankful for these young people who quickly learn about the ship and interact with our many visitors. The common feeling when visitors depart is one of positivity and thankfulness for those who served in these mighty Corvettes.



The ship completed committal of ashes on BoA Sunday and again in Sept 23. I can speak on behalf of the crew and our many support personnel that this remains one of our most precious and important events. The Next of Kin are so thankful and appreciative plus we honour the final request of our Veterans/Spouses/Trustees.

In conclusion, HMCS *Sackville* remains a vibrant and living reminder of Canada's significant contribution to the BoA and victory at sea.

From the CNMT Artifacts Collection Navigation Instruments

By: Carl Anderson

Many RCN ships commissioned at the start of the Battle of the Atlantic in 1939 went to sea initially without the benefit of radio aids to navigation such as radio direction finders and radar, which were then in short supply. Navigators practiced the art of celestial navigation, determining their ship's position by observing one or more celestial bodies at a known time of day, and making mathematical calculations with the aid of astronomical tables. Ships were initially fitted with magnetic compasses, and later by gyroscopic compasses.

The Canadian Naval Memorial Trust's collection of vintage Battle of the Atlantic artifacts includes several navigation instruments, all with remarkable histories.

Jack Wolfenden Sextant



Navigators use a sextant to measure the elevation angle above the horizon of the sun, moon, or prominent stars. This angle, and the time of observation, is used to estimate the ship's position mathematically.

Our vintage sextant was made by Henry Hughes & Son Ltd of London and bears serial number 29051. Its Certificate of Examination is dated 20 March 1942. The sextant is complete with a locking wooden case, a choice of four eyepieces, and a can of lubricating oil. For nighttime observations the arc is illuminated by a shaded electric light bulb powered by a battery in the sextant's hand-grip.

The sextant was donated to the Trust by LtCdr John E. (Jack)

Wolfenden, RCNR (1905-1992). He joined the RCN from the merchant marine, and in July 1943, he was executive officer in Canadian Fisheries Patrol Vessel HMCS *Mala-spina*. He was navigating officer in the River Class frigates HMCS Port Colborne K326 and HMCS *Levis* K400 (1945). Wolfenden commanded the River Class frigates HMCS *Charlottetown* K244 (1946) and HMCS *Antigonish* K661 (1947), and the Canadian Arctic research vessel HMCS *Cedarwood* (1949). In 1959 he was appointed Assistant Queen's Harbour Master and Master Attendant in HMC Dockyard, Halifax. Wolfenden donated his sextant to the CNMT in January 1992, and died in October that year.

SS *Belgian Soldier* Chronometer

The time at which the navigator makes celestial observations is determined precisely by a chronometer. Our vintage marine chronometer was made by the firm Robert Roskell of Liverpool, "Makers to the Admiralty". It has a 56-hour, "two day", movement, and a 4" diameter face bearing the numbers 1625 and 62563. A plate attached to the case indicates the chronometer was sold by "John Lilley & Son Ltd, North Shields".

The chronometer is virtually identical in appearance to those made by Roskell from 1820 onward. It resides in a wooden case with brass fittings, the lowest tier of which houses the gimballed chronometer and a mechanism for locking the gimbals. The keyhole for winding the mechanism is on the bottom of the clock body and is normally closed by a spring-loaded dust cover.

The second tier of the case is lockable and has a glass top through which the chronometer face is visible. Unfortunately, the top tier of the case is missing from our Roskell chronometer. It was originally a protective wooden lid that covered the glass window of the second tier, and was secured by a push-button latch.

The chronometer was taken from the torpedoed and sinking merchant ship SS *Belgian Soldier* in 1942. HMCS *Sackville* encountered *Belgian Soldier* on 3 August 1942 while escorting the westbound convoy ON115 approximately 265 n. mi. ESE of St. John's, Newfoundland. The freighter had been abandoned by her crew but was still under way. A lone seaman stood on deck, dressed



in a suit, and holding a suitcase. Lt. Alan Easton, *Sackville's* commanding officer, sent a boarding party to rescue the survivor and remove the ship's confidential books and other useful items. One of the boarding party, *Sackville's* Chief Skipper Gerald Kent, RCNVR, took the chronometer from the ship's bridge. *Sackville* then rescued a second *Belgian Soldier* survivor from a lifeboat drifting nearby. SS *Belgian Soldier* was left to sail on across the Grand Bank, slowly exhausting her head of steam. She was torpedoed and sunk the next day, 5 August 1942, by the German submarine U-607.

The *Belgian Soldier* chronometer was donated to the CNMT by Gerald Kent in 2005.

HMCS *Sorel* Magnetic Compass

The RCN Flower Class corvette HMCS *Sorel* served in the Battle of the Atlantic

from her commissioning in 1941 until she was paid off on 22 June 1945. She was sold to the Yugoslav Navy in November 1945.

On 13 December 1945, while manned by a Yugoslav crew, ex-HMCS *Sorel* ran aground in a blizzard off the southern point of Henry Island, near Port Hood, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. As the ship began to take on water, the men on board found that the water was shallow enough for them to wade ashore. With much difficulty, but with no loss of life, the crew made

their way ashore and struggled uphill to the Henry Island lighthouse. Just after daylight, the lightkeepers there were startled to discover nineteen men in desperate need of shelter.

The Yugoslavian crew did not speak English, but the ship's Canadian engineer explained their predicament. That afternoon, a four-man rescue party from Port Hood took 12 of the crew to the mainland. The following day, under much im-



proved conditions, the remaining crew members were also brought to Port Hood.

One of the rescue party later returned to the ship and removed the compass and its binnacle. The four men of the rescue party subsequently bought the wreck from the insurers for \$600, and salvagers subsequently removed the ship’s engine and equipment. The wreck was by then barely visible above water, and the ship’s remains are now totally submerged.

The compass originally was manufactured by Observator of Rotterdam. Its 170 mm diameter translucent compass card was illuminated from below. It is right-reading, graduated in degrees, and labelled with cardinal points NESW. Two lubber’s lines, 90 degrees apart, are aligned with the gimbal axes. The outer gimbal ring and the wooden binnacle did not survive the decades of storage in the salvager’s attic.

The HMCS *Sorel* compass, with-

out its binnacle, was donated to the CNMT in 2012 by Lewis MacDonald of Halifax, whose brother acquired it when he purchased the original salvager’s house in the 1970’s.

**HMCS *Saskatchewan*
Admiralty Chart**

The British Admiralty’s Hydrographic Office was established in 1795 and issued its first Admiralty Chart in 1800. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the Hydrographic Office’s chart folio contained hundreds of charts of all parts of the world.

In early July 1944, a month after the Allied invasion of France on D-Day, naval Escort Group 12, including the RCN River Class destroyer HMCS *Saskatchewan*, was tasked with patrolling the southern approaches to the English Channel to prevent the entrance of enemy submarines. *Saskatchewan*’s commanding officer was LtCdr Alan H. Easton, RCNR, HMCS *Sackville*’s

C.O. in 1942. On the ship’s chart table was Admiralty Chart 2643 “Raz de Sein to Goulven”, first published in 1859 and corrected to 1942.

In the early hours of 6 July 1944, EG12 set out from Plymouth to intercept four German minesweepers believed to be escorting submarines to sea from their French base at Brest. EG12 intercepted the ships sailing westward in line astern and swung around to parallel the enemy’s course, hemming them between the Canadian ships on the south and shoal water to the north. An exchange of gunfire and torpedoes ensued during which EG12 reversed course to continually engage the German ships. When EG12 withdrew, two of the enemy ships were thought to have been sunk and a third was left ablaze. The fate of the fourth was not observed, and it was not clear whether submarines had been present.

For his part in the action off Brest, LtCdr Easton was awarded a Men-

tioned in Dispatches in January 1945. The citation read, in part, “For outstanding leadership, skill, and devotion to duty in H.M. Canadian Ships *Qu’appelle*, *Skeena*, *Saskatchewan* and *Restigouche* in a successful action with enemy trawlers and U-boats.”

The Admiralty Chart 2643 used by HMCS *Saskatchewan*’s navigator in the 6 July 1944 action off the French coast was donated to the CNMT in 2023 by LtCdr Easton’s grandson Chris Rappell.

HMCS *Saskatchewan*’s track, drawn in pencil on the chart during that day’s action, is clearly visible, with the navigator’s notations “Radar Contact”, “opened fire”, “fired fish”, “Track uncertain”, “Searching for rest of group”.



Ham Radio VEOCNM

Sackville now has a HAM Radio Station generously donated by retired Navy Diver Sam Semple. The HAM Radio was originally owned by retired Navy Diver Wayne Catchpugh, now deceased. Call Sign VE0CNM. Any HAM Operators are encouraged to contact *Sackville* on the air or come and operate the station. Initially contact Dan Matte at gunarhead@gmail.com or call or text 902 456 5223 to organize a first visit and familiarization. The station will be open only during visitor hours while at Sackville Landing and during working hours in Dockyard. Currently, it is only open on Thursday mornings and sometimes on Mondays at noon. *Sackville* is a member of Parks on the Air (POTA) and listed as a Museum Ship for Ham operators.

The radio was installed by the Halifax Amateur Radio Club (HARC)



whose efforts are greatly appreciated. One of their members, Byron Mullet, has become a Trustee. On 19 October 2023, HARC “reactivated” *Sackville* as a Park on the Air

(POTA). The HARC used the set for a POTA event on 23 October and Earl Bruneau (former RCN Spark-er) made an amazing 29 contacts in Canada, US, Europe and Australia!

