



the Ensign

Volume 23, Number 2

Spring 2014



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



OUR COVER

HMCS *Algonquin*, HMCS *St. John's* and HMCS *Protecteur* sail in formation in the Gulf of Oman as part of the Canadian contribution to Operation Apollo.

www.journal.forces.gc.ca

From the editor

Scott Hausberg

My poor *Protecteur*! Each day I see her on my living room wall in a John Horton painting and she looks magnificent. The painting shows her in June 2004 refueling American ships of the USS *John Stennis* carrier group off Hawaii. One of her finer moments for sure. The year that I served as her Supply Officer was indicative of her advanced age. Starboard boiler tubes blew on the day we were doing trials of the newly replaced port boiler tubes (and had to be repaired again some months later in San Diego), turbo alternator failure, windlass failure and so on. All serious age-related issues but nothing in comparison to the mishaps of the last year.

First, there was the towex collision with HMCS *Algonquin* on August 30th, 2013. *Algonquin* got the worst of that one but *Protecteur* suffered some bow damage. Then came the fire of March 6th, 2014. Fortunately no loss of life, but her future is in serious jeopardy.

Already flagged to be taken out of service in two to

three years (a deadline we all know could be extended for many years), she may already be out of the game.

So, I thought now was as good a time as ever to showcase a few of *Protecteur's* finer moments. Hence the cover photo of her support to Canadian frigates during the war on terror and on this page, a photo of her supporting an Iowa-class battleship during the First Gulf War.

From the photo collection of Peter Vanderpluijm.



HMCS *Protecteur* with USS *Wisconsin* (BB-64) during the First Persian Gulf War.

President's report

Ken Sivertsen

I guess this is the winter that never ends as it is nearing the end of March and we are still getting snow warnings.

We held another meeting of the Naval Museum of Alberta board but we still haven't been able to accomplish a great deal. Our biggest concerns at this time seem to be the finding of a position that can be transferred to Calgary, and the correct classification of the position so that we can staff it. Apparently having the Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy authorize a go-ahead for the staffing of the Naval Museum of Alberta doesn't have much effect on the bureaucracy in the RCN. The commander authorized the staffing last June but we aren't any further ahead.

We are going ahead on other fronts nevertheless although I think our long winter has slowed us down in a number of areas. Our display of the enigma machine is coming closer to fruition as the video has been prepared, thanks primarily to Shaw Communications, and we have built the display case in which the monitor and computer will rest alongside the enigma machine itself. We are still waiting for the Mk 48 torpedo to arrive although we have reports we are getting closer to actually receiving the torpedo. Similarly we are still waiting for the echo sounder and the sidewinder missile, both of which we had hoped to have on site before now. Even the Phalanx defence system we had hoped to have on site hasn't materialized to date, even though we are now an officially authorized DND museum which had been the hold-back before.

On a happier note, we had a very successful volunteer brunch in the *Tecumseh* wardroom on January 26th with about sixty people in attendance. During the brunch, Mike Potter and Bill Kane were both acknowledged as Volunteers of the Year for 2013 and suitable plaques were presented to them. Bob Ramage was also acknowledged for his efforts last summer in producing the video of the museum which was to be presented to the Admiral's Board. That video can be viewed on our website at: <http://navalmuseumofalbertasociety.wildapricot.org>

Again on a happier note, our membership has, as of this date, almost reached 100 thanks largely to the efforts of Dave Brown our Membership Chairman. BZ to Dave as it is a tough task in today's world to try to get people to join organizations like the Naval Museum of Alberta Society.

Fair winds and happy sailing!

D-Day vets travel to Normandy

This June, commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Normandy invasion will take place in France. In an effort to help as many Canadian D-Day vets and Battle of Normandy veterans attend,

Veterans Affairs Canada is providing each eligible D-Day and Battle of Normandy veteran travel assistance up to \$2,000. See the VAC website for more info.



For the second year running, NMAS and the Ernest Manning High School Parent Advisory Committee are teaming up for a raffle. The prize is a gift of flight donated by WestJet — one (1) return trip for two (2) to any regularly scheduled WestJet destination (charters exempt and some restrictions apply). Proceeds to be evenly divided between the two groups and will be used for enhancement of respective programs. Last year's raffle raised \$5,000 and this year the target is to raise \$10,000.



Raffle tickets cost \$20 apiece and only 500 will be sold. The draw will take place at EMHS on June 5th, 2014 at 7:15 pm (at the Athletic Awards).

