



the Ensign

Volume 23, Number 1

Winter 2013-2014



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



OUR COVER

'The Naval Museum of Alberta building at night.'

A night view of the Naval Museum of Alberta section of The Military Museums complex in Calgary. The NMA facility is featured in a new video produced by Bob Ramage, which can be found on the new NMAS website (see article "New Society Website" on page 5).

From the editor

Scott Hausberg

I have to share with *Ensign* readers an experience I had in November that was life changing. Sponsored by WestJet and Boeing, and organized by a fantastic charity by the name of *Live Different*, I headed to Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic with forty-nine other WestJetters to make a difference. Specifically, we went there to build homes for deserving families in a community called Nuevo Renacer (New Hope in Spanish). This community was until recently called Agua Negras (Black Waters) for the polluted river that runs through it (and which often floods into it).

Over a period of ten days, we toiled in humid 35°C weather. We were the labourers; we hauled cinder blocks, sand and gravel and mixed concrete by hand,

and when done we did it all over again. By the time we climbed into our trucks at the end of the day, we felt barely alive. But resurrection was quick as the children cheered and waved at us as we navigated the narrow streets, the wind dried our wet clothes and the best bottle of beer in the world was produced from the cooler.

The families receiving these houses worked even longer and harder than we did. Most qualified for this build by having volunteered in the construction of their neighbours' homes. To date, *Live Different* has built fifty-five homes in Nuevo Renacer and fifteen of these have been built by WestJetters like myself.

The conditions these people had to live in were shocking to us gringos. The river water was black and smelled horrid. The coast they lived on was more a garbage dump than a beach. They try to keep it clean but with garbage constantly flowing down the rivers and along the coast, it is a losing battle. For us, it was



Nuevo Renacer before and after WestJetters.

shocking to see children playing in the garbage and in the polluted waters. The area we were building in had consisted of shacks made of corrugated steel, wood and cardboard that offered little protection from the elements and were subject to flooding. When we were done, there were five sturdy homes complete with electricity and plumbing.

Seeing the abject poverty of the Dominican Republic was a shock and made me appreciate so much more all we have in Canada. So, it was quite appropriate that the day we turned over the keys to the new homes to the families was Remembrance Day. We had the morning off and a retired air force major and I organized and conducted a Remembrance Day ceremony. I had brought poppies with me, which many had been proudly wearing while at the build site. We had a PA system, recordings of the Last Post, Reveille and O Canada, a copy of *In Flanders Fields* and a beautiful site overlooking the ocean. About forty Canadians attended what I feel was the most beautiful and moving Remembrance Day ceremony ever.



Letters

"I enjoyed hearing of Commander Michael Erwin (See: Spring 'Ensign' editorial). He joined the Navy in HMCS Tecumseh. He was one of our best young officers, albeit a little eccentric — I mean really, who makes Gnaval Gnomes? Even back then in the 1980s, he was honing his Gnaval Kraft. CO of the day was Capt(N) Laraine Orthlieb and I was the XO. We each received an Erwin original. Mine is proudly hung on my Christmas tree each year."

Commander (Ret'd) Greg McKenzie



A bonafide 'Erwin Original' Gnaval Gnome.

President's report

Ken Sivertsen



I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. If you are like most people, next is the start of the DIET season.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 26th, 2013. Once again the number of people attending was disappointing with only seventeen persons in attendance. We nevertheless did discuss things of importance to the Society such as our financial statements and held the election of directors, and this time we were able to discuss the possibility of the Naval Museum of Alberta engaging a curator/director because of our new relationship with the Royal Canadian Navy. LCdr Janet MacDougall, Commanding Officer of HMCS *Tecumseh* and the Naval Museum of Alberta, was able to brief the meeting on the steps ahead for the Museum, most important of which is the approval to start the recruitment process for the hiring of a full time Executive Director for the NMA and the hiring of a short-term assistant. Hopefully this process will not take too long, but we are looking at months, not weeks!