Summer & Fall 2023 Highlights Onboard

Opening Ceremony

The official opening/kick off of the 2023 summer-fall season for HMCS *Sackville* was held aboard Canada’s Naval Memorial at the end of June with a number of civic, naval and community officials in attendance along with other guests and Trustees. Welcoming remarks were extended by Bill Woodburn, Chair CNMT and Gary Reddy, Commanding Officer HMCS *Sackville* who commended the work of the volunteers to prepare the ship for visitors. Guest speakers included Andy Filmore, Halifax MP; Hon Steve Craig, representing the Province; and HRM Deputy Mayor Sam Austin.



Committal of Ashes Ceremony



HMCS *Sackville* embarked family members and carried out a committal of ashes service for their loved ones while the ship was abreast Point Pleasant Park during Battle of the Atlantic Sunday service in early May.



Reflecting the historic Nova Scotia-Newfoundland maritime ties, HMCS *Sackville* supported 1st Battalion, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to conduct a memorial service, with Padre Andrew Cook officiating.



The end of the season BBQ and thank you for the university students and other volunteers who served as summer guides was held at the end of August. Chief Shipwright Jeff Morrison was among the crew flipping the burgers for the departing guides and Trustees. And all enjoyed the great sounds provided by members of the Midtown Blues Band that set up on the jetty next to the ship (the music also attracted visitors to the waterfront area).



George Knowles, accompanied by his wife and two grandchildren, fulfilled a long-time wish to visit HMCS *Sackville*, a ship his father served in as a stoker/chief engine room artificer (CERA) during Second World War. His father had earlier served in and survived the sinking of armed merchant cruiser Rajputana before joining *Sackville*. The senior Knowles’ service was mentioned in Alan Easton’s Battle of the Atlantic classic 50 North and *Sackville*’s engagements with U-boats in 1942-43.

Change of Command



Rear Admiral Josee Kurtz, left, assumed command of Maritime Forces Atlantic in June, the first woman to hold the appointment. She relieves RAdm Brian Santarpia, right, who has retired. Also participating in the signing ceremony were Vice Admirals Angus Topshee, Commander RCN, and JR (Bob) Auchterlonie, Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command.

The Loss of HDC 15

By: Marc Milner

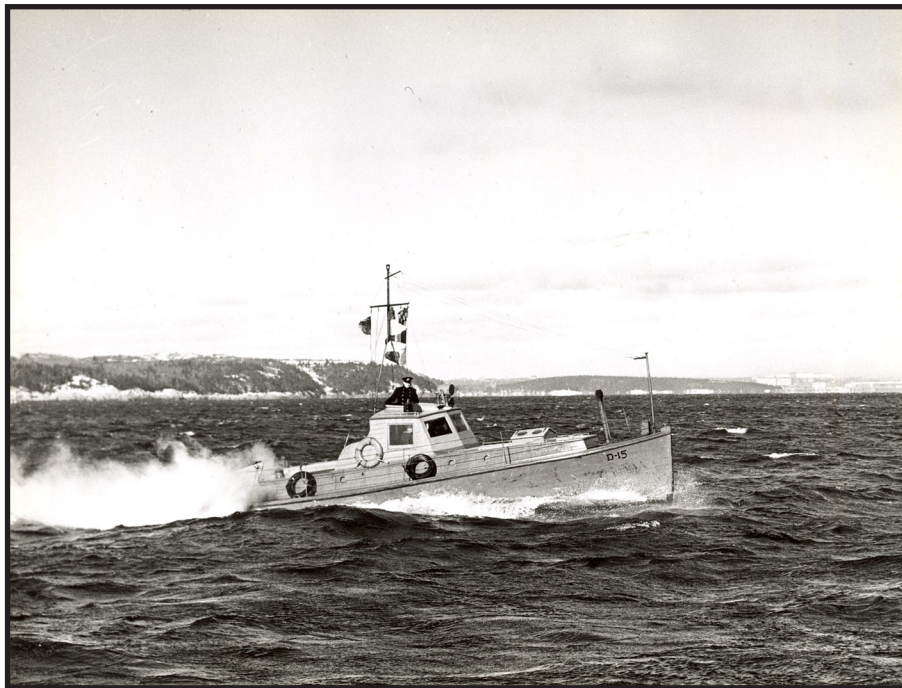
Eighty years ago this April Saint John harbour was the scene of a wartime tragedy, when Harbour Defence Craft 15 was lost with all hands off the Courtenay Bay breakwater. Six Canadian sailors perished. Nothing commemorates their sacrifice and until recently even the navy failed to list HDC 15 among its vessels lost at sea while on operations.

HDC 15 was a modest vessel, 48'.5" long

and thirteen feet wide and built of wood. Her two 225hp gasoline engines produced a maximum speed of 15 knots. A slightly raised cabin provided standing room for the crew below decks, space for a small galley, and a wheelhouse. HDC 15 carried a fourteen-foot dory as a tender, a small searchlight and one depth charge chute (without the charge).

In the spring of 1943 HDC 15 was part of a fleet of about a dozen small naval vessels working in the harbour. Seventy ships cleared the port in April. "A berth is seldom vacant for more than a few hours," the report for May observed. Shuffling shipping into and out of the examination anchorage south of Partridge Island kept it all ticking along.

On 14 April 1943 the south-east gale was strong enough to push the Swedish relief ship SS Monga Barra across the inner harbour, stranding her alongside the wharf at the Sugar Refinery. So HMCS *Murray Stewart*,



if HDC 15 got into trouble.

HDC 15 met *Murray Stewart*, with the Examination Officer on board, at the bell buoy north-east of Partridge Island, where seas were running twelve to fourteen feet high. When Wambach turned to follow *Murray Stewart* into the lee

of the island to pick-up the officer, HDC 15 could not hold its course. Waves pushed the stern around and then a large sea rolled it over. Chaplain A.R. Perkins on the veranda of the Sergeant's Mess on the island, watched HDC 15 disappeared "in a flurry of foam."

Skipper Harding R. Wambach was an experienced Nova Scotia seaman, and so was Able Seamen Odin Arthur Elliott, from Apple River, NS, near the head of the bay. HDC 15's Motor Mechanic Thomas James Rourke was an Irishman raised in Saskatoon, and the signalman was Ordinary Signalman Lawrence Cyril Jasper from Toronto. Ordinary Seaman Joseph W. Nodwell, a Saint John lad from HMCS *Brunswick*, and Ordinary Seaman John Patrick Daly, also from Toronto, rounded out the crew.

Wambach met HDC 37 on the way down the harbour and discussed the weather with her Skipper, Frederick Durant, and the Harbour Pilot: both advised him it was too rough. When Wambach resumed his course seaward, Durant followed to stand by

of the island to pick-up the officer, HDC 15 could not hold its course. Waves pushed the stern around and then a large sea rolled it over. Chaplain A.R. Perkins on the veranda of the Sergeant's Mess on the island, watched HDC 15 disappeared "in a flurry of foam."

Skipper Eric Caines of *Murray Stewart* immediately turned his ship to help. As the capsized HDC 15 drifted north three men were seen in the water. The seas soon carried them away, and their heavy foul weather gear pulled them down.

As the rescue effort drifted into shoal water north of the channel *Murray Stewart*, 119' long with powerful engines, was soon in danger. Waves swamped the stern and swept away *Murray Stewart's* boat, while efforts to go astern and back into the channel failed. Caines ordered full power and a turn to starboard. As *Murray Stewart* came around a wave crashed against the wheelhouse, taking out

three windows and all the ship's communications. Mate Jonathan W.H. Tremaine, a veteran of sixteen years at sea in the Saint John area, told the Board of Inquiry that those seas were twenty feet high. He may have been right: *Murray Stewart's* wheelhouse was sixteen feet off the water. Meanwhile, Skipper Durant brought HDC 37 within 100 yards of the overturned vessel before backing out because his ship "was becoming unmanageable."

Nothing could be done for HDC 15 and her crew. That night a badly battered HDC 15 was found upright on the east side of the Courtney Bay

breakwater. Skipper Wambach's body was found in the cabin, and Rourke's body among the rocks. Daly, Jasper, Elliott and Nodwell were missing. By the next day heavy seas had destroyed what remained of HDC 15.

A Court of Inquiry blamed the loss of HDC 15 on Wambach: "Over-zealousness on the part of Skipper Harding Wambach, R.C.N.R. in endeavouring to carry out the order received by him, was a primary cause."

In October the remains of Odin Elliott came ashore near Red Head, and were buried in Fern Hill Cem-

etry, Saint John. Over the next two weeks other remains were recovered and buried in Fern Hill as unidentified RCN sailors. The sea claimed the rest.

The crew of HDC 15 died in the cold waters of the Atlantic while on active service. Apart from five scattered graves, three names on the Halifax Memorial, and the recent addition of HDC 15 to the RCN's list of wartime losses, nothing marks their passing in the service of Canada eighty years ago.



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www.canadasnavalmemorial.ca (Join & Support banner)

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Keeping HMCS Haida Shipshape

Editor's Note: Following article appeared in September 19 2023 Maple Leaf Navy Magazine.

His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Haida* had a long and impressive service record in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1943 to 1963. The ship was spared from the scrap yard through the determination of the citizen group Friends of HMCS *Haida*, who continue to act as the ship's stewards.

In 1984, HMCS *Haida* was designated a national historic site and, in 2002, the ship was transferred to the custody of Parks Canada.

Since that time, the ship has been docked at Hamilton's Catharine Street Pier 9 and open to the public. It attracts numerous visitors in the spring and summer months, partly because *Haida* has the distinction of being the world's last survivor of a class of ships known as 'tribal-class' destroyers.

With commemoration of *Haida*'s 80th birthday, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) has commented it can reflect on two decades of supporting Parks Canada with the ship's preservation and restoration.

When *Haida* came into Parks Canada's care in 2002, it had an array of problems, including holes in

the hull. It was towed to a shipyard, where marine experts, alongside PSPC and Parks Canada staff, began the work needed to keep it afloat, make it safe and restore the ship so it could be put on display.

