



the **Ensign**

Volume 21, No. 3

Summer 2012



news, views and seagoing tales from the
Naval Museum of Alberta Society

OUR COVER – ‘Massive and Magnificent,’ HMCS Huron’s port screw now adorns the lawn outside the Naval Museum of Alberta.

Photo by Scott Hausberg

President’s Report

By Ken Sivertsen

This is my first report as President of the Naval Museum of Alberta Society. As mentioned in Earle Shirley’s report in the Spring 2012 edition of *The Ensign*, he and his family are in the process of moving to Victoria and he has turned the duties of President of the Society over to me until a new President is elected at the next AGM.

In his last report to the Board, Earle indicated there was not much to report since the last meeting except the unveiling of the port screw of HMCS *Huron*. The event was held on June 3rd in conjunction with the annual Open House at The Military Museums. The event was well attended and the weather cooperated. The ceremonies were kept low key as they were meant to honour the stokers and engine room personnel of the navy, but there were a number of short speeches from the Lieutenant Governor, MP Robert Anders, Minister Rick McIver of the Province of Alberta, Alderman Colley-Urquhart of the City of Calgary and Rear-Admiral Norman. Many thanks are owed to the many museum volunteers who were instrumental in getting this wonderful monument on public display. It is an impressive, eye-catching exhibit. Tom Doucette and his staff did a great job pulling everything together and the ASU came through to ensure everything was ready. Of course, Bill Wilson deserves much credit and thanks for his efforts in getting this off the ground.

The Society has advised the CO of the ASU, Maj James Hickey, that we intend to renew our lease at HMCS *Tecumseh*, as there is still significant usage at the old museum site which is now sometimes referred to as the Naval Museum Annex.

Speaking of this, there is still a need to address the yellow painted flight markings that are on the floor of the old building. These markings may have contributed to the presence of lead in the building and we must do something to mitigate this matter soon. The simplest way would appear to be to have the floor painted and sealed. If anyone

would like to take charge of this project, let us know.

One of our other projects for the summer is the updating of our membership list and of our email and distribution lists, as unfortunately we aren’t as up to date as we would like. Johanne Aylett (jaylett@telusplanet.net) has agreed to work with Bill Wilson and Lorne Hanson to do a comprehensive review. If you know of someone who isn’t getting our communications properly, please let Johanne know.

Work is also being carried on to get the old museum catalogued and the piles of paper sorted out. As previously mentioned, Greg McKenzie and his crew have done a fantastic job getting the Burgess collection over to the University of Calgary’s military library at The Military Museums. Their next goal is the transfer of the convoy records which is scheduled to occur during July.

Have a great summer and fair winds!

Museum Operations Update

By Bill Wilson

The dialogue with NDHQ continues regarding the allocation of a 20mm Phalanx gatling gun mounting to our museum. On Tuesday, June 19th, a meeting was held with the representatives of Raytheon Corporation to discuss a suitable location with the electrical power required for monitoring air quality within the mounting. The optimum location would appear to be the space presently occupied by the 40mm mounting at the north end of the open area on the starboard side of the bridge. The Bofors will be relocated to the east side of the open area. As well, we have requested the loan of the

video utilized at last year’s Stampede which describes the operation of the Phalanx gun and also shows a firing exercise.

A Mk. 48 Gun Director system utilized by both the 3” 50 and 3” 70 gun mountings has been allocated to the museum and should be delivered later this year. In addition, it is probable that the museum will receive a six barrel Shield countermeasures launcher, as they are being replaced in the Halifax-class frigates. Hopefully, we can get HMCS *Calgary*’s.

Bruce Connolly will shortly undertake a ‘refit’ of the carrier HMCS

Bonaventure model which will be located in the museum's naval air service section. A major overhaul of the model of the wartime HMS *Puncher*, one of the two Royal Navy merchant aircraft carriers (MAC ships) that was manned by

the RCN, is to be undertaken shortly. It is intended that the 3'70 steel barrel will be installed in the mounting the last week of June followed by the installation of the Studio Y fabricated barrel the following week.

HMCS *Huron* Monument Unveiled

By Scott Hausberg

Both Photos Vance Gough



LEFT – PO2 Grady gives the order for the unveiling of the HMCS *Huron* Screw Monument at The Military Museums on June 3rd, 2012.