For your information, the following persons stood up for the task and were elected to the Society's Board of Directors for 2014:

Tom Glover	Chair.	403-271-0972	tggllover@shaw.ca
Ken Sivertsen	Pres.	403-281-8640	kensivertsen@nucleus.com
Lorne Hanson	Treas.	403-241-0394	lhanson@bhh.ab.ca
Anita Von	Sec'y.	403-240-1967	anitavon@hotmail.com
Johanne Aylett	Director	403-245-4517	jaylett@telusplanet.net
David Brown	Director	403-247-6664	browncad@gmail.com
Bill Buchanan	Director	403-274-7535	cutknife@telus.net
Scott Hanwell	Director	403-515-5832	rhanwell@avaya.com
Scott Hausberg	Director	403-441-6756	jhausberg@westjet.com
Nancy Olmstead	Direct.	403-637-2110	albertaseaweed@live.ca
Glenn Wilkinson	Direct.	403-242-6291	glennwilkinson@gmail.com

Some of you may have noticed that we had our model of the 3"70 gun at The Military Museum for

Remembrance Day. The model had been greatly spruced up by Mike Potter, John Idington and Jim Cowie with a new paint job and was the centre of attention for numerous people during the day. Mike and John were on hand to explain the workings of the gun and its ammunition loading system. While the model is now back at the Annex for additional work, we hope to have it on permanent display shortly.

Also expected in the near future is a Mk 48 torpedo. This will be the first time we have had a submarine torpedo available for us to display. We have had a destroyer torpedo and an airborne torpedo for some time, but never a submarine torpedo. Also scheduled to arrive in the near future is an echo sounder that will be placed in the navigation area. 'Captain Rabbit' [for the uninitiated, *Captain(N) (Ret'd) Bill Wilson*] has been busy again. We are still awaiting confirmation of a shipping date for a Sidewinder missile that will be

mounted on the Banshee.

Our membership drive for 2014 is proceeding under the leadership of Dave Brown. As of the date I am writing this, we have had fifty-three members renew their membership. If you haven't renewed yet, please do so, and if you have any friends or acquaintances who might be interested in joining the Society, please invite them to join. [A handy membership application form is included for your convenience on page 7 of this issue of "The Ensign." Pub.]

Don't forget that our annual **Volunteer Brunch** will be held in the *Tecumseh* Wardroom on Sunday, January 26th, 2014 at 1000 for 1030. We will also be awarding our 'Volunteer of the Year' awards at the Brunch. Make sure it's on your calendar! Please RSVP by January 23rd to Johanne Aylett at 403-245-4517, or by email to jaylett@telusplanet.net



Museum Operations Update

Bill Wilson

The year 2013 leaves us with mixed reactions. For example, your Board after over twelve years of concentrated effort finally realized its number one priority and received the Commander of the RCN's commitment to appoint a full time position to direct and manage the Naval Museum of Alberta on a permanent basis. During the course of the year, several significant artefacts were added to the collection with a promise of more to come.

Readers of *The Ensign* are aware that while we previously had advised that several pieces including a Phalanx CIWS (Close in Weapon System), an EW (electronic warfare) system, etc., had been expected; they are yet to be delivered. However, the Mk. 48 submarine torpedo is expected in January and two modules of the Marconi sounding machine have now been received and we expect to uncrate them in the next few weeks.

While there was some good news described in *The Ensign* during the year, we still grieve the loss of Don Connolly. He was just so 'involved' in the operation of the museum that his departure has drastically slowed the creation and upgrading of displays. As most of you know, Don's right bower was Gary Hansen and they operated like a well-oiled machine. Now Gary has lost his wife Gail just last month after a long and difficult illness.

On a better note, Mike Potter (ex RCAF Reserve Captain, designer / manufacturer / fabricator, etc.), has virtually completed the retro fit of the 3"70 model to the point that the upper section is now on display next to HMCS *Terra Nova's* 3"70 mounting. Mike has also completed the painting of the hull of the Algerine minesweeper model and, as the cabinet has been completed, an acrylic cover will be ordered in January.

Jim Cowie has completed the base for the HMCS

Bonaventure model and with the assistance of Warrant Officer Ted McLeod of Lord Strathcona's Horse fame, who will take on the detailing of the *Bonny's* upper decks, we expect the model will now be completed in the immediate future. The steam boiler and condenser models should be mounted on their new base and be ready for transfer to the museum by the end of January.

Recent visitors to the museum may have noted that the 'Shield' countermeasures mounting that was removed from HMCS *Calgary* during the ship's upgrading and delivered to the museum earlier in the year, now has 'caps' to cover the muzzles of the projectile tubes.