In 2015, Parks Canada had an opportunity to continue the restoration work and turned to PSPC for help in awarding and managing the contracts. "We're not marine engineers or naval architects, but my team has a unique understanding of the industry that we could use to access suitable services and contractors for the project," says Dan Byron, the procurement manager in PSPC's ship refit unit.

That's how PSPC was able to issue contracts to qualified ship restoration experts and secure a berth for *Haida* at the Heddle Shipyards dry dock for an assessment. Since the aging ship had to be towed to the shipyard by tugboats, competition for the contract was limited to shipyards in the area. .

As a first step, every inch of the ship was surveyed and a report outlining priority repairs was produced. "For example, the thickness of the hull was measured using ultrasonic

technology to determine which areas were of concern and needed reinforcement," explains Byron. "Ships of this era have many issues, and we wanted to make health and safety improvements, as well as enhance the experience for visitors, so a range of repairs were carried out as part of the project." The ship's stability was improved, electrical systems upgraded, minor leaks addressed, and action taken to prevent further vessel corrosion.

The physical repairs were completed in three phases between 2016 and 2019. During the summer, the ship continued as a tourist attraction. In the off-season, it was towed from the pier to the shipyard, as required, where the restoration work was undertaken.

While the project was a success, Byron notes that the ship has many more check-ups in its future. "It's a veteran of our forces that took part in several wars and provided critical service to Canada. We have to maintain and protect it, so that we never forget the ship's, or Canada's, significant naval history."

For Byron, like his team and all the stakeholders involved, the project was a dream come true:

"Everyone was excited to contribute. The ship is a legend, and we'd all heard stories about the 2002 restoration work. Also, this wasn't a standard refit of an active service vessel. HMCS *Haida* is a historic artifact, so it was challenging but a great honour for our team to work on it. I'm pleased that we've made it possible for new generations to tour the ship and take this journey to the past."



HMCS Haida Deployment 1953

The Korean Armistice was signed 70 years ago in 1953 ending the three year conflict that involved Canada's army, naval and air forces. Signalman Gerald Butler serving in HMCS *Haida* in 1953 captured photos of the destroyer's second deployment to Korea in late 1953, including training exercises at sea (torpedo firing and recovery) and passage through the Panama Canal to the Pacific. *Haida*, commissioned in 1943 and known as the "fightiness ship in the RCN," arrived in Korean theatre in early February, 1954.



HMCS Moose Jaw and the Sinking of U-501

Referenced from The Juno Beach Center



Built in Collingwood, Ontario, corvette HMCS *Moose Jaw* was commissioned at Montreal 19 June 1941. She had a busy career on various escort routes: St. John's-Iceland, St. John's-Londonderry, United Kingdom-Mediterranean, on the Canadian East coast, the St. Lawrence and, after participating in the invasion force, in the English Channel. She is seen here entering Halifax, June 1942. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-105829.

Corvettes HMCS *Chambly* and *Moose Jaw* were sent to reinforce SC-42's escort when it was discovered that the convoy was headed for a concentration of U-boats. Within 48 hours on September 10th and 11th SC-42 was repeatedly attacked: 15 merchant ships, 40,000 tons of cargo, and 160 men were lost. *Moose Jaw* was a newly commissioned corvette still in training with *Chambly* when they hurriedly left St. John's on September 5th, 1941.

Chambly was under the command of highly experienced Commander J.D. Prentice, R.C.N. On its first escort mission, *Moose Jaw* went through a severe storm, participated in an attack which resulted in the first U-boat kill by the Royal Canadian Navy, and rescued survivors from torpedoed ships. *Moose Jaw*'s Commanding Officer, F.E. Grubb, R.C.N., was mentioned in dispatches for saving lives. This is his report.

H.M.C.S. "MOOSE JAW"

St. John's, Newfoundland.

November 6th, 1941.

Sir, I have the honour to forward this letter of proceedings for the period 5th September-17th September, 1941.

1. Instructions were received on the 4th September to sail with H.M.C.S. *Chambly* on a cruise on convoy routes at noon Friday, 5th September, returning to St. John's, Newfoundland, on, approximately, 15th September.

2. At the time of sailing the ship was short in complement one leading seaman, Q.R.III, one H.S.D., one coder, and one ordinary seaman, as there ere no reliefs available.

3. The fresh provisions demanded were not sent to the ship with the result that the dry provisions had to be broached three days after sailing.

4. Most of the ship's company was seasick for the first four days at sea, some of them being quite incapable of carrying out their duties. The officers suffered least from this malady.

5. On September 7th *Chambly* and *Moose Jaw* were ordered to join S.C. 43. *Chambly* was to detach *Moose Jaw* who was to proceed with the convoy.

6. On September 9th *Chambly* and *Moose Jaw* were ordered by C.C.N.F.'s 1858Z/9 to join SC 42 with despatch.

7. At about 2100 on 10th September, flares and star shell were sighted ahead on either bow.

8. Hands went to action stations at 2130.

9. At about 2200 *Chambly* signalled that he was about to blow a depth charge, and altered course to port.

At the time the two ships were in line abreast, *Moose Jaw* disposed to starboard.

10. I altered course to port in a wide sweep in order to keep clear of *Chambly*, and to place myself in an advantageous position to carry out a depth charge attack.

11. A few minutes later I saw a submarine surface between *Chambly* and ourselves, which appeared to be stopped. (A good echo was reported by the A/S operator just before I was the submarine). The submarine made a series of "I'S" on a small lamp just abaft the conning tower. It got under weigh at this point, and I gave chase, opening fire with the 4 inch gun as soon as it was clear of *Chambly*. Only one round was fired (which fell over), as No. 2 at the gun jammed the second tube in the lock. The gun is not fitted with a loading light and it is considered essential that this be done at the earliest possible opportunity.

12. The submarine appeared to be moving at about 13 knots. It attempted to place me dead astern, altering course to do so each time I tried to alter out of it's wake.

13. I ordered the 10 inch signal projector trained on it. This disclosed the crew on the upper deck. They appeared to be so demoralized that I did not believe them to be German and remarked to the navigating officer that they must be Italian. Considering this state of "panic" I thought there might be some chance of capturing the submarine.

14. The next few minutes was spent in chase, the submarine attempting

to get directly ahead of me, and I trying to keep on his quarter in case he fired torpedoes. At one time four of the submarine's crew made a determined move to the after gun. As our own gun was still jammed, no action could be taken except to increase speed and try to ram before they could fire. This I did, although the chance was small, but, fortunately, someone on the conning tower ordered them back. The .5 inch machine guns were bearing at the time, but when the trigger was pressed, they failed to fire. A subsequent check showed no defects, so I assume that in the excitement the crew failed to cock them.

15. I managed to go alongside the submarine, starboard side to, and called on her to surrender. To my surprise, I saw a man make a magnificent leap from the submarine's deck into our waist, and the remainder of her crew move to do likewise. Not being prepared to repel boarders at that moment, I sheered off. The submarine altered across my bows and I rammed her, increasing to 185 revolutions to do so, and altering course in order to hit her forward diving rudders, so as to prevent her submerging.

16. After the impact she moved across my bows at reduced speed. The gun being cleared by that time I opened fire again. The crew jumped into the sea as soon as the first round went, and I ordered fire to be stopped. I subsequently learned that the shell had passed low enough over the conning tower to knock down the men who were standing

thereon. The submarine was then on my port beam.

17. *Chambly* at this point signalled, "Where is submarine". He was coming up astern at the time. He closed the submarine and, as there were survivors around my screw and so many of them in the water that I feared for the safety of any boat I might lower, I asked *Chambly* to send a boarding party.

18. The man who I had seen jump on board turned out to be the submarine's commanding officer. He was badly shaken and when he was brought to me on the bridge appeared to be worried at the amount of light we were showing in order to pick up survivors.

19. As soon as I considered the water clear enough of men to allow the boats to be lowered without danger of swamping I dropped both skiffs.

20. *Chambly* ordered me to get underweigh and patrol around him as an A/S screen. This I did as soon as the screws were clear, leaving both boats to continue rescue work. I made one circle and then picked up the boats, after which I was ordered to take station ahead of the convoy. I could still hear men calling for help on the starboard quarter but left them and closed the convoy.

(cont...)

(Signed) F.E. Grubb,
Lieutenant, R.C.N.,
Commanding Officer

Continue reading report:
<https://www.junobeach.org/canada-in-wwii/articles/the-battle-of-the-atlantic/hmcs-moose-jaw-and-the-sinking-of-u-501/>

HMCS Moose Jaw

Among HMCS *Sackville*'s wide range of wartime artifacts and memorabilia is the telephone from sister corvette HMCS *Moose Jaw*. It was contributed to the ship by the late LCdr Max Corkum who served as navigating officer in *Moose Jaw* during the war and later served as CO of *Sackville* 1986-1992. In 1941 *Moose Jaw* and HMCS *Chambly* were credited with sinking U-boat 501.

