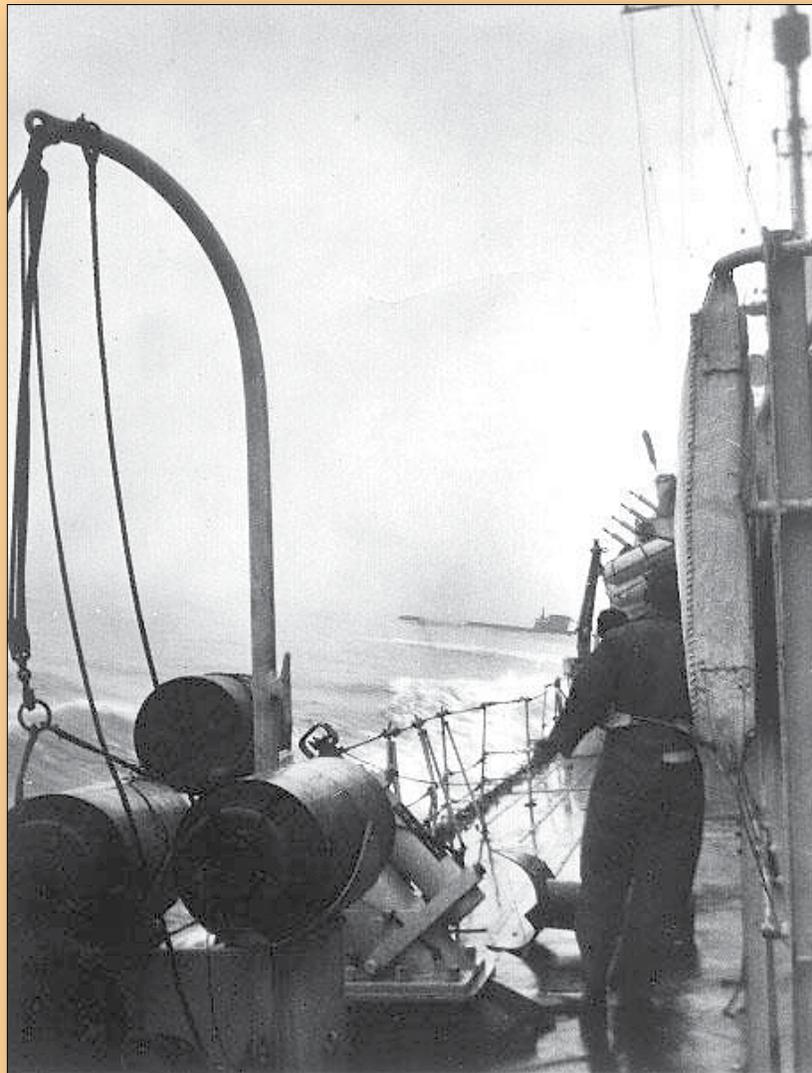




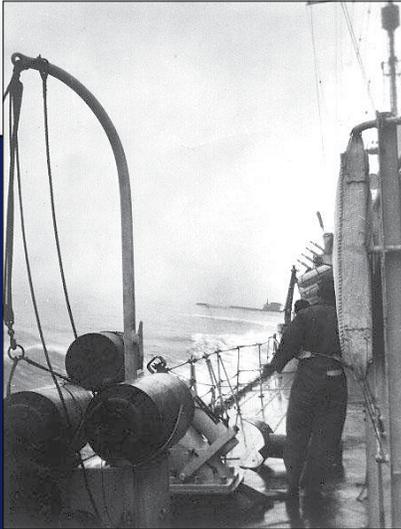
the Ensign

Vol. 22, No. 3

Summer 2013



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



OUR COVER

The destroyer *HMCS Assiniboine* is seen about to ram *U 210* on August 6th, 1942. *Assiniboine* rammed the U-boat twice before it was sunk.