BELOW – Guests including His Honour Col (Ret'd) the Hon. Donald S. Ethell (centre), Rob Anders MP, Hon. Ric McIver MLA and Deputy Mayor Diane Colley-Urquhart, join Naval Engineers and Rear-Admiral Norman at the unveiling of the HMCS *Huron* Screw Monument at The Military Museums on June 3rd.



Calgary's weather had been very cold and wet through April and May but took a timely turn for the better on Sunday, June 3rd, 2012. On that day, naval veterans and dignitaries gathered for the unveiling of HMCS *Huron's* port screw. Also on hand were many members of the public, as the unveiling coincided with Armed Forces Day at The Military Museums.

The 17 foot, 5 blade, variable pitch port screw was shipped in eight parts from Esquimalt to Calgary by Arthur Hazle and then cleaned using a high-pressure water jet by Murray Hazle. Don Connolly, Gary Hanson, Jack Pidgeon, Gord Rowan, and Andy Madsen, then hand-buffed all the surfaces and applied a clear coat to prevent future discoloration. Many months of work preceded the unveiling.

The unveiling ceremony took place immediately outside the Naval Museum of Alberta. Lieutenant Governor Donald S. Ethell, Member of Parliament Rob Anders and Deputy Mayor Diane Colley-Urquhart, each spoke before Rear-Admiral Mark Norman, Deputy to the Commander of the RCN, ordered the unveiling.

The monument is dedicated to "the men and women who served in the boiler and engine rooms of the ships of the RCN in the 20th century."

A good number of these engine room artificers and stokers were on hand for the ceremony.



As this issue of *The Ensign* features the *Huron* monument, it is appropriate to remind readers about the demise of *Huron*. In 2006, MARPAC decided to use *Huron* in what would become the first sink-exercise that Maritime Command [now proudly known once again as the RCN] had ever conducted. The sink-ex was named OPERATION TRIDENT FURY and was planned to use a variety of MARPAC ships. US Navy and AIRCOM aircraft were to bombard *Huron* with artillery, missiles, strafing fire and finally be sunk by a torpedo launched from a submarine. *Huron* was stripped of armaments and all environmentally harmful contaminants and fuel in the winter of 2006-2007. On May 14th, 2007, she was towed to the MARPAC offshore weapons range west of Vancouver Island. Despite being damaged by a Sea Sparrow surface-to-air missile and several other weapons, it was naval gunfire from sister HMCS *Algonquin* that was responsible for sinking the hulk of *Huron*. Ironically, the main gun used by *Algonquin* was originally installed on *Huron*, meaning that *Huron* was sunk by one of its own weapons. This sinking marked the first Canadian warship to be operationally sunk in Canadian waters.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Watch the sinking of *Huron* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9limkffYBAC>

HMCS Calgary Enhancements

Source: "Your Navy Today" June 1st, 2012

The removal at the end of May of scaffolding from HMCS *Calgary*'s mast (photo right) reveals details that will be of interest to the readership. On the mainmast (situated to the left in the image), the platform upon which the new two-dimensional long-range air search radar is mounted is clearly evident, as are the electronic warfare antennae mounted to the right. Such antennae generally operate at frequencies that require them to be positioned as high as possible in a warship, as a means of extending their working horizon. Moving forward (to the right in the image) is the frigate's new three-dimensional radar (so-called as it will provide range, bearing and height information on detected air tracks) in the foremast to the right. Also, just visible is the ship's new fire control system, immediately ahead of the 3D radar.





The John Burgess Collection

By Greg McKenzie

The John Burgess Collection is now well in place at The Military Museums. The University of Calgary was pleased to receive the collection into its stacks within the W. A. Howard Library. Preparations are underway for an opening event in September.

Meanwhile, there is work to be done behind the scenes, back at the old museum, which is now known as the Naval Museum of Alberta Society Annex. There are over 1,000 books that are duplicates or thought not relevant to the collection — lots of paperback novels, reference books and miscellaneous material. We know that some are rare and valuable. A process has been developed for the proper disposition of these books. Process matters as we are an accredited museum and need to proceed carefully to ensure we retain our museum status. It is also important that our many donors know their donation is going to a good home or cause. The process involves the following precedence:

- ◆ University of Calgary culling books that it would like to add to the Burgess Collection as multiple lending copies.
- ◆ Offering the books to other navy museums in Canada (Halifax, Esquimalt, Winnipeg and Québec City).
- ◆ Offering the books to other museums in Alberta and Canada.
- ◆ Offering the books to interested volunteers.
- ◆ Sale of the books on eBay to generate revenue for the Society.
- ◆ Sale of the books to second hand book

shops.