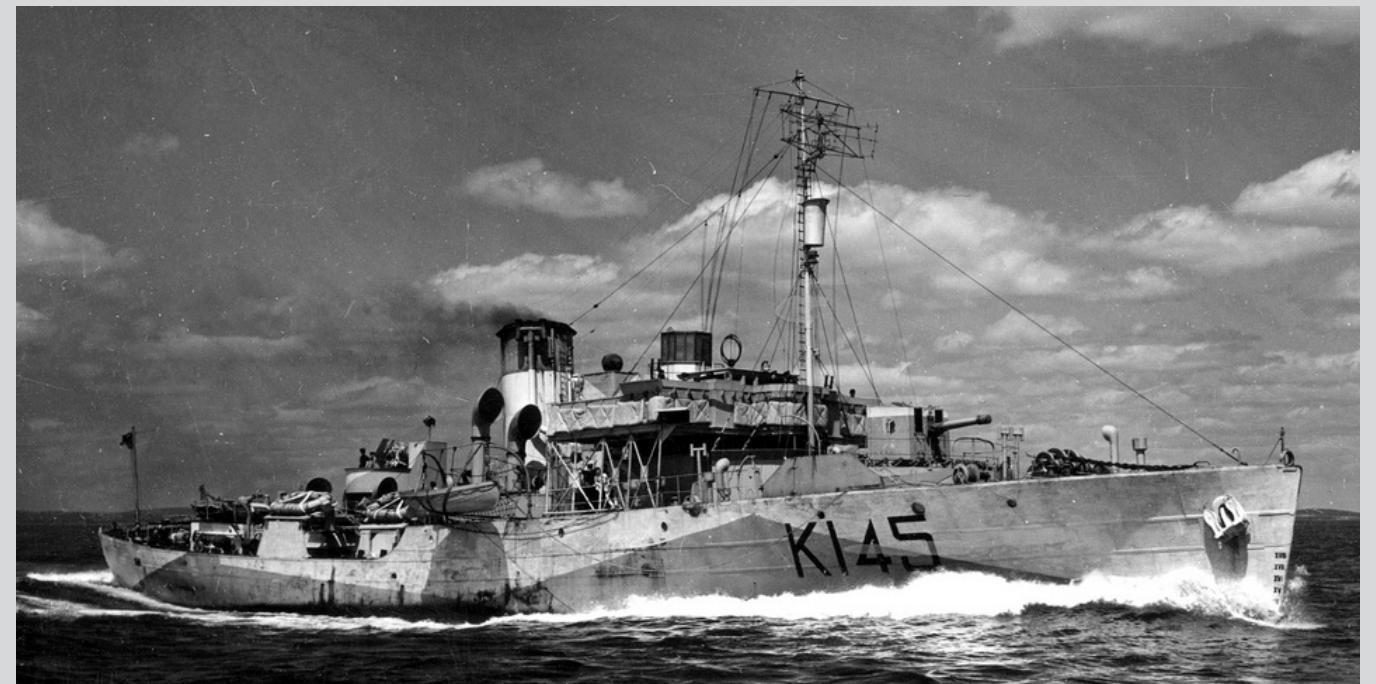
Canadian Corvettes in the Second World War - A General History

By: Dr Richard H. Gimblett, MSC CD RCN (ret'd)

The humble corvette was not meant to be the mainstay of Canada's naval effort in the Second World War. For that matter, when Hitler invaded Poland on the 1st of September 1939, no one had any idea that the unfolding European land war would expand into a global conflict requiring an oceanic lifeline from North America to Europe that has been immortalized as the Battle of the Atlantic. Still, the Canadian naval staff immediately appreciated that the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) would not have enough ships for whatever might arise – the entire fleet then consisted of only thirteen ships: a half-dozen frontline River-class destroyers, four modern Fundy-class minesweepers, a pair of Battle-class trawlers left over

from the First World War, and a sail training vessel. Six years later, almost to the day, when peace with Japan was signed on 2 September 1945, the RCN had grown to be the fourth-largest allied fleet (behind the United States, United Kingdom and Soviet Union), with nearly 100,000 men and women in uniform, and over 400 warships in commission. By then corvettes constituted a full quarter of the combat fleet, with 123 having been in commission, and ten of those lost in action. Indeed, the corvette had proven to be one of the largest Allied shipbuilding programmes with a total of 368 ships of eight different sub-types being built in Britain (186), Canada (122) and Australia (60).

The rearmament problem in the fall of 1939 was twofold – what type of vessel to get, and where to get them from? (A third issue – how to crew them? – was not yet fully appreciated.) The major British yards were at capacity building aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers already ordered for the Royal Navy (RN); all of these major warship types were beyond the capacity of Canadian shipyards, nor had a lend-lease arrangement with the neutral United States yet been conceived let alone put into place. In the end, a solution arose from the fact that the RN also was facing a shortage of auxiliary coastal escorts and had developed a type that could be built in smaller British yards that lacked the technical sophistication



HMCS *Arrowhead* was built in Sorel for the Royal Navy and loaned to the RCN in June 1941 for the duration of the war. She retained her Flower name, and there are several differences in configuration from RCN corvettes. An obvious one is the fitting of the 2-pounder pom-pom close abaft the funnel. *Arrowhead* was returned to the RN in June 1945 and sold after the war for conversion as a whale catcher. Scrapped in 1959.

to build capital ships. The “patrol vessel, whale-catcher” is said to have been re-designated “corvette” by Sir Winston Churchill, who then was First Lord of the Admiralty before becoming prime minister in May 1940. He also more famously dubbed them “cheap and nasties.”

Indeed, the vessel was an adaptation of a commercial design that was assessed to be inexpensive and easy to produce for emergency “hostilities only” production. This small, 205-foot long, 950-ton displacement, single-screw, steel hull ship fit the capacities of most Canadian shipyards, which had never built a steel-hulled warship greater than 100 feet (30 metres) in length. The design had the additional advantage that any production in the large number of Canadian shipyards on the Great Lakes had to be shorter than 270 feet (82 metres) to fit through the locks on the St Lawrence River before the Seaway was completed

in the mid-1950s; there remained, however, the limitation that these yards were iced-in over winter, so that while production could continue, the ships couldn't go down the St Lawrence River for fitting out and to enter service until after spring breakup. The corvette's machinery was similarly modest and within the capacity of Canadian industry: two low-pressure drum water-tube boilers provided steam to a 2,750-horsepower four-cylinder vertical triple-expansion engine, giving a range of 3,500 miles at 12 knots (which dropped to 2,500 miles at maximum speed of 16 knots).

Ship classes generally are known by the name of the lead (first built) ship, which in the RN was HMS *Gladiolus*, completed in April 1940. With all of the RN vessels getting similar names, the corvettes become known more popularly as the Flower class. That general term held in the RCN as well, even though the

Canadian Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral Percy Nelles, observing that “flowers don't knit mittens,” instead directed the ships be named after cities and towns to make the naval war effort resonate with the populace. The initial Canadian order of 54 under what became known as the “1939-40 Program” were completed as auxiliary minesweepers with a wider quarterdeck giving them a broad somewhat square stern distinguishing them from the duck-tail shape of RN corvettes; follow-on orders for the 1940-41, 1942-43 and 1943-44 programs dropped the minesweeping capability and adopted the more familiar British form.

As the war continued, other changes to the basic design were incorporated as a result of operational experience. By the time the first Canadian-built corvettes commissioned in October 1940, Hitler's forces had occupied Norway and France and established U-boat bases

within easy reach of the North Atlantic, shifting the need for escorts to the open ocean. Corvettes already had gained a reputation that they “would roll on wet grass” but the dramatic change of role quickly brought home the fact that the short fo’c’sle (forecastle) with a well-deck opening ahead of the bridge made them a very “wet” ship. To attempt to overcome this, the major modifications of the “Revised Flower Class 1940-41 Program” included extending the fo’c’sle aft to form an enclosed deck from the new flared bow back in line with the funnel; this required in turn that the forward 4-inch gun and the bridge had to be raised a full deck, and eventually the foremast located inconveniently in front of the bridge was moved back behind it, all dramatically changing the appearance of these later ships. Earlier-built ships eventually were modified to this new standard as operational requirements and shipyard capacity allowed; for example, Sackville (which will be discussed below), commissioned in December 1941, was not so refitted until February-May 1944. Still, the corvettes of the first two years’ building programs suffered from poor range. This was resolved by a change to a more compact boiler type that allowed for additional fuel tanks, classifying the 1942-43 and 1943-44 programs as “Revised Increased Endurance” programs, giving them very long legs of 7,400 miles at 10 knots.

Major deficiencies in the original Canadian Flower Class ships included their lack of a gyro compass for accurate navigation (the fitted magnetic compasses did not follow “true” north and had a lot of swing in the bearings indicated). They were saddled as well with Canadian-designed radars and sonars that were

not as accurate as later British developments, all of which hampered a corvette’s ability to conduct accurate underwater attacks on submerged U-boats. This was rationalized against the fact that their primary benefit was their just being on scene, offering the threat that any sort of surface escort was sure to give a U-boat pause in attacking.

The shortcomings of the corvettes were never fully resolved until the design in 1943 of what at first was styled the “twin-screw corvette” – soon designated as a “frigate” – that was some 100 feet longer and 500 tons heavier, could carry greater armament and variety of sensors, and came equipped with a gyro compass. These proved too large to be built in the yards above the St Lawrence Canal locks (and for the smaller British yards), so a scaled-down version of shorter length and back to a single screw was developed (252 feet and 1,060 tons); although an altogether different ship from the original Flower class, they generally are included in discussions of “corvettes” and were named the Castle class. Orders were placed for 37 of them to be built in Canada, but these all were cancelled in favour of other types; of the 12 commissioned into the RCN all were built in British yards. Another sub-group of “corvettes” often overlooked were the 60 ships of the Bathurst class built in Australia, essentially to Revised Flower-class specifications (that is, with the extended fo’c’sle, but somewhat shorter at 186-foot length).

A full discussion of the operational employment of RCN corvettes would take more space than is allowed here. The majority were allocated to the “North Atlantic Run”, but a good number were detached at various times for such operations as the Caribbean oil convoys (from

early 1942), the Aleutians (spring and summer of 1942 and 1943), the Battle of the Gulf of St Lawrence (in the summers of 1942 and 1944), Torch (the invasion of North Africa, November 1942 – January 1943) and Neptune (offshore support for the invasion of Normandy, May-August 1944). In exchange for the 10 lost in action, RCN corvettes participated in the capture or destruction, alone or in company, of 14 German U-boats.