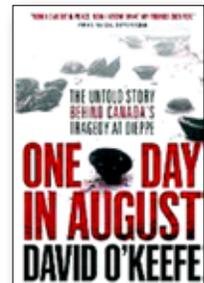
If you want to have a chance to win this great prize and also support two very worthy causes, you can get in on the action. Simply contact any member of the NMAS board (see Winter *Ensign* for contact info) before May 13th if you want a ticket (must be a minimum of 18 years old to purchase). Provide payment, name and address and they will get your tickets for you. After May 13th you can contact the editor but the tickets may all be gone by then.

Book Review

Scott Hausberg

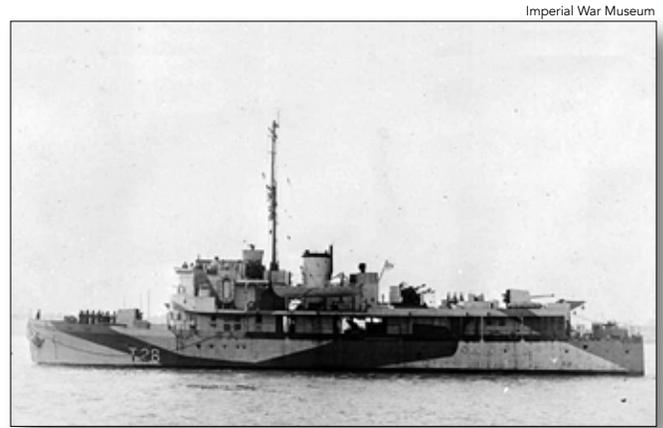
One Day in August by David O'Keefe, is not just another account of the tragedy of the

Dieppe Raid; it is a totally new perspective on the reasons behind the raid. The author starts with a discovery he made in 1995 of a report that made reference to an intelligence unit not having achieved its objective





The four-wheel Enigma coding machine.



The River-class gunboat HMS *Locust* in 1939.

at Dieppe. This one reference led the author to wonder what this unit was all about and what it had been trying to achieve at Dieppe. The answers did not come until previously classified war documents were released many years later. Then the puzzle started to come together and the main reason behind the raid greatly involved the Battle of the Atlantic.

David O'Keefe spends the first half of the book introducing the concept of Ultra and its importance to the war effort. Ultra, as most history buffs know, is everything related to gathering intelligence on German operations and with captured code books, Enigma machines (like the one we have in the NMA), rudimentary computers and lots of manpower; it was very successful until 1942.

Early in 1942 the Germans began introducing the four-wheel Enigma and as this machine began to replace the three wheel Enigma, the flow of information became a trickle. The first units converted to the new Enigma were German submarines and coastal patrol vessels. As a result, information with regards the wolf packs dried up and shipping losses grew to a level that nearly strangled Great Britain. British intelligence desperately needed a four wheel Enigma and related code books.

Enigmas and code books had been obtained prior to 1942 through 'pinch' operations. Pinch ops were typically when a German ship was captured without there being time to destroy all classified materials. Another source of this type of information were German naval

headquarters and the main naval HQ in proximity to England was Dieppe.

As the author delves into Ultra and the workings of Bletchley Park (the decoders), he introduces someone we are all familiar with, LCdr Ian Fleming, who later went on to write the James Bond novels. Well, it seemed that Ian Fleming was quite the spy himself and was very much involved in the Dieppe raid.

As the book reaches the late stages of the raid's planning, there is plenty of logic to support the premise that the raid's primary objective was not to satisfy Stalin or practice for a large scale invasion, but to simply pinch a four-rotor Enigma and related code books from the German Navy.

I have read a number of books on Dieppe, and visited the battle ground twice. Until reading this book I had never even heard mention of the intelligence unit that was to make the pinch, or HMS *Locust* which twice tried to breach the harbour mouth (but failed as the Royal Regiment of Canada had not succeeded in securing the overlooking cliff top).

Is this premise true? Well, David O'Keefe sure presents a compelling argument in what turned out to be a very engaging book. Even with the outcome already known, I found myself wanting to find out what happened next in this previously unexplored aspect of Canada's tragedy of August 19th, 1942.

This book is worth reading and then you can decide if the Dieppe Raid was truly created to pinch an Enigma.

SUMMER BBQ



The annual *Tecumseh*, NOA, RAUSI BBQ will again be held on the grounds of HMCS *Tecumseh* on Saturday, August 9th. We are changing the time this year and will be starting at 1200 with food being served at 1300. The Pipes & Drums Band from the Rocky Mountain Army Cadet Camp will again entertain. Cost is \$10.00 if you pre-buy your tickets, \$15 if you buy at the door. Tickets can be obtained from Johanne Aylette at 403-245-4517 or email at jaylett@telusplanet.net

CASINO VOLUNTEER CALL...

