



HMCS SACKVILLE

ACTION STATIONS

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On the Cover...

Nocturnal beauty

CNMT Life Trustee Donald Soulsby titled his evening photo of HMCS Sackville “nocturnal beauty,” splendour for sure. *Sackville*’s wartime and peacetime missions and tasks navigating the unpredictable North Atlantic are well chronicled; today, the iconic corvette—Canada’s Naval Memorial—welcomes visitors in a more relaxing setting at the ship’s Sackville Landing berth in downtown Halifax.



Committal of Ashes Service

A committal of ashes service for 16 former naval and service members was held aboard HMCS Sackville while the ship was abreast of the Halifax (Sailors) Memorial in Point Pleasant Park during the national Battle of the Atlantic ceremony. (Doug Struthers photo). See article on page 8.

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HMCS *Margaret Brooke*



From the Chair

Capt(N) (ret'd) William Woodburn

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the Battle of the Atlantic, a battle that changed our country forever. Yet this morning on 31 March 2025 as I prepare to submit this article for publication, I stumble across a headline in BBC News that reads “Germany decides to leave history in the past and prepare for war”. With that ominous message in mind, I encourage all of us to take the time to remember what happened 80 years ago. Indeed, take the time to commemorate the accomplishments, hardships and sacrifices made by so many during the longest battle of the war. May we never have to go there again.

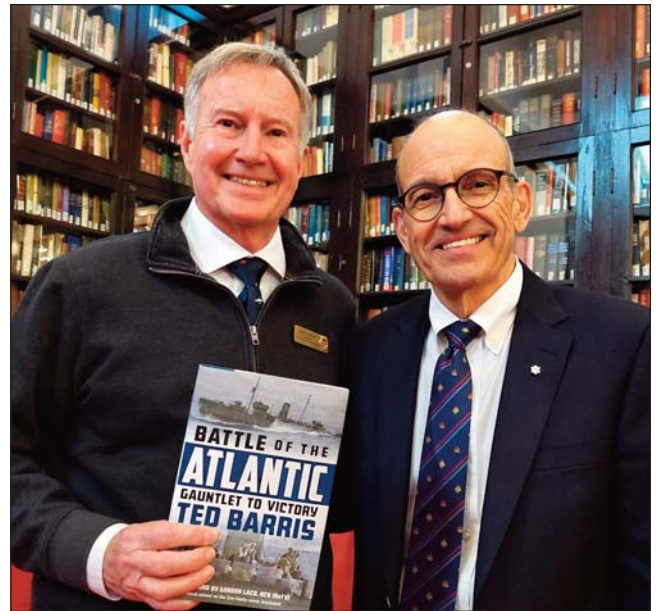
By my count, this is the tenth time I’ve had the privilege to write an article in “*Action Stations*” as Chair of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, it is also my last occasion to do so. I will step down as Chair on completion of our next AGM to be held on 28 June and at that time hand over my responsibilities to Greg Cottingham, our current Vice Chair. A fellow retired naval officer and submariner, Greg has an engineering background and possesses extensive operational experience both in the RCN and on exchange with the RN. He also has extensive experience in the private sector, not to mention a keen personal interest in naval history, model building and, it goes without saying, the Battle of the Atlantic. In other words, I am delighted to say he is a perfect fit to lead the CNMT team at a particularly exciting time

in our organization.

I must admit, the last five years at the helm of the Trust have flown by. They were rewarding, and invigorating years, and to be frank, busier than I ever anticipated. However, I was very fortunate to have the support of an outstanding Board of Directors and the advice and experience of my predecessor, Wendall Brown, as well as the friendship and wise counsel of Garrett Reddy, Commanding Officer, HMCS *Sackville* to rely upon throughout my tenure.

Looking back, it is gratifying to see how much we’ve accomplished together. I assumed the Chair during one of the most consequential refits undertaken by HMCS *Sackville* and just three months after the World Health Organization declared the COVID outbreak a pandemic. Both events were significant in their own way, and each had a profound effect on our operations. The refit provided the impetus we needed to create our strategic plan “Charting a New Course” while the pandemic forced us to significantly up our game in the use of technology to hold meetings and advance the objectives of the Trust.

Thanks to the mentorship and facilitation of Mr. Bob Thompson, the formal development of our strategic plan proved to be a pivotal event for me personally and our Board of Directors. I consider the creation of the plan one of our



Bill Woodburn and Ted Barris

proudest accomplishments during my time as Chair. In effect, it set us on our current path to grow the Trust and evolve into a self-sustaining, vibrant organization, not an insignificant undertaking in today’s world for a non-profit such as ours.

Some highlights associated with the plan included the development of a nationwide, multimedia Branding Campaign and new website. This initiative enabled us to reach a huge new audience of Canadians thanks to the sterling efforts of our Marketing and Communications Director, Ann Mech and the team at Trampoline Branding. In addition, due to the leadership and guidance of Roger Chiasson, our Director of Governance, we have evolved by leaps and bounds in the creation of policies, operating procedures and directives aimed at placing the Trust on a solid business footing. Also, a huge amount of credit for our success must go to the crew of HMCS *Sackville* who consistently rose to the occasion to ensure the ship was well maintained, operational and safe. Last but not least, the wealth of experience

resident in our growing staff has touched on virtually every aspect of the Trust and proven critical to successfully advancing our goals and aspirations, raising our public profile and furthering an ever-growing agenda of activities.

Looking ahead, I have every expectation that the steps we are taking now to improve the visitor experience onboard ship, advance our fundraising efforts, grow our membership on a national scale, and strengthen our ties with the RCN will remain crucial elements to ensure the preservation of HMCS *Sackville* for generations to come.

It has been my honour to serve as your Chair for the past five years and I want to thank all of you for the support and encouragement you've shown me. I know Greg can fully count on you as well, particularly during these bewildering and trying times, as we continue to inspire Canadians to appreciate the accomplishments and sacrifices of the RCN during and after the Second World War to make this world a better place.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't thank my wonderful wife Theresa who accepted my commitment to the Trust without a full understanding of what I was committing to, but appreciated my strong belief in the work we do. I could never have done this without her support. Thank you!

Yours Aye,

Bill Woodburn
Chair

Down Memory Lane – Foes in War, Friends in Peace

On April 16, 1945 three weeks before the end of Second World War the Bangor Class minesweeper HMCS *Esquimalt* was torpedoed and sunk by U-190 off Chebucto Head, Halifax while conducting anti-submarine patrol in company with HMCS *Sarnia*. Only 27 of the ship's crew of 71 survived; *Esquimalt* was the last Canadian warship sunk by enemy action during the war. Werner Hirschmann was U-190's engineering officer during the sub's patrol off Nova Scotia. Serving in the minesweeper *Sarnia* at the time of *Esquimalt*'s loss was Sub Lieutenant Lou Howard. Following the end of hostilities Howard and Hirschmann met and became friends and the latter's friendship with other Canadian veterans included members of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. During a visit to HMCS *Sackville* in 2010 photo shows Werner Hirschmann, left, and Battle of the Atlantic veteran LCdr Murray Knowles, CO of HMCS *Louisbourg* (K401) sharing their wartime experiences.



Letter of Note

Trustee Harry W. Brown of Cleveland, QC writes: "...sending my annual pledge to the ongoing operation of HMCS *Sackville* and the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust. May I also add that I appreciate the quality of ACTION STATIONS and grateful that it is keeping me informed of the status of our beautiful memorial...keep up the good work."

Thanks Harry.

From the Captain

Cdr (ret'd) Gary Reddy

As the crew prepares HMCS *Sackville* for her return to downtown Halifax on 1 May 2025, we reflect on what our ship, Canada's Naval Memorial, means to us, to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and to Canada. In this the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the

Atlantic and end of the Second World War, the significance of the last Flower Class Corvette should not be lost on us.

HMCS *Sackville* reminds us of war and conflict, its devastation, and why we must never forget. And it is the men and women who served that we must thank. Canada has always stood with our Allies. And it was the brave Canadian men and women who answered the call, who stepped up in defence of our democracy, our values, and our way of life. We owe our freedom to these true Canadian heroes.