Within a year of the end of the war, demobilization saw the bulk of the worn-out little ships disposed of for scrap, with a few going to smaller Latin American and Asian navies. Only one was kept on in Canadian government service, the former HMCS *Sackville*, transferred to the Department of Transport as a civilian oceanographic research vessel until finally being paid off in 1982. The volunteer Canadian Naval Memorial Trust quickly was established to acquire and restore the ship to her mid-1944 configuration. In 1985 the Canadian Government approved the restoration of her identity as a “His / Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship” and designated HMCS *Sackville* as Canada’s Naval Memorial, dedicated to the 2,000 sailors who lost their lives at sea. As “the last of the Flowers” she is berthed on the downtown Halifax waterfront and is open to visitors all summer as part of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic complex.

Many thanks to:
**Royal United Services
 Institute of Nova Scotia**
<https://rusi-ns.ca/canadian-corvettes-in-the-second-world-war/>

Fleet Week

Among naval/military and civilian officials taking part in the announcement of Fleet Week activities in Halifax-Dartmouth Sept 7-10 were, from left: CNMT chair Captain(N)(ret’d) Bill Woodburn; Dr John Gillis, chair, military rugby match; Captain(N) (ret’d) Dave Benoit, CEO of Build Nova Scotia; Rear Admiral Josee Kurtz, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic; Halifax MP Andy Fillmore, Hon Barb Adams, HRM Mayor Mike Savage, Hon Colonel Don Julien who attended as the padre and conducted Mi’kmaw smudging ceremony, and HMCS *Sackville*’s First Lieutenant LCdr (ret’d) Rick Powell.



Among naval/military and government officials participating in the opening of International Fleet Week were, left to right: HRM Mayor Mike Savage, Hon John Lohr, Nova Scotia Minister Responsible for Military Relations; Halifax MP Andy Filmore, Vice Admiral Angus Topshee, Commander RCN; Wing Commander Adrian Mellors, British High Commission, Ottawa and Commander Edward Moss-Ward, CO HMS Portland.



National Defence Minister Bill Blair rings the historic North Atlantic Bell to officially open International Fleet Week Sept 7-10, with HMCS *Sackville*, Canada’s Naval Memorial as backdrop.

As seen in *Trident Newspaper*’s September 2023 Issue:
 “With HMCS *Charlottetown* in the lead as the flagship for Exercise Cutlass Fury 2023, the exercise task force left Halifax Harbour on September 10 with a sailpast and flypast to kick off the exercise and wrap up Halifax International Fleet Week.”
 Photo by Cpl Alexandre Arsenault

Escort Aircraft Carriers: HM Ships Nabob and Puncher (Part 2)

By: LCdr (Ret'd) Doug Thomas
(with thanks to the Royal Navy Research Archive and "For Posterity's Sake.")

Part one of this article discussed the very active role of HMS Nabob, a Ruler-Class Escort Aircraft built in the US and transferred to the Royal Navy (RN). The ship was manned almost entirely by the Royal Canadian Navy while the aircrew were officers and men of the Royal Navy. Modifications to Nabob to fit her for operations with the RN were carried out at the Burrard Dry Dock Company in North Vancouver, BC, and workups were conducted off the West Coast of the USA and enroute British waters where she arrived in the Spring of 1944. Part one concluded with successful operations of Nabob and other Home Fleet units against German Forces based in occupied Norway.

Operation GOODWOOD was a major operation by the Home Fleet: battleships, large fleet carriers, and escorting cruisers and destroyers versus the German battleship Tirpitz, to take place between the 21st and 28th of August 1944. Tirpitz posed a threat to the Murmansk convoys simply by her existence, based in northern Norway close to the convoy routes.

For this strike on the German battleship, Admiral McGrigor had devised a new plan to damage the Tirpitz. The Avengers were to form the main strike, each armed with 2 Mk. V – 1,000lb aerial-launched mines which were to be placed near Tirpitz herself and the entrance to Ka fjord. The mines dropped near the battleship were fitted with time-delay fus-



German Battleship Tirpitz in a Norwegian Fjord – Wikipedia

es in the hope of causing some damage which might prompt her captain to leave the anchorage and be caught by the mines sown at the entrance. The aircraft from the Fleet Carriers were to launch another strike to both distract the German flak gunners and to attack the Tirpitz. Although highly practiced in aerial minelaying the Avenger crews faced a most difficult mission, careful route planning would result in each aircraft having 15 seconds over the target to accurately place two mines. Previous raids on the battleship had found the ship screened by smoke.

Severe weather delayed the start of the operation by 24 hours; on the morning of the 22nd the Avenger squadrons began to launch, and the strike force began to form up ready for departure. They were held in a holding pattern for some time while

a few aircraft were launched by the Fleet Carriers, then Nabob and Trumpeter turned into wind again and the Avengers began to land on: this phase of the operation was cancelled on account of low cloud conditions over the target area.

At 1100 a force comprising eighty-four aircraft was launched from the three fleet carriers. Thick cloud at 1,500ft also caused some of the aircraft to turn back short of the coast, they returned to the carriers without attacking. Twenty-eight aircraft pressed on with the attack but did not achieve any hits on the battleship, although several Luftwaffe bases were damaged.

Nabob launched four Wildcats at 1225 for Combat Air Patrol (CAP), one returned and made a successful emergency landing at 1432. The remaining three Wildcats were

landed on at 1500. At 1530 the ships of Force Two were detached to the westward. Nabob was instructed to fuel three destroyer-escorts commencing at 180 at a position 120 miles WNW of North Cape, in the Barents Sea. Trumpeter was to provide CAP and A/S patrols. The flight deck was being cleared of aircraft and the hands were laying out the fueling hose.

Torpedoed

At 1715 Nabob was struck by a single acoustic torpedo fired by U-354, which struck her on the starboard side, causing a thirty-two foot-square hole behind the engine room and below the waterline. She began to take on water at an alarming rate; within minutes Nabob was listing to starboard and was fifteen feet down by the stern. All electrical power had been lost and Nabob was dead in the water. A second torpedo was fired which struck the frigate HMS Bickerton in the stern and her damage was extensive: she had lost her propeller shafts in the explosion and thirty-eight crewmen died. The major warships immediately took evasive action and dispersed at full speed taking most of the screening destroyers with them.

At the time of the torpedo hit Na-

bob had 14 Avengers and 4 Wildcats on board, of these 9 Avengers and the 4 Wildcats were stowed in the hangar while 5 Avengers were parked forward on the flight deck. None of the aircraft were damaged by the blast; all Avengers were still armed with aerial mines for deployment during GOODWOOD.

Having received damage reports and seeing the 7-degree list and significant increase in her draught at the stern due to flooding, Captain Lay gave the order to prepare to abandon ship and lifeboats and Carley floats were made ready. A frigate came alongside and took off 210 men, ten of whom were injured, by boat. Many of those taken off were squadron personnel, it was believed that Nabob was now incapable of flight operations.

Once flooding was under control and diesel generators had been brought on-line to restore electrical power the Captain decided to attempt to save the ship. Steam was raised again, and she got underway slowly: three knots being the maximum safe speed. Although under way she was now in an extremely dangerous position if her flooding worsened: all the Carley floats and boats had drifted away, and only in-

dividual life jackets remained on board for lifesaving.

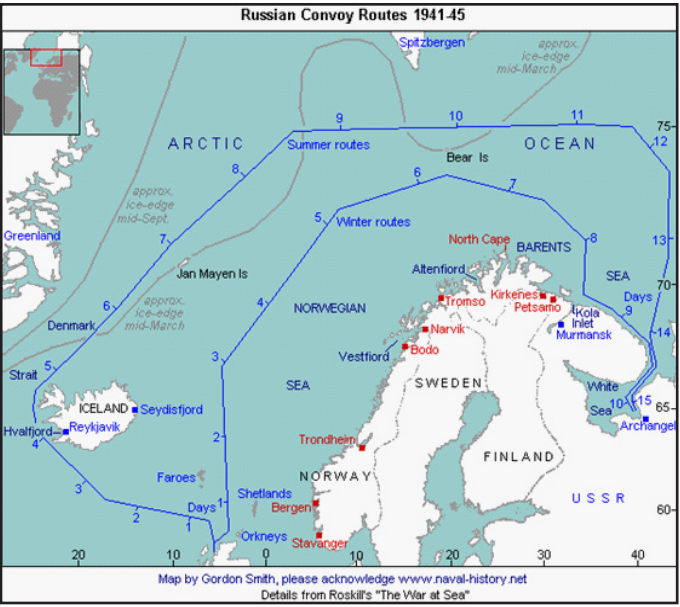
the bulkheads, but speed increased gradually to 5 Knots. As a precaution HMCS Algonquin, detached from Force One, took off a further 203 non-essential men by sea boat.

Damage control parties continued to work throughout the night attempting to correct the list and pump out water to reduce her draught aft; as a result of careful counter-flooding the 7 degree list had been reduced to less than 2 degrees by 0230 on the 23rd, however the ship's draught overall had worsened as a result, setting to 15 feet forward and 41½ feet aft (her normal draught was 23' forward and 25' aft). As much excess weight as possible was jettisoned or moved forward from the stern, the five-inch guns on the aft sponsons were dismantled and thrown overboard as well as ammunition. The portable pumps were run periodically to counter leakage from the secured and shored up areas and this trim was maintained for the remainder of her passage back to Scapa. General messing facilities had been destroyed by the explosion, provision and storerooms were flooded but provisions were sourced from emergency stocks located throughout the ship and hot meals were prepared in the officer's galley.

Nabob, Trumpeter, and escorting destroyers arrived in Scapa at 0800 on the 27th. She had successfully steamed 1100 miles under her own power after being severely wounded, much of this through harsh weather and rough seas.