Details of the attack can be found at:

<http://junobeach.org/e/2/can-eve-mob-gol-asb-e.htm>



The Gnaval Gnome in cadpat and Cdr Mike Erwin.



1980 was a good recruiting year for the unit, exceeded only in 1981 when former board member Bob Ramage and yours truly joined the wardroom.

Cdr Erwin has just completed a six month deployment in Qatar and is now assigned to MARPACHQ. If you like Gnaval Gnome, you can follow him on Facebook or in the CFB Esquimalt newspaper *Lookout* (lookoutnewspaper.com).

From the editor

Scott Hausberg

In the last *Ensign*, mention was made of a character called Gnaval Gnome and a suspected Calgary connection. It has been confirmed that Gnaval Gnome is the creation of Cdr Mike Erwin. Cdr Erwin is a Regular Force naval officer, but he caught the seagoing bug at *HMCS Tecumseh*. He joined *Tecumseh* as an Officer Cadet in 1980 and became renowned for creations such as painting the outline of the upper deck of a gate vessel on the boat shed deck and a cartoon strip called "Wardroom Man." One of his classmates at *Tecumseh* was current NMAS board member Scott Hanwell.



Letters

Greg McKenzie received a letter from H. Thomas Hickerson, Vice Provost and Librarian at the University of Calgary, thanking NMAS for its recent donation. Here is an excerpt from that letter:

We are honoured that the Naval Museum of Alberta Society has chosen to generously donate your extensive collections of archives, artefacts and photographs related to Canadian naval and maritime history to Libraries and Cultural Resources at The Military Museums. These rare collections

are among the most important military records in Canada, the Commonwealth and North America. They will add immeasurable strength to the university's existing military library and archives making the university's collection one of the largest in a Canadian academic library.

President's report

Ken Sivertsen

There are a couple of very positive things to report on in this issue of *The Ensign*. The first is that we are getting closer to actually fully activating our agreement with the Department of National Defence concerning the operations of the Naval Museum of Alberta. The second is that our workshop in the Museum Annex is operating again on a much better basis reminiscent of the days when Don Connolly, Gary Hanson, Jim Cowie and many others were toiling away on the guns, etc.

We have received confirmation that the Commander Royal Canadian Navy has approved the establishment of the NMA Museum Committee in order to fulfill the final requirements for accreditation of the Museum. We expect the Museum Committee to be set up shortly and we can get underway with requesting funding for personnel to operate the Museum on a day-to-day basis and relieve Bruce Connolly from the rather onerous job he currently has as the volunteer curator of the Museum.

Currently, Mike Potter and Jim Cowie are in the process of building the bottom for the 3"70 gun model which will show the workings of the gun, magazine and loading mechanism complete with models of personnel to indicate the scale of the gun and how it is loaded and fired. This, together with training videos, will give a real perspective of how the gun actually operates.

As most people probably realize, it was decided to cancel the Ceremony of Life planned for Don Connolly last June 22nd because of the flood. It is doubtful that Celebration of Life for Don will be rescheduled, as

Don's son has expressed reluctance to have it, as he believes his father would not really approve of it. The Board has accepted this but will hold a small ceremony when we put a memorial of Don into the Room of Honour.

The flooding in High River has had an enormous effect on at least two of our long time members. Both Bill Wilson and Frank Saies-Jones were forced to evacuate their homes in High River. As no one is allowed into the town site at the moment, we are not able to identify the actual damage that was done. I do know that Bill Wilson was in the process of writing a book about his life and it was contained on the hard drive of his computer that he was forced to leave behind. While there is the possibility of recovering the data, it is not known yet how much damage there is to the computer.