Petty Officer James (Jim) Silvester was one of those heroes who recently passed away on Vancouver Island at the full age of 102. He lived a full life but as an 18-year-old prairie boy, he knew he had to serve. He, like everyone, knew their purpose but probably not the full dangers involved. But he did it

anyway. When I chatted with Jim, he never considered himself a hero - he only did what he had to do. Thus, it is more important than ever to reflect on Jim's commitment and the sacrifice of so many Canadians be it First World War, Second World War, Korea, or Afghanistan.

Jim has left us but his legacy remains in HMCS *Sackville* and HMCS *Haida*. He was very proud of his service and what he was able to achieve as a young Canadian.

As we reflect on this the 80th Anniversary, let us remember Jim and those who served. Their numbers are dwindling but as a grateful nation we stand today on their shoulders. HMCS *Sackville* is just a material structure but the ship proudly represents a means to remember our brave men and women who served yesterday, today and into the future.

Thank you, Jim! Lest We Forget!



Presented Quilt of Valour/Rev

A Quilt of Valour was presented to Cdr (ret'd) Gary Reddy, Commanding Officer of HMCS *Sackville*, Canada's Naval Memorial in recognition of his 42 years of service. Participating in the presentation were Rhoda Moore, placing quilt on Gary, and his wife Elizabeth, right. Quilts of Valour-Canada Society's criteria for the quilts include the recipient having served in a combat or peacekeeping mission, or became ill or injured as a result of service in Canada or abroad. All quilts of comfort are hand made and donated by volunteers. (Bill Gard photo)



John Carling Career

It was a gathering of naval veterans of different eras when Graham McBride and Tom Estabrooks (Korean War) and Bill Gard and Doug Thomas (Cold War) visited Commander John Carling (Second World War and Korea) to bring greetings and best wishes from Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville* and the naval

community to recognize his 101st birthday. In addition to a few salty dips it was also an opportunity to reflect on John's 31 year career that began in early 1943 (seaman training followed by officer training) and service in the Castle-class corvette HMCS *Tillsonburg* (1944-45). Following the war he served in a number of ships

including HMCS *Iroquois* in Korea when the destroyer came under enemy shore fire; CO of HMCS *Nipigon* 1966-67 and held a number of appointments at NDHQ and on both coasts. Shown from left: Bill Gard, Tom Estabrooks, John Carling, Graham McBride and Doug Thomas.



HMCS Stettler

While ships of the RCN have authorized badges, also known as crests, wartime sailors started a tradition creating what became known as “gunshield graffiti” (informal artwork/drawings) to make a point including reference to ship's events/actions. Trustee Scott Durie provided a copy of early HMCS *Stettler* crest from his

father's naval memorabilia collection. *Stettler*, alternatively named for Edmonton, AB, was a River Class frigate commissioned in May 1944 and served in an escort group until the end of hostilities in 1945. In 1954 *Stettler* was recommissioned as a Prestonian Class frigate and served until 1966.



Trustees Presented Commendations

Three long-serving Trustees were recognized and presented the CNMT Chair Commendation during a dinner onboard HMCS *Sackville* April 3. Bill Woodburn, Chair of Canadian Naval Memorial Trust presented commendations to Elaine Tuff at right, shore office administration and membership co-ordinator; Roger Chiasson, CNMT board director of governance, and Gary Reddy, CO of HMCS *Sackville*. (Bill Gard photos)



Committal of Ashes Service at Sea

God of grace and glory, we thank you for the lives of those we commit to the sea today, who were so near and dear to those who loved them, and who have now been taken to eternal rest.

With Padres LCdr Andrew Cook (ret'd) and Lt (N) Stephen Cogswell officiating, a committal of ashes service was held aboard HMCS *Sackville* for 16 former naval and service members May 4 off Point Pleasant Park, Halifax.

Sackville, with the aid of a tug, was abreast of Halifax (Sailors) Memorial during the Battle of the Atlantic service at the Memorial. Par-


ticipants in the national service included government officials, naval and military leaders, veterans, civic and military support organizations.

With family members participating in the service aboard Canada's Naval Memorial the names of each of the 16 committals was read:

Trustee Ronald Paul Herold
AB Donald (Mac) McGregor
MCpl Robert (Rob) Vincent Bolger
MS Brock Brown
MS Michael Christopher D'Costa
MS Michael James
Sgt Darrell Gilbert (Ave) Avery
Sgt Alan M. Lamb
Sgt Howard Logan'

PO2 Brent Stevenson
PO1 Douglas Harry Morgan
PO1 Bruce Edward (Sudsy) Zwicker
CPO2 William (Bill) Weir Black
CPO1 Richard Joseph Laurie Charlton
Lt (N) Gerald Duncan White
RAdm Thomas Steel (Dudley) Allan

Following the service *Sackville*, under command of Cdr Gary Reddy (ret'd), returned to the ship's summer berth at Sackville Landing adjacent to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

An aerial photograph of a vast fleet of naval ships, likely the Battle of the Atlantic convoys, spread across a dark, choppy sea under a cloudy sky. The ships are small in the distance, creating a sense of scale and magnitude.

2000

Two thousand. All causes and theatres combined, two thousand brave members of the Royal Canadian Navy made the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War. The vast majority fell in the Battle of the Atlantic, amid defending enemy gunfire, the crashing of waves against steel hulls, and cries of comrades lost. Their stories are now safeguarded at HMCS Sackville, Canada's Naval Memorial. Each name, each legacy, a reminder of unwavering dedication to freedom and peace.

And that changed everything.



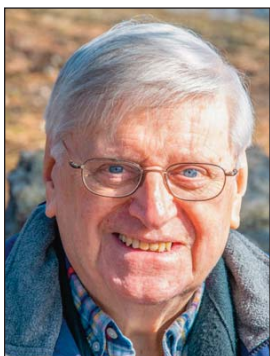
Support the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust at CNMT.ca

Crossed the Bar



Commander Robert John Gray (ret'd), whose 33 career included service in ships, submarines and a number of shore appointments passed away January 17 at the Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Building, Halifax at age 83. He was a graduate of the Royal Military College (class of '63) and served

in HMC Ships *Iroquois* and *Saguenay* and submarines *Ojibwa* and *Onondaga*, Canadian Forces Maritime Warfare School, Canadian Force Fleet School Halifax, Maritime Command and National Defence HQ, NATO (Denmark) and Canadian Forces Command and Staff College. Following retirement in 1995 he was active in a number of community, recreational and military support organizations including National Association of Federal Retirees, Northern American Hunting Dog Association, Kings County Wildlife Association, Atlantic Salmon Association and the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*. Survivors include children Christopher, Michelle and Angela, a number of grandchildren, brother Frank and his former wife Pierrette Bernier.



David Bruce Flemming, a recognized museum and heritage professional and an active supporter of Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*, passed away in Ottawa April 25 at age 79. During his career he served with National Historic Sites and Parks Canada, a former director of the Maritime

Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax and later with the Cumberland Heritage Village near Ottawa. He authored a number of papers on a range of historical subjects, including the Halifax Explosion and served on the board of directors of a number of historical and heritage organizations including Heritage Ottawa. Survivors include wife Teresa Dore, sons Sean, Matthew and Michael, brother Robert and grandchildren Rachel, David and Matilda.

Lieutenant Commander Ian Fraser McKee (ret'd), a 25-year naval veteran and active in public service, community and



military support organizations and causes passed away in Halifax December 10, 2024 at age 93. Survivors include his wife Johanne, sons Andrew, Bruce and James; a number of grandchildren and brother Fraser; he was predeceased by son Christopher and sister Carol. He attended HMCS Royal Roads (1948-1950) and served in HMC Ships *Ontario*, *Beacon Hill*, *Antigonish*, *Magnificent*, *Wallaceburg*, *Lauzon*, *St Croix*, *Outremont* and *Assiniboine*; HMCS *Cornwallis*, HMCS *Hochelaga*, National Defence HQ, Maritime Forces Warfare School and naval aide-de-camp to Governor General Vincent Massey 1956-1958. In civilian life he operated a real estate and financial management firm and supported a number of organizations. These included the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*, of which he was a member of the investment committee and contributor to the Trust's Endowment Fund; the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Royal Military College Club, RCN Benevolent Fund, Order of St John, and First Baptist Church, Halifax. A highlight of his career was serving as aide-de-camp to six Lieutenant Governors of Nova Scotia 1974-2001.