Every 18 months or so, NMAS is allocated casino dates which they must staff. The casino opportunity is a major source of funding for the Society. The NMAS Casino dates for this year are Tuesday, August 19th and Wednesday, August 20th. The venue has been changed and this year we are at the Cowboys Casino. The address is 421 - 12th Avenue SE (right beside the Stampede grounds). We need cashiers for both the day and night shifts, count room staff and chip runners. Please call Johanne at 403-245-4517 or email at jaylett@telusplanet.net if you can volunteer your time for this very worthy cause.



Past issues of 'The Ensign' available on new NMAS website!

A new Naval Museum of Alberta Society website was announced in the last issue of *The Ensign*. It has many great features but surely the best is the ability to view past issues of *The Ensign*. Read them over and over again in magnificent colour (for those who have only seen the black and white printed versions). The site is at ...

<http://navalmuseumofalbertasociety.wildapricot.org>

NMAS Annual Volunteer Brunch



NMAS President Ken Sivertsen (centre) presents Volunteer of the Year Awards to Mike Potter (left) and Bill Kane (right).

The Annual Volunteer Brunch was held in the *Tecumseh* Wardroom on Sunday, January 26th with about sixty people in attendance. During the brunch, Mike Potter and Bill Kane were both acknowledged as Volunteers of the Year and suitable plaques were presented to them.

Bob Ramage was also acknowledged for his efforts last summer in producing the video of the museum which was to be presented to the Admiral's Board. That video can be viewed on the NMAS website at <http://navalmuseumofalbertasociety.wildapricot.org>

We need your help!

Dave Brown

Spring has sprung (so they say) and we are half way through our 2014 membership drive. Unfortunately we are far from the number of members we had hoped to have in 2014. As the society that supports the Naval Museum of Alberta, our

support is limited to the funds we collect from casinos, donations and membership fees. With an annual membership cost of only \$20.00, it is obvious that we need more members to ensure our support of the Naval Museum of Alberta and the promotion of our

naval history to students and the public at large.

With only 92 members to date, we need *your* help in finding more individuals who would be willing to help save our naval history and the outstanding naval museum located within The Military Museums facility.

If you know of anyone who might be interested, please have the membership application (located on the next to last page of each issue of *The Ensign*) completed and sent to the address as indicated.

Thank you for your help!

The Royal Canadian Navy at D-Day

By Scott Hanwell



Canadian landing craft conveying troops ashore during Operation Neptune, the naval portion of D-Day.

While the role of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic is well known, perhaps Canada's second greatest contribution to naval operations in the Second World War were the operations surrounding the D-Day invasion of occupied France. The RCN's roles were many and varied in June 1944, but can be summarized as follows:

(1) Anti-submarine Warfare – Based on intelligence obtained earlier in the war, the Allies were aware that the German invasion response plans called for all available U-boats to proceed to the invasion area and disrupt and sink Allied vessels. Canada supplied four of the nine anti-submarine escort groups

and diligently patrolled the area on the western flanks of the American assault forces.

(2) Minesweeping – Rommel's defences of Western Europe included mines, both on the beaches and in the sea approaches to the D-Day landing zones. RCN minesweepers helped clear and buoy the ten lanes used by the Allies to reach the Normandy beaches.

(3) Transport of Infantry – HMCS *Prince David* and HMCS *Prince Henry* were Canadian passenger liners converted first to armed merchant cruisers at the outset of World War II, and then to infantry landing



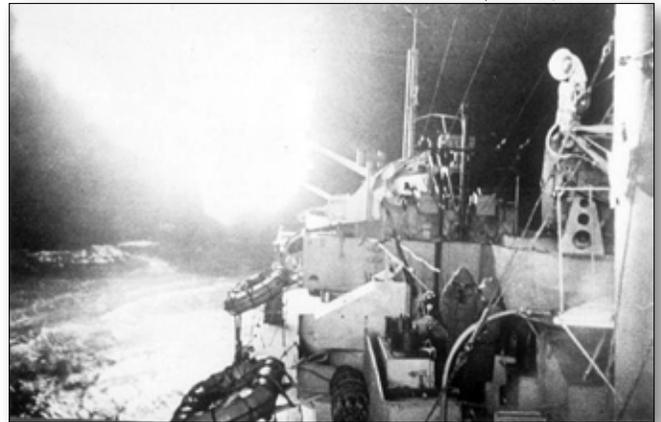
Minesweepers in the English Channel, including those of the RCN, destroy a mine near the route of the convoys ferrying troops ashore.



Reinforcements being rushed ashore from HMCS *Prince Henry* during Operation Neptune.



LCdr Desmond Piers addresses members of HMCS *Algonquin's* ship's company on the eve of D-Day.



HMCS *Algonquin* participates in a night bombardment prior to the landings.

ships in time to take part in the Normandy landings. Both vessels ferried troops to the beaches for the commencement of landings and then returned on subsequent occasions with reinforcements.