I wish to extend to both Bill and Frank my heartfelt sympathy for their tragedy and wish everyone else affected by the flood the best and hopefully a speedy recovery.

www.awesomenavystuff

Funnyman

Rick Mercer visits

HMCS *Protecteur* and jackstays
to HMCS *Calgary*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgzC12GjC_Y

~ also ~

Watch the video of a
fishing boat ramming HMCS
Winnipeg in Esquimalt
Harbour on April 23rd

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rjls6Q9b-ul>

More from the March 28th, 2013 transfer to the University of Calgary of the John Burgess Library and the Ken Macpherson Photo Collection

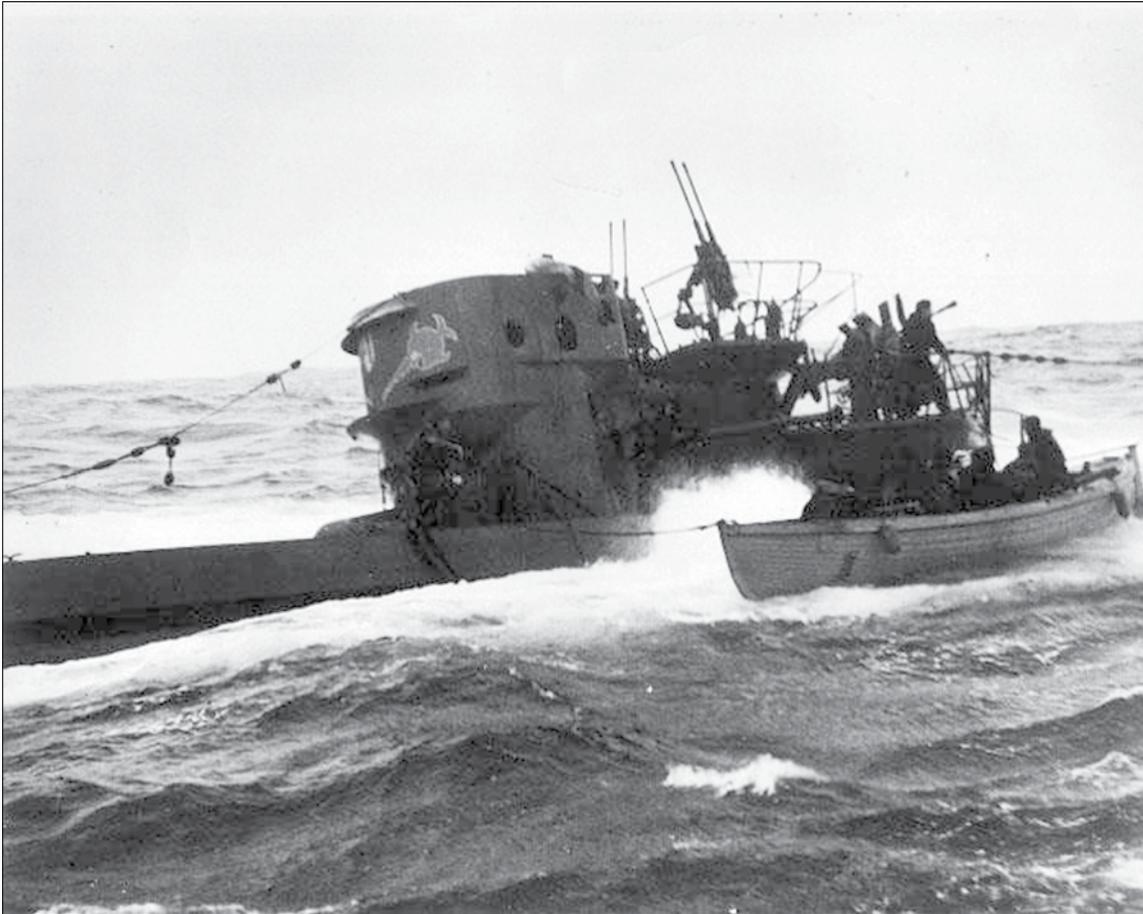


Commodore David Graig, Commander Naval Reserve, presents a ship's photo to Dr. Elizabeth Cannon, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Calgary. NMAS Chairman Tom Glover looks on.