Doris Jean Stuart, who served in the RCN early in her career passed away in Halifax March 6 at age 88. Survivors include her husband John, CNMT Trustee and former president of the NS Naval Association of Canada and CO of HMCS *Scotian*; children Mary, Peggy, Charles and Anne and a number of grandchildren. A family event to celebrate her life will be held in the spring. Donations may be made to the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*.



Crossed the Bar (continued)



Lieutenant (P) Finlay Paul Sterling,
Pender Island, BC, who commenced his career as a naval pilot

in the 1960s and would later join Air Canada passed away August 22, 2024 at age 83. He was a Life Trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust/HMCS *Sackville*. He was predeceased by his wife Donna and is survived by sons Shawn and Craig and several grandchildren. He graduated from HMCS Venture, Esquimalt with the Class of '61 and began his flying career with postings at RCAF Centralia, RCAF Penhold, RCAF Saskatoon, HMCS Shearwater, USS Intrepid, USS Essex, and culminating with VS 880 Tracker Squadron flying from the aircraft carrier HMCS *Bonaventure*. Following his naval service, he signed on with Air Canada where he advanced to chief pilot of the 747-400. As he reminded family and colleagues his favorite flight was the annual Dreams Take Flight trip where the airline would fill a 747 with deserving children in need and fly them to Disney World for the day, adding "can't believe they pay me to do this."



Flashback

December 12, 1942 St John's KoC Hostel Fire

One of most traumatic events in Newfoundland's history occurred in St John's during the Second World War when the Knights of Columbus Hostel caught fire and 99 military members and civilians perished and more than 100 were injured. The fire started in the auditorium dance area of the Harvey Road hostel where off duty sailors, other military personnel and residents were enjoying a brief break from the rigours of war being fought off Newfoundland's shores. At the time, St John's harbour was one of the busiest North American ports serving as a staging area for trans-Atlantic convoys to the UK. Bill Gard, a former CO of HMCS *Sackville* relates how his father, the late Raymond Gard serving in



Memorial recognizes victims of the 1942 KoC Hostel fire, Harvey Road, St John's.

HMCS *Rosthern* at the time of the fire, was involved in removing bodies from the destroyed hostel, one of whom was a friend from a sister ship in port. As Bill notes, "Truly a tragedy."



Dances and other social gatherings were a welcome respite for RCN, Merchant Navy and other off-duty military members serving at Atlantic ports and establishments during Second World War.

HMAS Castlemaine Bathurst Class corvette

By Andy McNeill

Bathurst was one of several classes of corvettes, along with Flower Class corvettes like HMCS *Sackville*, to be constructed and served during the Second World War.

HMAS *Castlemaine* was one of 60 Bathurst Class corvettes constructed in Australia during the war of which, 56 served with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and four with the Royal Indian Navy (RIN).

HMAS *Castlemaine* was constructed at Williamstown Naval Dockyard, Victoria and commissioned on 17 June 1942, with the following principal characteristics:

- Length overall 186'
- Beam 31'
- Draught 8' 5"
- Full load displacement 1040T
- Horsepower c.2000hp
- Speed 15kts
- Endurance 2,640 nm @ 10kts
- Crew c.80
- Armament 1 x QF 4" Mk XIX, 1x 40mm Bofor, 2 x 20mm Oerlikons and various machine guns (4" Mk XIX gun installed during the 1943 re-fit and a Bofors replaced the aft Oerlikon during the 1944 re-fit)

The ship was propelled by twin shaft triple expansion steam engines. The steam was provided by two oil fired admiralty pattern three-drum water tube boilers instead of Scotch boilers. Interestingly the boilers were not fitted with economisers. The steering gear and deck auxiliary deck machinery was also driven by steam. The main and

auxiliary machinery fitted onboard was simple in design, to facilitate ease of manufacture and maintenance.

After commissioning, the *Castlemaine* undertook convoy escort duties, along with undertaking the hazardous task of supporting Australian and Allied troops engaged in guerrilla activities against the Japanese in Timor.

From December 1942 – mid 1944, the vessel undertook escort duties between North Queensland and New Guinea ports. During August 1944 the vessel was engaged in survey duties along the north coast of Australia and was present at Hong Kong in August 1945 during the Japanese surrender ceremony.

In November 1945 the vessel returned to Melbourne after further minesweeping and survey work in northern Australian waters. Finally on 14 December 1945 the vessel paid off into Reserves, immobilised

at Crib Point, Victoria as a training hulk for engine room artificers (ERA's).

In September 1973 the Minister for Defence announced that the *Castlemaine* would be gifted to the Maritime Trust of Australia, to become a maritime museum. The vessel is currently moored at Gem Pier, Williamstown and has been lovingly restored by generations of dedicated volunteers. The ship is open for public inspection at the weekends and on public holidays.

The vessel was awarded three Battle Honours:

PACIFIC 1941-45, DARWIN
1942-43, NEW GUINEA 1942-44

A sister vessel, HMAS *Whyalla* (J153) was commissioned in January 1942 and paid off at Brisbane in May 1946 after war service. The vessel was subsequently sold to the Victorian Public Works Department, renamed RIP and was operated from February 1947 until



HMAS *Castlemaine* at Gem Pier, Williamstown Victoria

1984, in maintaining marker buoys, moorings and pile lights in Port Philip Bay and other Victorian ports. Whyalla City Council purchased the vessel in 1984 and serves as the centrepiece of the Whyalla Maritime Museum in South Australia. The vessel is located two kilometres inland in Whyalla and is mounted on a permanent foundation.

HMAS *Whyalla* at the Whyalla Maritime Museum, South Australia



Fraser McKee celebrates 100th birthday



Fraser shows off new joggers to kick off the new year at his 100th birthday gathering,

As noted by friends and associates at his February 100th birthday celebration, Fraser McKee has accomplished much in and out of uniform in his first century.

He joined the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) in Toronto as an ordinary seaman in 1943 even though soldiering was a family tradition with his father serving as a senior officer at the time.

Fraser had sailed a lot in his youth at a cottage in Pictou, N.S. and was active in the Army Cadet Corps at school before commencing naval training in March 1943. In February 1944 he joined the armed yacht HMCS *Vision* sailing out of Digby, NS, including anti-submarine escort for the CPR Ferry *Princess Helene* operating between Digby and Saint John NB.

He recalls transit in a destroyer from Halifax to Cornwallis, N.S., in a February gale. He thought they were done when the alarm bells sounded due to a short circuit. His only feeling was, “well, we’re all going to drown for sure, but that’s the chance you take...and thinking of his poor mother—as his father was away fighting in Italy—and I’m drowned at sea!”

Fraser continues: “During the war I received letters from my mother, brother or sister once or twice a week, and from my father about monthly. And care packages – chocolate, snacks and clothing items like socks, sweaters, scarves and other things knitted by my industrious grandmother who lived

with us. Occasionally, cigarettes for trading as he didn’t smoke (but later smoked a pipe at sea).”

He ended the war in May 1945 serving in the minesweeper HMCS *Wallaceburg*, operating out of Halifax. They were part of the escort groups that brought in the last west-bound convoy of the war to New York, picked up at sea from the mid-ocean turnover. He still has the White Ensign his ship flew.

Fraser remained in the Reserves until 1978 specializing in anti-submarine warfare. He retired as a commander after 35 years of service.

He is the author/co-author of six books on the RCN and Merchant Navy history and has written book reviews and articles for different journals on naval subjects. He has also served as national president of the Navy League of Canada and editor of several publications.

Editor’s Note: *The preceding is slightly condensed version of Fraser McKee biography on Canada’s Battle of the Atlantic Heroes website.*

Happy 101 George Soane!

By Eric Brunt

George Soane at 101 is still driving, spending his days drawing house plans, reading, and scratching lottery tickets. Born in Windsor, ON his father worked for Ford Motor Company and had fought in the First World War. Despite a scar on his neck as a lasting reminder of his service, he never spoke of it. George had his own war stories, which I was honoured to hear.