- ◆ Sale of the books in a garage sale.

The Naval Museum of Alberta Society is no longer accepting books that are donated. Instead, donors are invited to proceed to TMM and make the donation directly to the

John Burgess Collection.

University of Calgary staff have been very helpful and appreciative of donors who have shown up so far and it's great to have books going directly into a safe and environmentally controlled facility.

Lunch with 'Desig Papa'

By Greg McKenzie

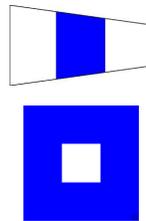
I recently had the pleasure of lunch with our outgoing NMAS President, Earle Shirley. We got to telling our own salty dips and Earle had a few — too many for one article, but I'll relate a couple.

A little context is needed first. Earle joined the Regular Force right after graduating from High School in Bathurst, New Brunswick. He was following in his father's footsteps as his dad was a WWII vet who saw heavy action in HMCS *Red Deer*. Earle served three years including time with the NATO squadron, STANAVFORLANT. Likely lots of stories to be mined from that time.

Earle first came to my attention when I was CO of HMCS *Te-cumseh* and this, shall we say, mature Direct Entry Officer candidate appeared before our Board that was vetting incoming Officer Cadets, most age 18. By now, Earle was in his mid-30s. In my experience, Direct Entry Officers rarely lasted. It wasn't usually their fault as much as the fault of the system including all of us then serving. It proved nearly impossible to get the necessary

courses and sea time to qualify when holding down a full time civilian job. By now, Earle had a geology degree and had been with Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board for eight years. We grilled him hard and tried to spook him off but he was very persistent in his quiet determined way. Best of all, you could tell that he had a sense of humour.

At the time, a favourite line among us Reservists was "If you can't take a joke, then you shouldn't have joined." Well, Earle seemed qualified in that department and his lower deck experience as a 'sparker' certainly weighed heavily in his favour. Clearly he did know what he was getting into. We signed him on. Here he



Is your membership current?

NMAS did not issue any formal reminders to renew memberships for 2012. As a result, membership levels have declined. If you are reading this and think you may not have renewed your membership for 2012, please contact:

execdir@navalmuseumsociety.ca

or simply send a cheque for \$20.00 to the address on the back cover of this issue. Your support is appreciated, and, as a bonus, you get to keep receiving "The Ensign."

is still at it as a Reservist with a combined Regular Force and Reserve time of 27 years.

As I feared for Earle, he did indeed have a challenge earning his watchkeeping certificate. At every turn he was encouraged to go NCS or Log. His CTO on his DEO course even suggested that he quit outright. But to Earle, that would not do and he persevered and chipped away at the MARS courses and got a leave from his employer to do the MARS IV Sea Phase. That's where the title of this article comes from.

When engaged in Officer-of-the-Watch maneuvers, each ship's officer, including those under training, is assigned a pennant to fly so that the other ships in company know who is conning the ship at the time of the maneuver — so they know who to blame or ridicule, say some. The designations are usually designated in order of seniority with the CO being Desig Alpha, XO Desig Bravo, etc. There aren't many officers on a small training ship, and only three or four junior MARS Officers under training, so Earle's designation should have been Desig Fox-trot, Desig Golf, or an alpha character early in the alphabet. Given that he had a ten or fifteen year age gap on most of the others on board, Earle was considered the senior citizen of the group. So his captain thought it would be appropriate for Earle to have flag P or Papa for his designation. So every time Earle had the con, Desig Papa was hoisted and fluttered proudly at the yard. He did well and earned his BWK despite being ten years of age senior to his CO!

He tells of taking his very first watch as Officer-of-the-Watch, this time aboard a ship with a very experienced CO. The ship had just left Zeballos and was proceeding down Tahsis Inlet towards Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island's west coast. The captain had retired to his cabin and SLt Shirley reveled in his first time alone on the bridge. He was proudly and confidently navigating down the Inlet, which he describes as about

as wide as driving up Bow Trail.