Emergency repairs and passage to Rosyth for damage assessment

After arriving at Scapa, the aircraft were transferred ashore, and work was started to remove as many stores as possible and unnecessary equipment to improve her trim. Nabob left Scapa on September 8th and proceeded to Rosyth, arriving the



During the early hours of the 23rd the wind and the sea swell increased, the Engine Room reported that they could increase speed. There was concern that increased motion caused by the weather might collapse some of



August 23rd: HMS *Nabob* still down at the stern, limping back to Scapa Flow after her damage control teams managed to control the flooding. Photo: courtesy George Billing

next day. All ammunition remaining in the forward magazines, together with more stores were now off-loaded by lighter.

Beginning early in the morning of September 28th several compartments forward as well as all undamaged oil tanks and the forward magazines were flooded to achieve a final trim of about twenty-nine feet forward and thirty-one feet aft. *Nabob* was moved by dockyard tugs into a drydock and the sad task of removing the bodies from the flooded compartments began. The bodies of fourteen of the twenty men reported as missing, 10 Canadians and 4 British ratings, were removed from the ship and prepared for burial ashore.

Captain Horatio N. Lay OBE RCN, and Commander (E), Cecil I. Hinchcliffe, RD RCN were awarded a Mention in Dispatches "For good service when his ship HMS *Nabob* was damaged."

Disposal: Return to US Custody

It was decided that her damage was beyond economical repair and the decision was made to lay her up for the rest of the War. *Nabob* was paid off on September 30th, 1944,

but allocated to Rosyth Command in nominal reserve. Those personnel from NABOB who remained on the ship after October 1st were shown as discharged to the shore establishment HMS *Cochrane*, the remainder to HMCS *Niobe*, the Canadian shore establishment at Greenock. Some of her machinery was also stripped out to support her sister ships: her main gearing was installed in the other Canadian-manned CVE, HMS *Puncher*.

CVE-41 was returned to US Naval custody at Rosyth on October 10th, and she was stricken for disposal on March 16th, 1946. Her hulk was sold for scrapping in Holland in March 1947, but she was resold and converted for merchant service. Conversion was done at AG Weser Shipyards in Bremen, Germany, October 1951–June 1952, she emerged as the German cargo liner MV *Nabob*, a merchant service cadet training ship owned by the German Steamship Company. She was sold to a Panamanian company in 1967, renamed *Glory* in 1968, and was finally scrapped in Taiwan beginning December 1977.

Received from David Collins, LCdr RCN, (Ret'd)

Hi Doug, I enjoyed your tale about *Nabob* and look forward to its conclusion. Here is a short ditt that my late father (Vice Admiral Alan Collins) recounted. He was Capt. Nelson Lay's secretary in *Nabob* (as a Paymaster Lieutenant RCNVR).

"After the torpedoing and the ship's return to Scapa, most of the ship's company were landed, except for a small retard party kept on board while the authorities considered whether Nabob was salvageable. The captain's secretary, Paymaster Lieutenant Alan Collins was one of them. It was getting chilly that far north and the few officers left on board sat around a stove in the wardroom anteroom trying to keep warm whilst drinking Plymouth gin. At the end of rounds one evening, the officer of the day burst into the anteroom to report that the wardroom wine locker had been found intact! It had been deemed to have been lost in the attack, and the supplies were consequently written off. When the retard party (officers and ratings) left the ship sometime later, many pockets were stuffed with the booty from the wine locker as they headed ashore!"

Anyway, for your use in the Autumn issue if you wish!

Yours aye
David Collins

A final segment about HMS *Puncher*, and Canadian Naval Aviation in the immediate post-war era, will be in the next issue of Action Stations.

Sinking of HMCS Spikenard, Loss of CO and Crew

38, Woodlands Park Road
Greenwich

S.E., 10

Dear sir:

Letter to brother of

LCdr H.F. Shadforth

Today I received your letter enquiring for your brother, my late Commander. I'm sorry I cannot give you hope of his survival.

You no doubt would like to know why and also what happened to convince me Lt. Commander Shadforth was lost.

On the night of Tuesday, 10th February at 10:30 p.m. a torpedo struck the *Spikenard* just forward of the bridge and must have killed any one of the officers who happened to be in the wardroom. Your brother, I believe, was on the bridge at the time of the explosion. I was asleep in the petty officers' mess at the time and on arrival on deck saw part of the bridge blown away and the forward end of the ship right back to the lifeboats – this included the bridge – in flames.

Someone on the bridge, I think Lieut. Commander Shadforth, was blowing "Abandon Ship" on the whistle. She went down by the head very fast and had disappeared in 3 minutes. She was a small ship and the torpedo must have nearly broken her in halves.

Eight of us were picked up the next evening after 18½ hours on a raft. The port life-boat was smashed in the explosion. The starboard boat was in flames and one Carlie [sic] float lashed near the boats, and could not be reached and went down lashed to the ship.

There was one other float and the raft back aft. I got the float free and



three others got the lashings off the float and picked up four others who were in the water.

Immediately after she sank there followed an underwater explosion. It may have been the boilers or a depth charge. I had a miraculous escape after being blown off the raft an coming to under the water going down with the ship. I made the surface, heard them talking on the float and swam to them. We changed over to the raft and heard a few cries in the water. We managed to pick up two, an ordinary seaman and a leading stoker, but both were injured internally and died before noon the next day. There were no more cries and we settled down to wait.

On being picked up by the English Corvette [HM *Gentian*], I learned we had not been reported sunk, and no one knew we were lost. The English Corvette queried our whereabouts at 11 a.m. and obtained permission to return and search for survivors. The first definite information regarding her loss was gained from us. Therefore, I fail to see how any others were picked up before us or

they would have known, and I don't think any others in the water at the time of the explosion would have escaped injury. If anyone did get clear, I don't think they could have survived as the temperature of the water was 42 degrees F. I am very sorry I am unable to give you more pleasant news, but think you would rather know the truth.

The *Spikenard* was a very happy ship due to the consideration shown the crew members by the officers. Your brother, Sir, did not stand on formality, but treated us all as human beings. However, he was regarded with the greatest respect. We lost a man we could ill afford to lose.

You have every reason to be proud of your brother. Thank you for your good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Alex A. Day (signed)



The Sinking of HMCS Weyburn

By: LCdr (ret'd) Rick Powell



Background

HMCS *Weyburn* was sunk on 22 February 1943 off Cape Espartel, east of Gibraltar, while on escort duties for Convoy MKS-8 (Mediterranean – UK). The mine, laid by U-118 several weeks earlier, ripped open the portside amidships, splitting the funnel from bottom to top, buckling the decks. The sea entered the engine room causing pipes to burst. After the initial explosion, all firing pins from the depth charges were safely removed except for two, which had jammed. This was done, should the ship sink, the depth charges would not explode as the ship went under. HMS *Wivern* came to *Weyburn's* aid, nudging her bow against the corvette's quarterdeck to take the crew

off. Roughly twenty minutes into the rescue operation, with her back broken something gave way inside *Weyburn* and the ship sank immediately. As the ship sank the two depth charges that could not be rendered safe exploded, killing those in the water and killing and severely injuring members of the *Wivern's* crew in the forward half of the ship. The underwater explosion was sufficient to shift *Wivern's* engines and boilers, rendering the destroyer dead in the water. HMS *Wivern* had to be towed back to the U.K.

A Unique Wrinkle

I gave a special request tour of the *Sackville* to Anthony Collins, and his wife Cath from Sussex in the U.K. During the walk around the ship Anthony related a very interesting story about his father who was killed in action in the *Weyburn* sinking.

Anthony Collins's father Able Seaman J. Collins was in the RN serving in the destroyer HMS *Laforey* based in Gibraltar. He was however being sent home on compassionate leave due to his wife's medical complications who was four months pregnant with Anthony. *Laforey's* Captain, Maurice Hutton, took the extraordinary effort, as a good CO does in looking out for the

welfare of a member of his crew, to make arrangements for AB Collins to be transferred to HMCS *Weyburn* departing the Mediterranean on convoy duty bound for the UK. He had only been in his new ship for four days when *Weyburn* struck the mine. AB Collins was the port lookout in *Weyburn* and was killed in action when the ship struck the mine. Eight members of *Weyburn's* Crew who were in the water were killed by the exploding depth charges when the *Weyburn* sank. Able Seaman Collins's body was the only body recovered from the *Weyburn* sinking when it washed ashore in southern Spain. He was buried in Zahara Los Altunes, Spain with a HMCS *Weyburn* headstone which is most unique since AB Collins was technically only a temporary member of *Weyburn's* crew. Crew members taking passage on other ships, had to be 'drafted' to the new ship and their documents transferred for pay, welfare etc. AB Collins thus was discharged from his ship HMS *Laforey* and became a member of the *Weyburn's* ships company until the ship reached the UK which sadly never did.



And now you know the rest of the story.

Anthony Collins joined the navy in 1959 aged 16 and served in a variety of ships as a radio operator (telegraphist), frigates, a boom defence vessel and the aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*, before leaving in 1970. An-

thony then finished off his naval career in the Royal Naval Reserve until 1985, mainly on minesweepers.

Anthony Collins stated "It has been an ambition for me to see the *Sackville* and get a feel of the ship type that my father lost his life on, I have certainly achieved that".



HMCS Glace Bay Engineers Aboard HMCS Sackville

During the third week of September Glace Bay Coxn, PO1 Rob Sinclair, contacted *Sackville's* Coxn CPO2 Conrad Johnson to see if a small contingent of *Glace Bay* crew members could visit HMCS *Sackville*. The visit request was authorized and on 21 Sep 13 members of *Glace Bay's* crew

boarded the ship.