Though he didn't swim, George still chose to join the Navy. When asked why, he simply said:

"I figured it doesn't matter. Nobody could swim 2000 miles, so I just didn't think of it."

Serving in the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, he knew the brutal reality—if you went overboard, survival was unlikely. That fate met two sailors from his ship, the destroyer HMCS *Qu'Appelle*.

"There were two over. We tried to get them. Their life belts had a light ... you could see them every now and then. Next thing you know, they're over here. Next thing you know, they're over there... just washing right over. It was horrible."

His parents were surprised by his decision to enlist but never spoke against it. The one most concerned was Eileen, the girl he had just started going steady with. When he left Windsor by train, they were all there to see him off. Exceptionally mature for 18, George reflected:

"I certainly had some regrets. We had just started going steady and everything, but no, I had joined, so I was ready to go. I told her, 'I don't want you sitting home worrying about me, so go on and date. If I get the chance, I'm going to date too.'"

Eileen might have worried most if she had known about July 5, 1944. That night, George and his crew sailed into the heavily fortified harbour of Brest to engage German submarines.

"We got shot up. My duty was to start two diesels for auxiliary electricity. I got one going, but the other wouldn't start. And I was right below the big guns firing, just sucking in cordite fumes. I finally gave up and went topside. As I was climbing from the stokehole to the fo'c's'le, I bent over for some reason. Right then, a roll of bullets hit along the ship. The guy next to me got hit by shrapnel. We were lucky." *Qu'Appelle* lost two men in that battle, one dying days later from his wounds.

After the war, George returned to Windsor and married Eileen in September 1945. She had waited for



him. They shared 69 years of marriage.

While many men, like George's father, never spoke of war, we now know more about ships like HMCS *Qu'Appelle* thanks to George's willingness to share. Encouraging veterans to speak helps us understand the horrors of war and why we must strive to avoid another. At this time, these stories matter more than ever and a heartfelt thank you to George for his service 80 years ago.



Anatomy of a Ship: HMS/HMCS *Mayflower*

By Doug Thomas

The Canadian War Supply Board ordered 64 Flower Class corvettes in early 1940, of which 10 were intended for the Royal Navy (RN).

The RN desperately needed more ASW vessels, and their shipyards were already fully committed to building other warships. As corvettes were small enough (less than 255 feet) to transit the canals and locks linking Lake Ontario and the Saint Lawrence River, many of them could be built in Ontario shipyards. Discussions between Canadian Naval Headquarters and the Royal Navy had agreed to a barter arrangement of five corvettes for each of two Tribal Class destroyers to be built in British shipyards for the RCN.

The 10 RN Flowers had a few differences in their layout compared to their RCN counterparts: principally the gun tub and 2-pounder pompom which were moved forward about 20 feet and the galley was located aft in the upper deck superstructure rather than forward of the funnel. The early Canadian ships, like HMCS *Sackville*, were designed to conduct minesweeping (pre-war estimates considered sea mines a major threat to harbour approaches and coastal sea lanes) and so were fitted with heavy winches and Oropesa gear on the quarterdeck. As it turned out this proved not to be necessary, and even most purpose-built minesweepers were not employed in minesweeping.

HMS *Mayflower* was laid down in February 1940 at the Canadian Vickers yard in Montreal, one of the

few operating shipyards in the country prior to World War II. She was rapidly completed, commissioned into the Royal Navy, and arrived in Halifax in December to store ship and work up her Canadian ship's company. In February 1941 she sailed in a convoy to the UK with a dummy wooden four" gun as there were no suitable guns available in Canada, a magnetic rather than gyro compass, and an inadequate early Radar set. Three months later all her equipment shortcomings were resolved, and she sailed as a member of Escort Group 4 with an Iceland-bound convoy in June and then on to St. John's Newfoundland. She was transferred to Canadian control, commissioned into the RCN as HMCS *Mayflower*, and served for the rest of that year, as a convoy ocean escort between St. John's and Iceland and took part in the battle of Convoy SC.44, which saw the loss of four merchant vessels and HMCS *Levis*. *Mayflower* picked up some of *Levis*'s survivors.

Mayflower was sent to Charleston, South Carolina for a major refit and the foc'sle extension which greatly improved the habitability of most of the early corvettes. This took place from December 1941 and February 1942. This would have given members of her ship's company a chance to get ashore in a friendly warm port and probably get home for the Christmas holidays – a great treat and break from the wintry North Atlantic.

For the rest of the war *Mayflower* was a convoy escort with several lengthy refits in Pictou, NS and Norfolk, Virginia. She escorted block ships and arrived off the Normandy invasion beaches on 7 June. For the rest of the war, she operated in UK waters and returned to the RN after VE Day. Many of the corvettes were transferred to smaller navies after the war or sold for mercantile purposes such as salvage tugs or whale catchers. *Mayflower* languished in Grangemouth, Scotland until scrapped in 1949.



HMCS Sackville Amateur Radio Station

The Wireless Office in HMCS *Sackville* now has an Amateur Radio (HAM) Station, VE0CNM. *Figure 1.* The station belonged to



Figure 1 *Sackville's* HAM Station VE0CNM

CPO Wayne Catchpaugh and was donated to the ship by CPO Sam Semple. It was installed by the Halifax Amateur Radio Club (HARC), Bruce Wade, VE1NB, Ken Asprey, VE1PDL, and Byron Mullet. VE1NFD, Ken and Bruce have since become Life Trustees and Byron has been a long time Trustee. *Sackville* is a designated

Museum Ship for the organization Museum Ships on the Air, MSOA, and is a registered Park for Parks on

the Air, POTA.

Regular events are scheduled for these organizations and there is worldwide

interest in *Sackville* as she has the treasured VE0 call sign, which is very sought after to add to the enthusiast's logbooks. Also, there is an

international organization, Youth on the Air, YOTA, designed to encourage interest in HAM radio by young people. YOTA Camps are held every year, and one was held in Nova Scotia in the summer of 2024.

There has been plenty of activity in HMCS *Sackville's* Wireless Office since the installation of her HAM radio station. Her logbook has



Figure 3 Mike Costelo VE1ANU

over six hundred entries and all those contacts have received a QSL Card, *Figure 2*, which is a post card with the radio station details and the time and date of contact for the sender's records. *Sackville* is also registered in the eQSL Network, where operators can request an electronic QSL card.

Most of those six hundred contacts have been made by a few of the HARC members, most notably, Mike Costelo, VE1ANU, an amazing Continuous Wave - CW (Morse Code) operator. *Figure 3.* While not a Trustee, he will soon be one. The most prolific operator using the microphone or Single



Figure 2. *Sackville's* QSL Card



Figure 4 Steve Albert VE1SK

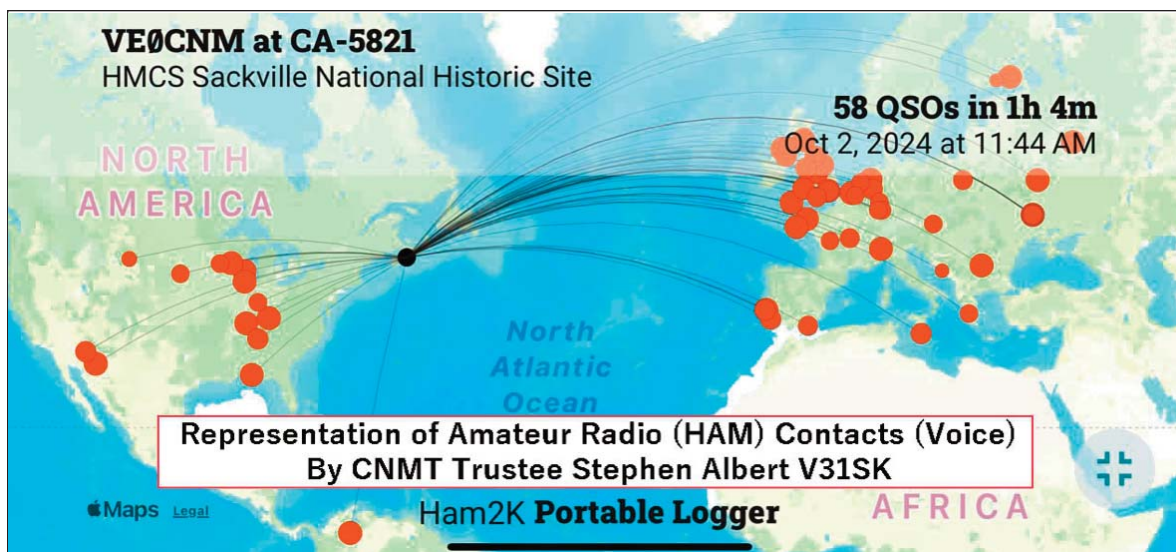


Figure 5 sample of SSB (Voice) contacts.