(4) Shore Bombardment – HMCS *Algonquin* and HMCS *Sioux*, two of the RCN's newest destroyers, provided shore bombardment support for the Canadian landings and were called upon to destroy specific enemy fortifications and emplacements that stood in the way of advancing Canadian troops.

(5) Coastal Forces – Canadian motor torpedo boats were assigned to harass any approaching German coastal forces including any enemy submersibles engaged in suicide attacks.

(6) Anti-Shipping – Tribal-class destroyers from the RCN were preventing any surface combatants from approaching landing areas or the Allied flotilla.

(7) Combined Operations – RCN personnel were responsible for twenty Landing Craft Infantry (Large). These vessels, 158 feet in length and capable of carrying up to 200 soldiers, made repeated trips between the United Kingdom and the Normandy beaches bringing initial assault troops and reinforcements on to the field of battle.

Plans are now underway to include details of this critical contribution of the RCN in the materials displayed at the Naval Museum of Alberta. Please watch for further details in future editions of *The Ensign*.

Captain(N) Bill Wilson Inducted into the Alberta Order of Excellence

By Scott Hanwell

Taylor Weaver, High River Times/QMI Agency photo.



L to R – Okotoks Mayor Bill Robertson, Danielle Smith, MLA for Foothills, HCapt(N) Bill Wilson and his wife Phyllis, Capt Douglas Eaglesham and his wife Marlene and High River Mayor Craig Snodgrass stood proud at the Museum of the Highwood as Capt(N) Wilson and Capt Eaglesham were honoured with the Alberta Order of Excellence Award.

Congratulations to Bill Wilson on his recent induction into the Alberta Order of Excellence! Bill's many contributions to the Naval Museum of Alberta are common knowledge and his unflagging enthusiasm, drive and determination have made the museum what it is today: quite simply the best in Canada!

In addition to being the museum's founding father and a tireless fundraiser, 'Captain Rabbit's' special skills in procurement have made the museum collections an exemplary and fitting tribute to the men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Bravo Zulu Bill!

You can read the *High River Times* coverage at the following address:

<http://www.highrivertimes.com/2013/11/19/local-men-receive-alberta-order-of-excellence>

'CH-124 SEA KING HELICOPTER'

The Sea King helicopter has received a lot of poor press in the last few years but there was a time when this machine was state of the art, not only for its automatic rotor folding system, but it was also the first helicopter to fly faster than 160 mph (257 kph). This is also probably a good time to mention its exceptional length of service. The first unit was acquired by the RCN in 1963. A great deal of detail on the Sea King can be found at:

<http://jproc.ca/rrp/rrp3/seaking.htm>

CF Photo SW2013-0254-08



The Sea King helicopter in its 50th Anniversary paint.

'VARIABLE DEPTH SONAR'

The Variable Depth Sonar or VDS was a Canadian invention developed in the 1960s that allowed surface ships to find submarines hiding below thermal layers in the ocean. Different temperature layers in ocean waters can bend or deflect sonar sound beams allowing submarines to escape. The Canadian solution was to take the sonar system off the ship and tow it behind at various depths thereby allowing it to 'see' underneath the thermal layers. The first prototype was installed on HMCS *Crescent* in 1961. Source: Facebook Militrivia.

CF Photo SW2013-0254-08



RCN variable depth sonar.

'HMCS LABRADOR'

HMCS *Labrador* was the first large vessel to transit the Northwest Passage and the first ship to circumnavigate North America in a single trip. Commissioned in 1954, this Wind-class icebreaker was transferred to civilian control in 1957 and then into the newly formed Canadian Coast Guard in 1962. She was decommissioned in 1987 and scrapped two years later. When commissioned she was the world's largest icebreaker and could break through ice 13 feet (or almost 4m) thick. Source: Facebook Militrivia.

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PLEASE RENEW / PURCHASE A MEMBERSHIP IN THE NAVAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA SOCIETY

YES, please renew/accept my Naval Museum of Alberta Society membership. A cheque for \$20.00 is enclosed and my information is filled out below (please print):

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please check this box only if you would like to receive *The Ensign* by mail rather than by email (because we do not have a colour copier, these will be in black and white, emailed copies are in full colour PDF format and save the Society both paper and postage).

Please check this box if you would like to make a donation to the Society. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations in excess of \$20.

Please return this form with your cheque payable to NMAS.
Mail to: Naval Museum of Alberta Society, c/o HMCS *Tecumseh*,
1820 - 24th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta T2T 0G6

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



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!

2014 Membership Drive

The Naval Museum of Alberta Society is actively seeking new members! Every new member adds to our ability to provide credible support to our museum. Please do your part to help us grow in 2014!

- Membership Application on page 11 •

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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NMAAS members FREE • Ample free parking

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