But this visit would be just a little different. The *Glace Bay* crew were under the impression they were coming to tour the *Sackville* engine room. That's what they thought, however unbeknownst to most there was a special event to take place. The group preceded to the engine room and when all were assembled on the engine room plates the CO and Coxn proceeded with an award ceremony. Two of the *Glace Bay* crew had just successfully passed their Kingston class MCO qualifications. S1 Alexis Pemberton and S1 Corbin Simpson knew they had successfully passed



their practical exam but that's all, they were under the impression they were getting a tour of the *Sackville* including the engine room. Little did they know they would receive their MCDV engine room qualification certificates. Needless to say, both recipients were caught completely off guard but elated.

Because the event had been pre-planned the *Glace Bay* Group had made the appropriate lunch reservations to join the Trustees in the Mess for the Noon Hour Weepers. As it is customary to introduce the guests in the Mess I called upon the CO, LCdr Morrison, to enlighten the assem-

bled why they were there. He said he was very proud to have just presented two MCO engine room qualification certificates to two of engineering crew and decided it be most fitting to present the recipients with their certificates in the engine room in HMCS *Sack-*

ville, the last Flower Class Covette. He then formally introduced S1s Pemberton and Simpson to the assembled Trustees and guests.

As *Sackville* also traditionally presents a book to one of the guests at our lunch weepers it was decided, on this special occasion, to present not one but two books to the two newly qualified *Glace Bay* engineers, their day yet made again, they will have fond memories of HMCS *Sackville*.

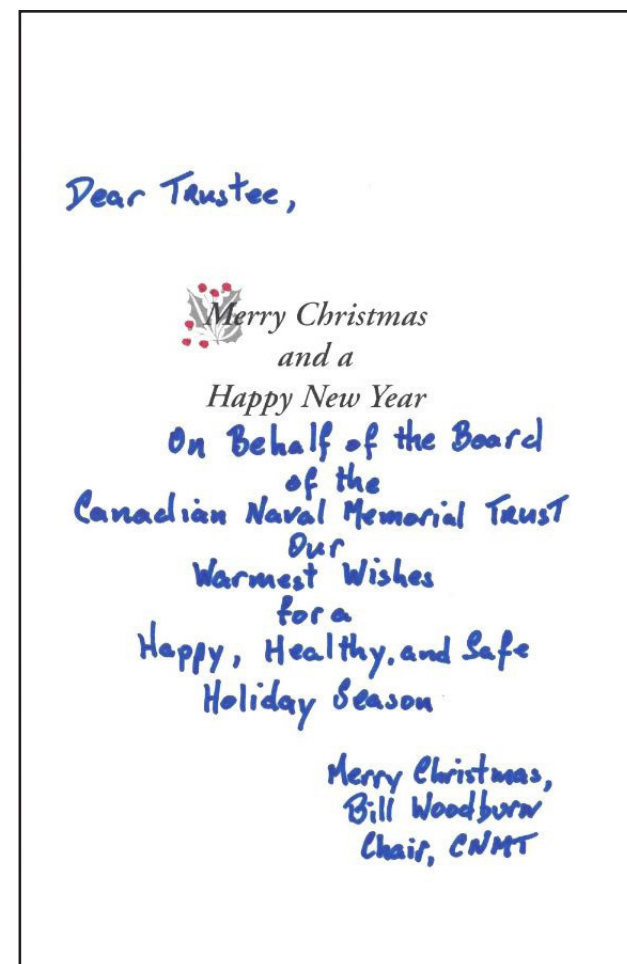


Trust and Mess Events

Members of HMCS *Scotian* alumni produced “HMCS SCOTIAN Our Sailors, Our Stories,” a 108 page book of stories and photos to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the commissioning of the Halifax Division and 100th anniversary of the Naval Reserve in 2023. Chief Petty Officer (ret’d) JoAnn Cunningham, centre, and Chief Petty Officer (ret’d) Peggy Bradford, right, both former Coxswains of *Scotian*, presented a copy of the book to Lieutenant Commander (ret’d) Rick Powell, *Sackville*’s 1st Lieutenant during a Friday visit to the ship.



HMCS *Sackville* has a new 27-foot whaler that has attracted a fair bit of attention, not to mention a keen crew (including CNMT Chair Bill Woodburn) anxious to ‘refresh’ their whaler pulling and sailing skills. The Trust contracted with Big Pond Boat Shop in Martin’s River, Lunenburg County, NS to build a replacement whaler for the ship. The design for the seaworthy and durable whalers dates to the 19th century (some years ago Fibreglas version replaced the wooden design).



Canadian veterans participating in the 2023 cross-Canada Rolling Barrage rolled up to Sackville Landing on the historic Halifax waterfront and were welcomed by the Chair of CNMT, CO of HMCS *Sackville*, crew members and other Trustees. Halifax-Dartmouth was a major stop for members riding across the country to raise funds and increase awareness of PTSD.



Councillor Mary Rasmussen, Lord Mayor of Liverpool welcomes, from left, CNMT Trustees Bob Stewart, John Langley and Gary Reddy during Battle of Atlantic 80th anniversary ceremonies in Liverpool in May.



During a family visit to Alberta and the famed Calgary Stampede, CNMT Director Bill Gard met with Angela Pitt, MLA for Airdrie-East and deputy speaker of the Alberta Legislature and shared background and current activities of HMCS *Sackville*, Canada’s Naval Memorial.

Crossed the Bar



Hodges P. Hamm, well-known Saint John, NB realtor and supporter of CNMT/HMCS *Sackville*, passed away June 6 at age 74. He had a lengthy career in the Naval Reserve and cadet movement, retiring with the rank of lieutenant commander, and active in the Navy League of Canada and other community undertakings. Survivors include his wife Lorraine, daughter Brandy, brothers Ron and Frank, and sister Linda.

Charles Anthony Goode, of Sherbrooke, QC, son of CNMT Director Captain (ret'd) Anthony (Tony) Goode and the late Terry Ellen Goode (Keddy) passed away in July near his Queens County, NS summer home at age 45. Survivors include his widow Jeanne, twin brother, Jonathan, his father and his spouse, Patricia Matthews. A graduate of Kings-Edgell School and Bishop's

University, Lennoxville, QC, he was an avid rugby player, referee, and mentor, coaching Bishop's Varsity Rugby program from 2012 to 2019 as well as the Sherbrooke Abenakis. He taught English and coached for 20 years at the Seminaire de Sherbrooke. Donations in his memory may be made to a scholarship fund to be announced.

George Wayne Rogers, a nationally recognized architect, passed away in Halifax in September at age 85. As president of MacFawn and Rogers Architects he received a number of design recognition awards over the years, including the Governor General's Award for Architecture for design of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* Interpretation Centre at Sackville Landing. He was active in a number of professional and community organizations and was a historian of church architecture. Survivors include his wife Carol and sister Nancy.

Ronald Knapman, Halifax, who joined the Navy at 16 in 1945 and served for 25 years, passed away in June at age 94. Following retirement as a chief petty officer he joined the federal public service where he was employed as an auditor for 17 years. He was a member of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*. Survivors include his wife Hope, daughter Wanda, sons David and Wayne and several grandchildren. Donations in his memory can be made to the Canadian Wildlife Federation or the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust.

Captain (N) (ret'd) John Nethercott, who joined the RCN in the VENTURE program (class of 1959) and would hold a number of senior appointments during his career passed away in Ottawa in September at age 83. During his career he commanded HMC Ships *Annapolis*, *Fraser* and *MacKenzie*; the Naval Training Centre VENTURE, *Esquimalt* and CFB Halifax. He was a Life Trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*. Survivors include his wife Carol, sons Michael, Mark and John, and several grandchildren. Donations in his memory may be made to CNMT/HMCS *Sackville*, Perley Health or the Alzheimer's Association.



Robert William (Soapy) Stoddard, active in hockey and sailing and a volunteer in a number of organizations including a Life Trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* passed away in Halifax in September. Survivors include wife Dorothy, sisters Judith and Beverly and brother Donald.



Commander Lorenzo A. (Tony) Cormier (ret'd), a retired business/finance executive and former commanding officer of HMCS *Scotian*, passed away in Halifax in September at age 93. He joined the University Naval Training Division while attending St Francis Xavier University in 1950s and had a lengthy reserve career, serving as CO of *Scotian* 1971-74 and honorary aide-de-camp to Governor General Roland Michener and Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Victor Oland. He was a long-time CNMT Trustee and supporter of the naval community. In civilian life he was comptroller of Oland Breweries. He was predeceased by his wife Benita and son Stephen; survivors include sons Kenneth and Christopher and grandchildren Lauren and Jack.

Lieutenant (N) Donald (Don) M. Mackey (ret'd), a 37 year veteran of the RCN and long-time supporter of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* passed away in Dartmouth, NS Nov 12 at age 83. Born in Peterborough, ON he joined the navy in 1958 and trained as a sonar operator. He served in a number of ships and training establishments, including D5 staff, coxswain HMCS *Iroquois* and following commissioning served on the directing staff of the Junior Leadership School/Seamanship Division and as a career manager at National Defence Headquarters. Following retirement he was actively involved with HMCS *Sackville*, including serving as gift shop manager, and the Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 160). Survivors include his wife Elaine Shirley, sons Ronald, Scott and Brent; sister Barbara Jean and a number of grandchildren. Burial at sea will take place at a later date. Donations in his memory may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.







Calling All Active Service and Retired Veterans !

HMCS *Sackville* needs your support. Be part of something special:
a living symbol of the rich history of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Funds raised from memberships and direct donations help preserve and operate the "Last Corvette". Official tax receipts are issued for donations of \$10 or more.

www.canadasnavalmemorial.ca (Join & Support banner)

(902) 492 - 1424

Battle of the Atlantic Pilgrimage

2023 Londonderry

By LCdr (ret'd) Ann Mech

The first pilgrimage that the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust has taken to Londonderry (Derry), Northern Ireland since Covid lockdowns brought 15 Trustees and guests to commemorate the 80th Battle of the Atlantic in May 2023. Our four days were action packed with events/activities organized by Ship Mate Robert Buchanan, president of the Royal Naval Association Londonderry Branch.