Figure 6 YOTA Camp members Cyan, from Korea and Zachery, from USA

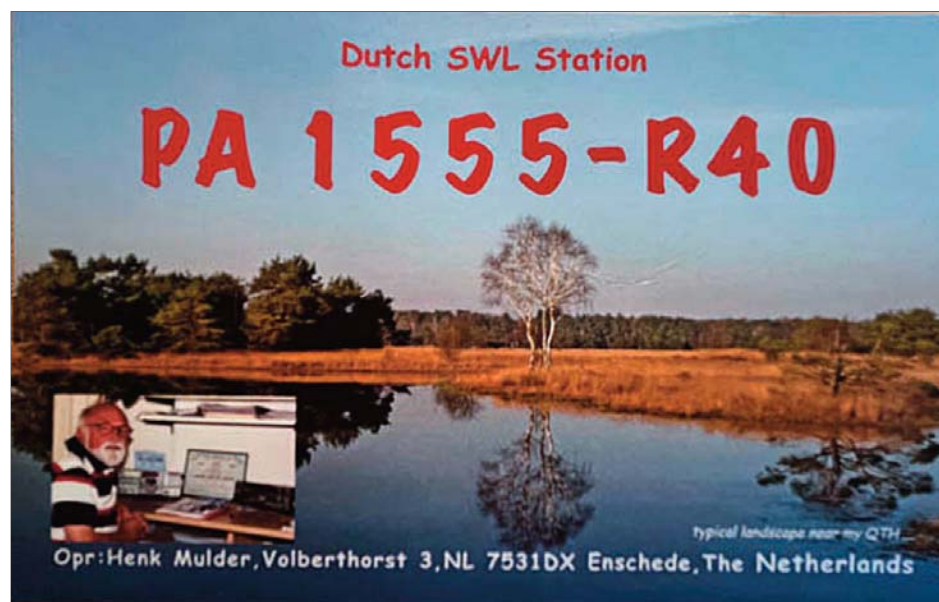


Figure 7 Henk Mulder, a Shortwave Listener (SWL)

Sideband, SSB, was Trustee Steve Albert, VE1SK, *Figure 4*.

These operators and others, have made contacts all over the world, USA, Europe, Australia, Russia, *Figure 5*.

The YOTA Camp event in the Summer of 2024 included members from Canada, USA, Europe and even Korea, *Figure 6*. The station

was shifted to the upper deck to make room for everyone. Keith Bruce, VE1JKB, the HARC representative for the YOTA event, decided the radio station would be easier to move if it was installed in a rack by combining the radio and power supply, he donated the materials and assembled it onboard after the event.

It was interesting to discover that, in some countries in Europe before an operator can obtain a HAM license, they must prove they heard other HAMs by listening to the radio only and requesting a QSL Card indicating the Call Sign and time heard. Henk Mulder, from the Netherlands, requested one, *Figure 7*.

An Historical Vignette – Havoc off “an East Coast Port” – January 1945

Researched and written by William (Bill) Dziadyk, author of
“*S.S. Nerissa, the Final Crossing*”

Since mid-1944, German U-boat tactics had evolved away from mid-ocean wolf pack attacks on convoys to “inshore offensive” strategies whereby single well-placed U-boats would wait in concealment (i.e. lurk) in busy channels or off major allied ports, waiting for targets.

U-806 (C.O. Klaus Hornbostel) had been lurking off Halifax since 13 December 1944. On Christmas Eve (08:40 local), near the anchored *Sambro Lightship*, U-806 sank the minesweeper HMCS *Clayoquot* (8 killed and 75 survivors). *Clayoquot* was one of four escorts in the Halifax to Boston convoy XB-139 (12 merchant ships) which had been exiting the harbour. U-806 avoided detection by resting on the bottom, before slowly escaping the scene.

On 31 December 1944, U-1232 (C.O. Kurt Dobratz) arrived in the approaches to Halifax and relieved U-806. Dobratz plotted his U-boat’s position (and later continuously) by using the three radio Direction Finding (D/F) beacons on Sable Island, the *Sambro Lightship* at the south-east edge (44°22’N, 63°26’W) and the *Halifax Lightship* at the north-east edge (44°26.5’N, 63°13’W) of the entrance to the swept channel to Halifax.

On 04 January 1945, about 4 miles North-East of Halifax, U-1232 sighted the Sydney to Halifax convoy SH-194. The only naval escort, the Bangor class minesweeper, HMCS *Kentville* was patrolling ahead while the three merchant ships

followed in a single line abreast with the tanker SS *Nipiwán Park* between the freighters SS *Polarland* and SS *Perast*. Dobratz quickly positioned U-1232 between the lead escort and the three merchant ships and fired a torpedo into the tanker’s bow, which broke off and sank. U-1232 then moved in between the ships and fired a torpedo into the port side of the Norwegian SS *Polarland* (17 killed and 5 survivors) which quickly sank. The *Nipiwán Park* (2 killed and 29 survivors) remained afloat and was later towed to Halifax for repair. U-1232 headed towards the coast and rested on the bottom, where she avoided detection by *Kentville*.

Early on 12 January, 20 merchant ships, in convoy BX-141, departed Boston and were bound for Halifax. The convoy commodore (LCdr T.B. Edwards, RCNR) was embarked in SS *Athelvik*. The initial escorts were two Bangor Class Minesweepers (HMCS *Nipigon* and HMCS *Westmount*), which patrolled ahead of the convoy. At about 19:00 (local) on 13 January, three River Class Frigates (HMCS *Meon* (Commander St. Clair Balfour), HMCS *Coaticook* (LCdr Louis Audette) and HMCS *Ettrick* (LCdr E.M. Moore)) joined the escorts.

On the morning of 14 January, convoy BX-141 was steaming towards the anchored *Sambro Lightship*. The convoy then slowly formed a single column of 20 merchant ships. (The SS *Pacific Skip-*

per, a slow straggler, had been escorted by HMCS *Nipigon* and was the last ship to join the column.) U-1232 had been lurking near the *Sambro Lightship*. As the long column of merchant ships, at 500-yard intervals, began steaming at 8 knots on a course of 330° towards the harbour entrance, the U-boat was on their starboard flank at about 4000 yards. The frigate *Meon* was leading the column, with frigates *Ettrick* and *Coaticook* screening the port and starboard flanks and the minesweeper *Westmount* at the end of the column.

At 10:35 local, U-1232 was inside the screen, when Dobratz quickly fired a torpedo, at range 800 yards, into the third ship in the column. The tanker SS *British Freedom* (1 killed, 56 survivors) was hit aft of the engine room, and she quickly broke apart and sank. After the first torpedo struck the *British Freedom*, the Escort Commander (Commander Belfour in HMCS *Meon*) ordered the three frigates to stream their anti-acoustic torpedo noise makers along the perimeters of the column.

About 5 minutes later, at range 1000 yards, a GNAT (German Naval Acoustic Torpedo) torpedo was fired into the fourth ship in the column, the US Liberty ship SS *Martin van Burren* (3 killed and 66 survivors), which did not sink. She was later taken in tow by a Halifax naval tug, however another naval ship crossed and cut the tow line ... and the Lib-

erty ship drifted ashore and was deemed a total loss. After the torpedoing of the Liberty ship, the RCN frigates were also firing patterns of depth charges.