A birds-eye view of the museum following the transfer ceremony.

Turning Point



While serving with Escort Group C2 in the North Atlantic during the night of March 5-6, 1944, and following a lengthy chase, the RCN frigate HMCS *St. Catharines* and the corvette HMCS *Chilliwack* shared in the destruction of *U 744*. Having been submerged for a lengthy period under attack by ships of the escort force, *U 744* finally came to the surface to fight it out. *St. Catharines* and *Chilliwack* both launched ships' boats to attempt to board and capture the submarine. *Chilliwack's* boat reached the U-boat first as illustrated above and several men managed to make it below to liberate valuable code and signal books as well as a cypher machine. However, both ships' boats subsequently capsized in the heavy seas and the books and cypher machine were lost. A British escort vessel, HMS *Icarus*, fired the coup de grâce and *U 744* was sunk.

Seventy years ago, U-boat wolfpacks nearly won the Battle of the Atlantic. In two separate running battles, twenty-two Allied warships were sunk against one U-boat sinking. A Royal Navy report concluded that, "The

Germans never came so near to disrupting communications between the New World and the Old as in the first twenty days of March 1943," and, "It appeared possible that we should not be able to regard convoy as an effective system of defence." (Roskill)

Snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, by the end of May the Allies had driven the U-boats from the ocean, and for all intents and purposes, had won the Battle of the Atlantic.

(Source: *Militrivia* March 9th, 2013)

What is the connection between the USS *New York* and Canada?



USS *New York* was launched in 2008 and seven tons of her hull was forged from steel salvaged from the Twin Towers. “Shortly after September 11th, 2001, Governor of New York, George E. Pataki wrote a letter to Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England requesting that the navy bestow the name ‘New York’ on a surface warship involved in the War on Terrorism in honour of the victims of the September 11th attacks.” (Wikipedia) The tower victims included twenty-six Canadians — making it the worst terrorist event in Canadian history. Let’s hope it is the last.

Source: *Militrivia*, June 6th, 2013

The essential minesweepers

RCN/PAC Photo



HMCS *Caraquet*, February 25th, 1944.

Clearing mines so the invasion fleet could safely approach the beaches is an often overlooked D-Day story. The 31st Canadian Minesweeping Flotilla consisted of ten RCN Bangor-class minesweepers. HMCS *Caraquet* was the flagship. The 31st spent the month prior to the landings clearing the approaches to Omaha and Utah Beaches. On the morning of the landings, the Bangors led the way in and to their credit American losses to mines were negligible. A plaque overlooking Omaha Beach commemorates the service of the 31st that day of days.

Source: *Militrivia*, June 6th, 2013

CTV News Photo



Ooops!

The fishing vessel *American Dynasty* is shown shortly after it collided with HMCS *Winnipeg* on April 23, 2013 at HMC Dockyard in Esquimalt, BC.



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

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

Visitors this summer?

Take them to see the
Naval Museum of Alberta

(Full information regarding admission and hours below right)

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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LCdr (Ret'd) George A. Moore, President
1871 Primrose Crescent, Kamloops, BC V1S 0A5
Phone 250-314-1284 • Fax 250-314-1286 • cascadecreek@shaw.ca

The Naval Museum of Alberta

is located at The Military Museums
4520 Crowchild Trail, SW, Calgary, Alberta T2T 5J4
Telephone 403-974-2807

Admission Prices

Adults \$10.00, Seniors \$5.00, Youth 7-17 \$4.00
Serving personnel (past and present) and their families FREE
NMAAS 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

The Naval Museum of Alberta Society

1820 - 24th Street, SW, Calgary AB T2T 0G8
Telephone 403-242-0002
Facsimile 403-240-1966
execdir@navalmuseumssociety.ca

The Ensign Editor

Cdr (Ret'd) Scott Hausberg
hausberg@shaw.ca