The NMAS has a new website for Society business such as maintaining the membership and watchkeeping lists, informing members of upcoming events such as the Volunteer Brunch, and a place to go when looking for back issues of the Society's newsletter, *The Ensign*. Those of you with email addresses will already have become acquainted with the website — a little too much so say some! That's because the website seems to have a mind of its own and has sent out membership renewal notices four times — much to our surprise too! Please bear with us as we learn how to use the power of this new tool. We are beginning to catch on and hopefully you'll see us getting better at it as the year progresses. If you have computer skills and would like to help us with the website, please let us know. Any help would be much

appreciated!

Please note that the Society website is not meant to replace or compete with that of The Military Museums (TMM) at <http://www.militarymuseums.ca>. The TMM site is wonderful and does a terrific job of showcasing our Naval Museum. It is still the place to go for current Museum information such as hours of operation, special events, lectures, etc.

Our new web address is...

<http://navalmuseumofalbertasociety.wildapricot.org/>

What's 'wildapricot' you might ask? It's a company that specializes in providing websites to non-profit societies at a very low cost. Crazy, these tech companies names!

Wearing of mess kit by retired service members

Early in 2013, many in the naval community heard that retired service members would not be permitted to wear mess dress at military social functions without prior approval from the Minister of National Defence. This appears to have resulted in a significant number of such requests and subsequent clarification as to whether or not retired members were, in fact, authorized to wear mess dress at social functions.

In a letter to a retired naval officer, VAdm Mark Norman, Commander RCN, stated:

"The request you have made has been repeated by naval veterans across the country. I understand the sense of pride and shared camaraderie that is felt wearing mess dress while attending traditional mess dinners. To that end, retired members are authorized to wear mess dress for mess functions in a military mess. All other dress regulations will, of course, be applicable while in uniform."

NMAS Volunteer Brunch

Don't forget that our Volunteer Brunch will be held in the *Tecumseh* Wardroom on Sunday, January 26th at 1000 for 1030. We will be awarding our "Volunteer of the Year" awards at the brunch. Make sure it is on your calendar!

Please RSVP by Thursday, January 23rd to Johanne Aylett at 403-245-4517 or email jaylett@telusplanet.net

NMAS Membership Renewal

Dave Brown

Your membership in the Naval Museum of Alberta Society (NMAS) for 2013 was greatly appreciated and assisted us in keeping the Naval Museum of Alberta as the BEST naval museum in Canada.

The display and protection of our naval history through thousands of artefacts is important to the rich history of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Merchant Navy and all those who have served and sailed under the RCN.

The membership fees, although a small portion of our revenue, allow the museum to survive and constitute an important contribution towards its operation.

For 2013, we had only 102 paid members. In 2014 we have set a goal to achieve at least 250 paid members.

Membership is open to any person who would like help save, protect and promote our naval history for present and future generations. Membership has privileges such as receiving *The Ensign*, admission to The Military Museums (TMM) and obviously, our own Naval Museum of Alberta, invitations to various special activities when organized by the NMAS and attendance at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of

the NMAS. The purpose of this note is to encourage you to renew your membership if you haven't already done so. We would ask for your help in reaching our goal of at least 250 members for 2014 by, in addition to renewing your own membership, suggesting to a relative, friend or acquaintance that they also become a supporting member of the Naval Museum of Alberta Society. Please complete the handy membership application form on page 7 and send it to the address shown. Although this is a membership notice, we would obviously appreciate any donation in addition to your membership fee and the appropriate tax receipt will be provided.

NMAS Membership Cards

Dave Brown

The Naval Museum of Alberta Society is struggling with raising funds to support the Naval Museum of Alberta. Over the past few years membership in the society has dropped off considerably, donations are few and far between and our casino revenues have been significantly reduced. With the latest increase in postage costs, it has been decided that membership cards will no longer be sent out in the mail. For members who have an email address, the membership renewal invoice, which is generated from our website once payment is received, will serve as a temporary proof of membership. Membership cards will be prepared for all paid-up members and held in the Museum by the watchkeepers. Those wishing to have a card may pick them up at their convenience from the watchkeeper when visiting the museum. We appreciate your understanding and hope these minor changes to some of our operating procedures meet with your approval. We sincerely appreciate your participation and membership in the Naval Museum of Alberta Society, helping us to preserve our rich naval history for future generations of Canadians through the biggest and best Naval Museum in Canada!



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!

Volunteer Brunch

Will be held in HMCS *Tecumseh's*

Wardroom - January 26th, 2014

Doors Open 1000

Food Served from 1030 to 1130

Bar Closes at 1300.

More info on page 6.

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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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
NMAA 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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