The attacks at the front of the column caused a veritable traffic jam among the ships following. The seventh ship in the column, the British SS *Athelvik* had maneuvered out of the column to avoid ships stalled in front. When the ship was returning to the column, Dobratz was following her movements and setting up a firing solution. However, HMCS *Ettrick* had just fired a pattern of deep and shallow depth charges, causing Dobratz to scan the horizon, through his attack periscope ... and he saw the frigate heading at high speed towards his U-boat. He quickly fired a GNAT torpedo at the *Athelvik*, and crash dived. When the U-boat was at depth of about 13 meters, the frigate unknowingly passed right over the submarine's



HMCS *Ettrick*

bridge and destroyed the attack periscope. About a minute later, the crew of U-1232 heard their torpedo exploding and SS *Athelvik*, breaking apart and sinking (4 killed, 47 Survivors).

Editor's Note: U-1232 was a large ocean-going Type IX submarine,

built late in the war. This was her only patrol, sinking three ships in the span of 13 minutes. The damage inflicted by HMCS Ettrick forced a return to Germany, and U-1232 was captured by British forces in May 1945 and later foundered enroute to being scuttled in 1946.



HMCS *Margaret Brooke* returned to Halifax May 9 following OP PROJECTION, an extended deployment to South America and supporting the first all-Canadian scientific research expedition in the Antarctic in cooperation with Global Affairs Canada. The Harry DeWolf Class Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessel, under command of Cdr Teri Share, carried out climate change research during the deployment. (Photo: Doug Struthers)

A Sackville Summer – A Reflection on My Experience With CNMT

By Leah Murphy

Following a fantastic 2024 summer working onboard HMCS *Sackville*, I can say for certain that the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust's motto, "History preserved is history remembered," holds firmly true. This opportunity has been a tremendous learning experience, as well as a rewarding one, offering both memories and personal growth.

I have always been very passionate about history – enough to see that Canadian history can often be overlooked on the international stage. With new generations having more access to knowledge than ever before, it is so important to keep the memory of those who served alive. Initiatives by HMCS *Sackville* and the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust are crucial assets to this goal.

When I took my first tour of the ship during my orientation, I was amazed at how many aspects of the Battle of the Atlantic I observed that were not common knowledge nor taught to me in school. As I looked at the photos posted in the Aft Mess Hall, I pondered how these young men, younger than I am now, were faces I could have seen on my university campus in another life. The incredible sacrifices these young men made were put into perspective – the families, rights of passage, and dreams that were put on the back burner as these courageous individuals left for sea.

The time spent cold and soaking wet, the sleepless nights, the lasting trauma, and the imminent possibility always on their minds that each day

– each hour – could be their last highlights their tremendous sacrifice. I recognized that they secured privileges that we Canadians enjoy today, which may not have been possible as we know them without the valour and bravery of young men such as the crew of the HMCS *Sackville*. What they have given us is beyond compensation and demonstrates the need to remember them for generations to come.

To have a memorial like the *Sackville*, where we can even begin to walk in their shoes and view where they lived and fought, can not only keep this memory alive but also humanize the experiences we typically learn about from pages in a book. The tactile, visual, and interactive of the *Sackville* are thus an invaluable resource in keeping this preserving this history, one I am honoured and humbled to have been a part of.

Along with tangible memorials of our nation's past, some of history's most raw and personable elements are shared through stories. This is one of the facets of my job for which I am most grateful. In an environment as bustling as Halifax's waterfront, I had the opportunity to meet and converse with people across diverse demographics. Whether it was international travellers, history enthusiasts, locals, or those with personal connections to the battle of the Atlantic, I never knew what experiences each day at work would bring. Some visitors were stopping by with no previous knowledge and left with

a comprehensive understanding of life on Corvettes – others told me they had travelled from across the continent to visit the *Sackville*. I even met with families whose relatives had served on corvettes, sometimes on the *Sackville* specifically. I was able to give these groups guided tours of the ship and hear their stories, sharing knowledge as well as learning constantly. The intrigue, happiness, and gratitude I was met with was beyond rewarding.

Nonetheless, many of these tours were reminders of the importance of the *Sackville* as memorial – such as that of a woman's uncle who had been swept from his Corvette out to sea while releasing depth charges. While many of these may have been sombre, some interactions were cathartic in other ways. One example is how, on one of my first days on board, I met a Congolese man who had recently immigrated to Canada. He explained that he had grown up in refugee camps and had watched movies about Canadian history in anticipation of his arrival. Emotionally, he expressed how grateful he was to learn and see the history of the country in which he hoped to build a new life. He explained that my conversation with him and his experience on the *Sackville* would be something he would remember for the rest of his life.

I was even able to give my own family a tour of the ship. This experience was emotional and educational for us all, as my great-grand-

father served onboard a Corvette during the Battle of the Atlantic. As he passed away in recent years, this opportunity gave me a newfound connection to him.

When I was asked during my time on my ship what one of my biggest takeaways would be, I explained that I love being able to make the story of the ship accessible to everyone. One of the biggest examples of this is to children. If you simply look at a young child and say, “this is Canadian Anti Acoustic Torpedo Gear,” they are not going to be learning anything. Versus, if you explain that it’s a “trick” that makes “a whole lot of noise” to protect the ship from U-boat torpedoes, they will have a much bigger takeaway and interest. Another example is how the age of technology can help make the ship’s story more accessible, as I was able to bypass language barriers and answer the questions of international

travellers using translation software.

Another facet of my time on the *Sackville* that will stay with me is how fortunate I was to work alongside such a fantastic crew. Many of my colleagues shared stories and experiences, forging friendships I would have never encountered otherwise. The trustee guides offered insightful information on the ship, and my supervisors inspired me with their passion and dedication to their work. The navy members on board were happy to answer any of my questions about the modern military and sparked a new area of interest I may not have gained otherwise. Finally, many of the other interpreters are also university students, and I am so grateful to have cultivated extremely meaningful friendships to add to the undoubtedly long list of those forged onboard the *Sackville*.

During my time on the ship, I was able to participate in the preservation

of history by sharing it verbally and through physical conservation, such as keeping the brass in shining condition (a task which many visitors commented did not look enjoyable, but I digress). This set a new perspective for me on the Battle of the Atlantic, which I intend to harbour and share going forward. Admittedly, for many people of my generation, perspectives on the Battle of the Atlantic are limited to what they cram for an upcoming History test. Yet, the efforts of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust offer a new way of immersive learning that humanizes these events beyond reproach. I am incredibly grateful for the experience and the opportunities I gained during my summer employment on *Sackville*, and I hope this article can spark the same appreciation for both those who served and those who keep their memory alive as my time with CNMT has for me.



FLASHBACK

RCN Role in D-Day Invasion June 6, 1944

By Len Canfield

Surviving veterans of the Second World War were recognized and honored as Canadians observed the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE Day) May 8, 1945, a victory made possible by the successful Allied June 1944 invasion of the Normandy beaches in which the Royal Canadian Navy played a significant role.

More than 100 Canadian ships and 10,000 sailors were part of the massive armada of Allied vessels, OPERATION NEPTUNE, the seaborne element of the overarching OPERATION OVERLORD. Approximately 15,000 troops from different regiments were landed while Canadian pilots patrolled the skies over the English Channel and the Normandy beaches.

RCN ships engaged in support and assault roles and included destroyers, frigates, minesweepers, corvettes, landing craft and motor torpedo boats (MTBs).

The 16 Bangor Class minesweepers preceded the main Allied armada clearing a safe passage across the Channel for the invasion fleet.

The 'big guns' destroyers, including HMCS *Algonquin*



RCN Flotilla D Day (LAC)

and *Sioux*, zeroed in on enemy shore batteries and firing in support of ground attacks that followed the landings along the Normandy coast.

HMCS *Prince Henry* and *Prince David*, armed merchant cruisers carried Canadian troops and the landing craft used to transport the troops ashore and returned wounded Canadians to medical facilities England. Other RCN flotillas of landing craft transported troops and equipment to shore.

The 19 Canadian corvettes conducted several roles, including providing escort for ships carrying troops and equipment to the beaches. The latter included escort for the floatable mulberries, temporary portable harbours to bring much needed equipment and supplies ashore.

Second World War veteran and naval historian Cdr Fraser McKee (ret'd) of Toronto compiled a list of the Canadian ships that participated in D Day entitled *The Ships of the RCN present off Juno Beach June 6, 1944*.