All was going well until the lookout reported, "Red 30, bear, far." Indeed, a large black bear had dived into the water and was swimming strongly right into the path of the ship. By now Earle was familiar enough with Alberta gophers and knew they race across in front of a vehicle only to turn around and head right back into the path of the vehicle again. He wasn't too sure about bears but it certainly occurred to him that this one might just do that. While these thoughts were racing through his mind, his training had already kicked in and he'd stopped engines and had called down to the captain that he had "A bear closing on a steady bearing." Since "Bear" is the NATO code word for a Soviet long range bomber, the captain's reply was loud but unintelligible, and he appeared on the bridge within moments. He was somewhat relieved to discover the bear was not of the airborne Soviet type, but was

indeed a good old Canadian black bear. He swore that in all his years in ships, he had never encountered a bear on a closing bearing or otherwise.

LCdr Earle Shirley left command of HMCS *Tecumseh* in 2009 and remains with the Naval Reserve as a professional development officer. He recently retired as an executive manager with the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board and is currently the outgoing president of the Naval Museum of Alberta Society where he has helped the society through a challenging transition period. He and his family are heeding the call to the sea and are moving to Victoria, BC in July. I'm looking forward to lunch with Desig Papa in his new environment where we can pick up on a few more anecdotes.

Greg McKenzie is also a former CO of HMCS Tecumseh and is currently a volunteer in the NMAS.

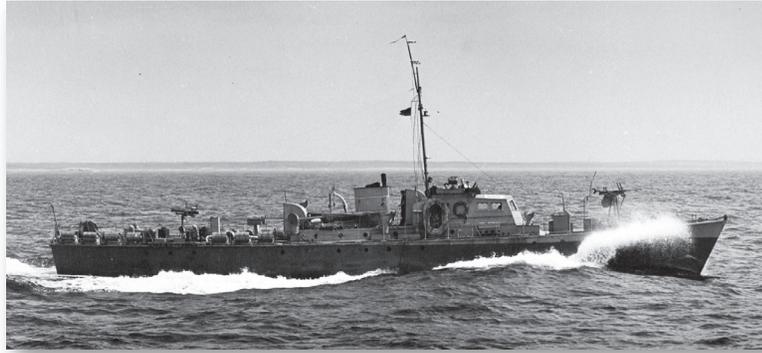
Navy appoints new Honorary Captain

Photo Jacek Szymanski



The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence, announced on June 22nd the appointment of Ms Arlene Dickenson as the newest Honorary Captain (N). Ms. Dickenson is a Calgary based entrepreneur best known for her role on CBC's "Dragon's Den."

Canada gives three vessels to France!



On January 15th, 1943, Canada gave three Fairmile motor launches to the Free French operating out of the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon (off the east coast of Canada). They were returned to Canada at the end of the war. Canada built 88 of these 79 ton vessels which were used in anti-submarine patrols and convoy escort duty. Eight of the 88 were turned over to the US Navy as sub-chasers. Nearly 700 Fairmiles were built during WWII. [The Fairmile ML in the photo is shown patrolling of the East Coast toward the end of WWII. RCN Photo #M-0098]

Source: Militrivia

More 'www.AwesomeNavyStuff'



Discovery Channel's "Daily Planet" aired a positive feature on HMCS Victoria during her recent Mk 48 exercise torpedo firings at the CF Maritime Experimental Test Range. It can be accessed at the following:

<http://www.discoverychannel.ca/episodeList.aspx?sid=13287>

(Click on the "Video" tab and then scroll down to the May 1st and May 8th, 2012 episodes.)

Casino Volunteers Needed!



NMAS' next casino will be December 12-13, 2012. **This is our most significant fund raising event** and only occurs every 18 months or so. To make each casino event work, we need to provide volunteers to work as chip runners, cash room counters, etc. If you would like to help with the December casino, please contact Johanne Aylett at jaylett@telusplanet.net



We have a pressing need for volunteers to serve as Naval Museum Watchkeepers!

If you would like to enlist in our fine body of Naval Museum Watchkeepers, please contact Bill Buchanan at 403-274-7535 or cutknife@telus.net and we promise not to send the Press Gang to your door!

The NMAS is urgently seeking a volunteer or volunteers to rebuild the Society's website!

If you can assist, please contact the Society at execdir@navalmuseumsociety.ca

Content is always wanted for The Ensign

If you have any material you think would be appropriate, please send it to Editor, Scott Hausberg hausberg@shaw.ca

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Adults \$10.00, Seniors \$5.00, Youth 7-17 \$4.00
Serving personnel (past and present) and their families FREE
NMAS members FREE • Ample free parking

Hours of operation

Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Weekends and holidays 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

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