The City Hotel, our accommodations for the commemoration events, is centrally located near the Derry's Walled City and the River Foyle. This central location was appreciated by all for it enabled the us to sight see, shop, and visit the many delightful pubs and restaurants.

Londonderry played a significant role with Canadian sailors during the Second World War, with more than 30,000 Canadian military taking respite there. According to military historian Richard Doherty, convoys began sailing the North-West Approaches after the fall of France

in 1940. The river Foyle became a major Royal Navy asset with the creation of base, HMS *Ferret*.

In time, Canadians comprised the largest element of the Londonderry Escort Force (LEF) with more than 100 ships as part of the Canadian 2nd Escort Group (C-2), which included Flower-class corvettes. A stone frigate, HMCS *Niobe* was also the local office for the Canadian ships. Today, the Sailor Statue, familiar to visitors to the Halifax waterfront, is also represented in Derry in Erbington Square, the former HMS *Ferret*, with the International Sailor Memorial.



Vice Admiral (ret'd) Dean McFadden, left, presents bell from HMS Malcolm (1919) to Robert Buchanan, Royal Naval Assoc.



The first evening of festivities was a welcoming meet and greet by the Londonderry Branch of the RNA at the Royal British Legion Waterside Branch. The Trustees also caught up with the representatives of the Crow's Nest St. John's and the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff London. On behalf of the Trust, Vice Admiral (ret'd) Dean McFadden presented S/M Buchanan with a letter of appreciation from Rear-Admiral Brian Santarpia (formerly Commander MARLANT) as well as the bell from HMS Malcolm (1919), *see photo on p. 22*. This Scott-class flotilla leader destroyer fought in many theatres, including the First World War and the Battle of the Atlantic. The mystery of how the bell found its way to Halifax may be unknown, but it was fitting to return the bell back to its station after an eight-decade port visit.

On Friday the award winning Tower Museum, located in the walls

of Derry hosted a riveting presentation by military historian Richard Doherty regarding the river Foyle and Londonderry's participation in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Another highlight was the Laurentic Commemoration (shown above) at Fort Dunree, Inishowen, County Donegal in the Republic of Ireland. The hauntingly beautiful landscape was a fitting backdrop to the ceremony at the Laurentic Memorial commemorating the 354 souls, including 21 Newfoundlanders, lost during the sinking of HMS *Laurentic* at the mouth of Lough Swilly in 1917. Esteemed guests included the Canadian Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland Nancy Smyth, and Cord Meier-Klodt, ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany. I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the Trust at this touching ceremony.

The Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration on Sunday morning

at All Saint's Clooney, Church of Ireland, previously the Garrison Church, was a fitting end to the four day visit. An impressive parade to the church, including the Churchill Band, Sea Cadets and Veteran's Associations were met by a congregation representing the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, CDLS London, and other veteran associations. The Newfie-Derry Convoy Bell was relocated from the Tower Museum to All Saints specifically for the service and rang out 8 bells. Vice Admiral McFadden laid HMCS *Sackville*'s wreath on behalf of the Trust during this impressive ceremony.

After a final trip to the Royal British Legion for a light lunch and farewells, the contingent began to go their separate ways back to all parts of Canada. An extremely memorable experience to be included in Londonderry's Battle of the Atlantic Commemorations.

Battle of the Atlantic '80

26 - 28 May '23, Liverpool, England, the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic was commemorated with a variety of ceremonies ranging from Princess Anne unveiling a new national memorial then cutting a ceremonial cake at a town hall luncheon with the Lady Mayor, a Formal dinner with the RN First Sea Lord, a tour of the Western Approaches Museum, a Royal Marines concert at the Philharmonic Hall, a Drumhead service and laying of wreaths, flypast by the Battle of Britain Historic Flight, and a 'March of Medals' through the streets of the city.

Throughout the various events the organizers welcomed the participation from HMCS *Sackville* and were grateful that Gary & Liz Reddy, Bob & Pat Stewart and John Langley (a fellow *Sackville* Trustee), representing the Cunard Steamship Society, had made the effort to attend from Canada.

At the luncheon Gary presented a *Sackville* coin to Adm Sir Ben Key KCB CBE, the RN First Sea Lord, on behalf of VAdm Topshee, Comd RCN, and Bob found that the Admiral Key's predecessor as 1st Sea Lord had been his co-pilot when Bob was on his RN exchange tour at 814 Sqn in 1983.



Membership Update

Welcome Aboard - Bienvenue à bord

Nineteen Life and thirty-seven Annual Trustees have joined this year, to date (23 October).
Dix neuf membres à vie et trente sept membres annuels ont adhéré à ce jour cette année (23 octobre).

To all of our members across Canada and beyond, thank you for your ongoing support. The mission continues because of you !
À tous nos membres au Canada et à l'étranger, merci de votre soutien continu. La mission continue grâce à vous !

Life Members

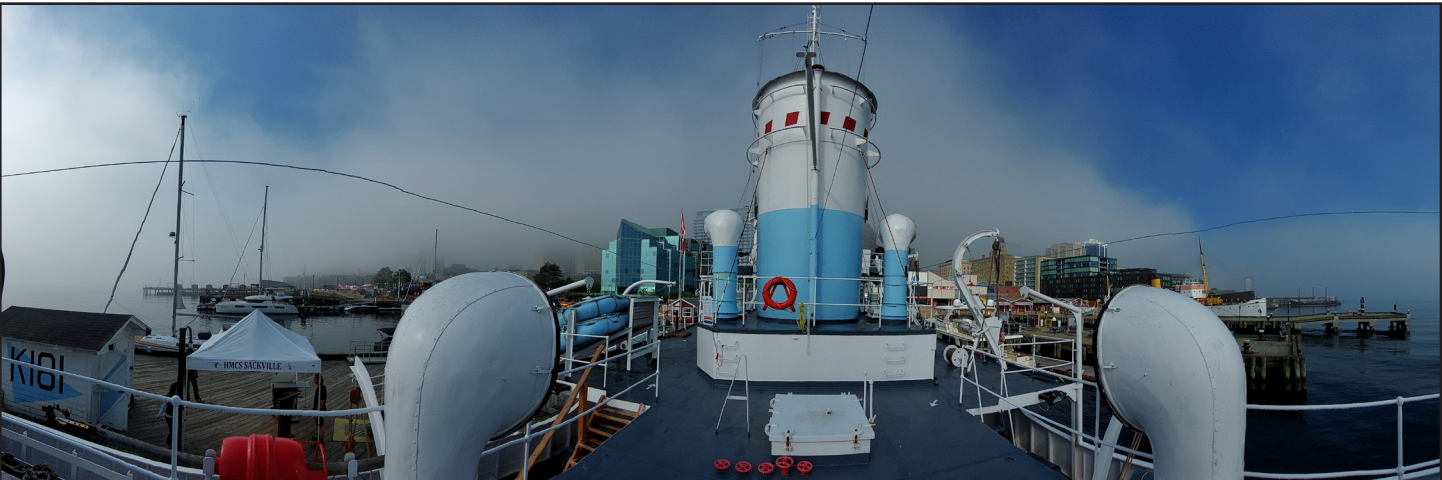
James Anderson, Halifax, NS
Blaine Carter, Enfield, NS
Earle Corn, Lower Sackville, NS
Jonathan Doucette, Gallagher Ridge, NB
Jerzy Gajewski, Halifax, NS
Mike Hracs, Calgary, AB
George Knowles, Mono, ON
Jason Knowles, Sambro Head, NS
Nicholas Loughheed, Halifax, NS
Eva McFadden, Bedford, NS
John Nisbet, Halifax, NS
Danial Orwick, Elmsdale, NS
Carol Skelton, Northfleet, Kent, UK
Donald Soulsby, St. John's, NL
Katelene Smith, Halifax, NS
Angus Tulloch, Halifax, NS
Daniel Proctor, Sackville, NB
Thomas Walford, Northfleet, Kent, UK
John Williams, Regina, SK

Annual Members

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Andy Ashworth, Bath, ON
Gerald Bradley, Sudbury, ON
John Brown, Prospect Bay, NS
Matthew Campbell, Halifax, NS
David Cashin, Dartmouth, NS
Alex Csank, Vankleek, ON
Michael Daine, Dartmouth, NS
Brian Doucette, Bedford, NS
Richard Duncan, Burlington, ON
Richard East, Comox, BC
Donald Fairley, Long Beach, CA, USA
Richard Feltham, Eastern Passage, NS
Tom Fredericks, Halifax, NS
Ward Foster, Midland, ON
Tanya Grodzinski, Kingston, ON
George Haggerty, Brandon, MB
Ian Hutchings, Dartmouth, NS

Annual Members Cont...

Dave Manning, Campbelltown, NSW, AU
Rob McCarl, Cambridge, ON
Margaret McClean, Dartmouth, NS
Gregg Morris, Halifax, NS
Byron Mullet, Dartmouth, NS
Jordan Nowlan, Sainte Anne de Kent, NB
Cynthia O'Connell, Chester, NS
Trevor Penny, Beaverbank, NS
Ryan Pilmer, Boutilier's Point, NS
Elizabeth Reddy, Dartmouth, NS
Lorne Reid, Kingston, NS
Daniel Robitaille, Eastern Passage, NS
Kelvon Smith, Virden, MB
Jon Summers, Whiteway, NL
John Thompson, Dartmouth, NS
John-David Todd, Halifax, NS
Charles Trombley, Hubley, NS
David Watts, Halifax, NS
David Young, St. John's, NL





HMCS Sackville

Just For The Hull Of It Campaign

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by mail (cheque payable to CNMT)
or by calling (902) 492-1424.

Have you considered donating stocks ?

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