Troops Landing (LAC)

Commander Gary Reddy (Rtd) – a profile

Why does someone join the Canadian Navy?

For some people, it's a foregone conclusion, something they've thought about for years. For others, it's by accident.

When Gary Reddy was in Grade 10, some cadets from the Royal Military College gave a talk at his school in St John's, Newfoundland. Gary was wondering what to do with his life, and was enthralled by what he heard. His desire to join the military was reinforced by a summer at CFB Gagetown, but he was discouraged when he learned that studying for an arts degree at university was unsuitable preparation for becoming an engineering officer. Leaving the recruiting office, he saw a light on in HMCS *Cabot*; he crossed the street, was welcomed with open arms, and joined the Navy Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman. And then, after spending another summer on board ship in Halifax, was accepted into the Officer University Training Plan.

In another happy accident, Gary met a retired clearance diver called Bill Lukeman, who suggested that he take a diving course. By the time he graduated from university, Gary knew that he wanted to join the Navy and that he wanted to be a clearance diver.

After qualifying as a MARS (Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface) officer in the Naval Reserve and then spending nine months as part of the diving team on HMCS *Saguenay*, Gary transferred to the regular force in 1977, served on HMCS *Athabaskan* and *Protecteur* and, in 1982, finally qualified as a clearance diver.

Clearance diving is dangerous but critical work. But not everyone is cut

out to be a clearance diver. Candidates must pass a two-week assessment, and less than half make it into a year-long training program. "It's just not for everyone," says Gary. "I loved it, but some people didn't. There's no shame in that; I have some really good friends from those days who left the program and went on to have successful careers in the Navy."

One of Gary's favourite experiences was being in charge of a mini-sub when serving as Deck Officer and Submersible Technical Officer on HMCS *Cormorant*, the Navy's deep diving ship. It could carry five people, and could stay down as long as the air supply and batteries allowed. "We did sea floor mapping, lots of different kinds of scientific research. One time we spent two weeks in Bonavista Bay with a university professor, looking for giant squid. We had a big tuna out as bait, hoping a squid would come and take a look. Never did see one, though!"

Gary's next assignment was to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Centre at Maryland, working with the US Navy. Working in an R&D office, he managed various projects developing new technology to be deployed in the field. His main project was working on a remote operated vehicle (ROV). "We'd use the ROV to find the EOD, put some explosive beside it, get the hell out of the way, then blow it all up," he said, clearly relishing the memory.

Returning to Canada, Gary became the Executive Officer of Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic). One XO job led to another: he became the XO on HMCS *Cormorant* in 1995 and was appointed Commanding Officer the next year. This was a bitter-sweet ex-

perience, since *Cormorant* was decommissioned and sold eighteen months later. "It was an emotional day for all of us," he said. "I spent six years on that ship. Tough to see her go."

Gary's next home was in Ottawa, where he was the Director of Diving Safety. One morning in September,



1998, he learned about the Swissair crash off Peggy's Cove. "I went to my boss and said I was going to Halifax," he said. "My boss said, 'No, you're not.' The next day, I went to my boss and said I was going to Halifax. My boss said, 'No, you're not'. The next day, I left him a voice mail and told him I was calling from Halifax!"

Based on board HMCS *Halifax*, Gary oversaw the diving aspects of the recovery operation. "That was a tough job," he said, "but we were all really proud of the contribution we made there."

After being XO on HMCS *St John's*, Commanding Officer, Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic), and then CO at CFS St John's, Commander Reddy went to Washington, where he was Assistant Naval Attaché. Life as a diplomat isn't all dinner parties and

receptions – the most important thing is building relationships with the US navy, strong working relationships that endure.

Returning to Canada, Gary spent five months at the Maritime Warfare Centre before becoming Commanding Officer of the Regional Cadet Support Centre, the Canadian Forces unit responsible for supporting the Canadian Cadet Organizations in Canada's Atlantic provinces. "That was a really rewarding job," Gary said. "Being a cadet has an incredible impact on kids from all parts of society, and something like 20% of cadets join the military. That's pretty good, I think."

This was to be Gary's last posting – he was rowed ashore in June, 2012, and retired to civilian life. But not to inactivity. Since then, he's volunteered at senior levels with the Canadian Naval Divers Association and the Navy League of Canada. He's consulted on security issues in the

maritime industry, and taught leadership in the merchant navy.

And, of course, he became the 14th Commanding Officer of HMCS *Sackville* in 2019. Besides handling a considerable administrative workload and providing leadership to the ship's crew and volunteers, he has been an outstanding ambassador for the ship. His many diverse contributions make HMCS *Sackville* an important memorial for the Canadian navy and the Battle of the Atlantic, welcoming and informing many thousands of visitors each year.

Looking back over his long and distinguished career, Gary said that getting his clearance diver badge was a highlight – but then turned quickly to the people he's worked with. "Teamwork is absolutely critical when you're diving," he says. "You work with people who are professional and dedicated, and you trust them with your life. Treat everyone in life like that and with empathy,

and there's nothing you can't achieve."

Any regrets? "Yeah," he says. "I should have read more and studied more at school. And I spent too much time behind a desk, not enough on the deck plates."

Behind a desk or at sea, there's little doubt that Gary Reddy has had a huge impact on the many, many people he's worked with. He recently ran into someone who worked for him when he was XO on HMCS *St John's*. "You're the person who made me want to stay in the navy," this person told him.

Sackville is a happy ship, thanks to the leadership provided by her Captain; this is one reason she's such a welcoming attraction on the Halifax waterfront. We should be grateful for that moment long ago when a young Gary Reddy saw the lights on in HMCS *Cabot*.



Capt Bill Woodburn (ret'd), centre, Chair of Canadian Naval Memorial Trust welcomed Trustee Darcy Bullock of Surrey, BC, an active West Coast supporter of the Trust and HMCS *Sackville* and members of his family to Friday weepers in the ship in early May. At left is VAdm (ret'd) Dean McFadden. (Photo: Bill Gard)



04

Four years. October 1942 to August 1946. That's all it took for the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, affectionately known as *Wrens*, to carve an indelible mark on history. In those four years of the Second World War, the *Wrens'* pioneering spirit, determination, and skill paved the way for future generations of women. From wireless operators to motor transport drivers to intelligence analysts, they took on roles critical to the war effort.

And that changed everything.



Learn more at CNMT.ca

Corvettes and Battle of the Atlantic

American naval officer and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan's oft-quoted comment of importance of "those far distant, storm-beaten ships" in advancing sea power in an earlier era could have easily applied to the plucky Canadian corvettes during the Battle of the Atlantic. Jim Miles of the Flower Class Association has posted his 18 by 24 inch painting of HMCS *Chicoutimi* (K156), commenting: "...my attempt at painting a Canadian corvette escorting a convoy through all sorts of weather throughout the year." The 205-foot Flower Class *Chicoutimi* was commissioned at Montreal in May 1941 and served as an ocean escort between St John's, NF and Iceland and later Londonderry, Northern Ireland. In 1944 the ship transferred to HMCS *Cornwallis* as a training ship, was paid off at Sydney, NS in June 1945 and broken up at Hamilton, ON in 1946.



From Facebook. Corvette K-156. HMCS *Chicoutimi*

Jim Miles posted this WWII painting image: My attempt at painting a Canadian corvette escorting a convoy across the Atlantic. Hard duty, winter and summer, through all sorts of weather for the entire length of the war. I'm a Newfoundlander, and most of the Newfoundlanders that served in the navy sailed in ships like this – the small, hard worked corvettes and frigates that kept the supplies running to Britain. As a young boy, I got to know a few of the veterans who escorted the convoys...all gone now. Much respect to them. "The Shepherd", 18 x 24, oil on stretched canvas.



This picture depicts U-744 on the surface to the west of Ireland on the 6th of March 1944. She had been depth-charged for 30 hours by a number of Canadian and British convoy escorts, including the frigate HMCS *St. Catherine's* (K-325), and corvettes HMS *Buttercup* (K-193) and HMCS *Chilliwack* (K-131). Once on the surface the U-boat surrendered, the 40 survivors rescued, and the submarine was sunk by torpedoes from the British destroyer HMS *Icarus*. Artist: Jim Rae





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Margaret Brooke's Heroic Actions During the Sinking of SS *Caribou*

By Doug Thomas

On the fateful morning of October 14, 1942, the SS *Caribou*, a passenger ferry enroute from North Sydney, Nova Scotia, to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, was tragically sunk by a German U-boat. Among the 237 passengers and crew on board was Nursing Sister Margaret Brooke, a member of the Royal Canadian Navy. Her actions during this catastrophe would become a testament to her extraordinary courage and selflessness.

In the early hours, the SS *Caribou* was struck by a torpedo from the German submarine U-69. The explosion was devastating, and the ferry began to sink rapidly into the icy waters of the Cabot Strait. Amid panic and chaos, Margaret Brooke's training and instinct as a nurse took over. She focused on helping those around her, aiding and comforting

the injured and terrified passengers.

As the ship listed heavily, Margaret, along with her close friend and fellow Nursing Sister Agnes Wilkie, found themselves thrust into the frigid Atlantic. The freezing water was an immediate threat, sapping strength and will. Margaret managed to cling to a piece of debris, and though the waves were relentless, she held on with determination. Despite the perilous conditions, she did not consider her own safety alone.

In the water, Margaret Brooke's thoughts were on her friend, Agnes. With fierce resolve, she tried to keep Agnes afloat, battling the cold and the powerful currents. Hour after exhausting hour, Margaret fought to save her friend's life, demonstrating an extraordinary level of dedication and friendship. She encouraged Agnes, providing whatever support



she could in dire circumstances.

Despite Margaret Brooke's heroic efforts, Agnes Wilkie succumbed to the cold and exhaustion. It was a heartbreaking moment for Margaret, who had done everything within her



HMCS *Margaret Brooke* passing George's Island in Halifax Harbour."

power to save her friend. The loss was a profound personal tragedy but also a stark reminder of the brutal realities of war.

Margaret Brooke's bravery did not go unnoticed. For her gallant actions during the sinking of the SS *Caribou*, she was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire

(MBE) in 1943. This honour recognized her courage and selflessness, qualities that exemplified the highest standards of the Royal Canadian Navy and the spirit of those who serve.

The legacy of Margaret Brooke extends beyond her actions on that fateful night. She continued to serve

in the Royal Canadian Navy, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant-Commander. Her story remains an enduring inspiration, a powerful example of heroism in the face of overwhelm-

ing adversity. Her name lives on in the new Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship: HMCS *Margaret Brooke*.

The sinking of the SS *Caribou* was a tragic event, one of many during the tumultuous years of World War II. Yet, amidst the sorrow and loss, the heroic actions of individuals like LCdr Margaret Brooke shine brightly. Her bravery, compassion, and unyielding spirit are lasting reminders of the strength of the human spirit, even in the darkest of times.

Margaret Brooke's actions during the sinking of the SS *Caribou* encapsulate the essence of true heroism. Her story is not just a historical account but a timeless narrative of courage and sacrifice, inspiring future generations to act with valor and humanity in the face of adversity.



Photo: S2 Taylor Congdon, Copyright: © 2022 DND-MDN Canada

American and Canadian Sailors in Hawaii, Halifax and Derry



The Canadian Sailor Statue (right) at Sackville Landing, Halifax depicts a young sailor proceeding to his next ship with kitbag and rolled-up hammock over his shoulder. The American Sailor Statue (at left) is part of USS *Arizona* Memorial, Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. (American ships were equipped with bunks, so hammocks weren't used). The International Sailor statue in Ebrington, Londonderry U.K. (centre) overlooks the harbour.



Annual Membership 2025

(as of 2 May 2025)

Greetings to Fellow Trustees:

Back in early January, I found myself scrolling through the CNMT website most impressed with the Trust's commitment to preserve and share the heritage and stories of the RCN. Like a thousand or so generous people before me, I gladly selected the "become a member" button and; that changed everything...

I am now very honoured to have been appointed the

Trust's Director of Membership. In the coming days I will be reaching out to the membership at large to better understand how we might enhance what it means to be a Trustee and how we might share the experience with potential new members. After all, history preserved truly is history remembered.

Respectfully,
Mark White

New Annual Members

Marc Batsford	Jennifer & Dave Leger
Gary Bugden	Robert Manzer
Mary & James Campbell	Tom McCaughey
Jim Corning	Debbie McMullen
Leanne Crowe	Barb McNaughton
Brian Evans	Tania Meloni
Brenda Evans	Donald O'Leary
Brittany Evans	R. Lew Osmond
Frances Ford	Brian Poulton
Eric Franson	Tanya Poulton
Joyce Hoeven	Heather Raney
John Holden	Murray Ritch
Lawrence Jones	Guto Thomas
	Mark White

New Life Members

John Gullion
Brian Leask
Judy Madden
Joe Marlowe
Robin McNamara
Stephen Porrior
Kelvon Smith
Margaret & Paul Therrien
Derek Threinen
David Yetman

Members who upgraded from Annual to Life in 2025

Charles Black
Conrad Johnson
Clifton Johnston
Ken McClean
Gary Reddy



HMCS Sackville Bell-Rope Presented to Historic Crow's Nest Club

By Bob Stewart

The historic Crow's Nest (Seagoing) Officers' Club (CNOC) in St John's, Nfld was founded in 1942 at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic as a refuge for naval and merchant officers on brief R & R stops in St John's between transatlantic convoys.

The club survives today as a tribute to the thousands of Navy, Merchant Navy and other service members who visited the club, many of whom who were lost in the longest running battle of the Second World War. Today it is a National Historic Site.

Each year the CNOC hosts a "Corvette Wake" formal mess dinner in honour of those who made the ultimate sacrifice and the ships that carried them off to war. This year the crew of HMCS *Sackville* – the Allies' last surviving corvette – was invited to send a team to represent the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and the ship at the dinner. The CO, Cdr (ret'd) Gary Reddy

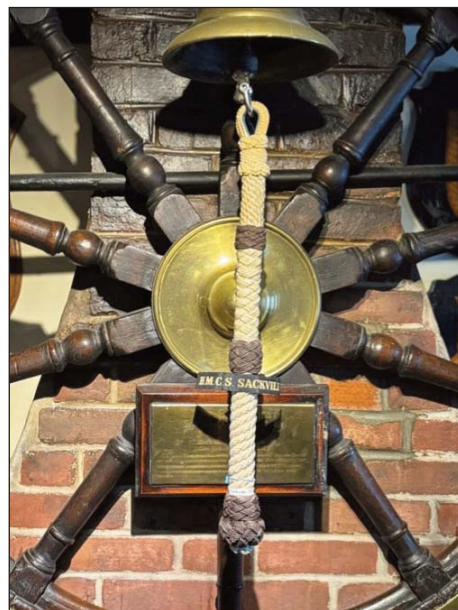
assembled a team of trustees and ship's crew to go to St John's to represent the trust and ship at the dinner.

To mark the occasion and participation of the "Sackville Team" Gary suggested taking a memento from the ship as a gift to the club. The

problem was that the CNOC has been receiving many gifts from visiting ships' crews over the years and the walls are full of wartime ship art, plaques, badges, pictures and other artifacts. What could *Sackville* contribute that didn't take up much space? The answer was a bell-rope from *Sackville* that could be used for one of the several bells displayed in the club.

Unfortunately, winter storms in both Halifax and St John's forced cancellation of the team's flight. However, the CO had offered a gift to the club and team member Bob Stewart was able to arrange a flight to St John's the following week and offered to take the bell-rope and present it to the club at their regular Friday luncheon.

Despite yet another winter storm in St John's at that time, Cdr (ret'd) Margaret Morrison a member of the CNOC Executive and the primary contact for the *Sackville* team visit, and Don Soulsby, the curator of artifacts for the club were able to make their way to the Crow's Nest to receive the gift. Now, HMCS *Sackville* is represented at the CNOC by the bell-rope, adorned by a ship's cap tally.



CNMT Trustees Pat and Bob Stewart present Cdr (ret'd) Margaret Morris, centre, with HMCS *Sackville* bell rope and ship brochure in front of the club's historic fireplace and ship's wheel.



Canadians celebrate VE Day May 8 1945

