

Action Stations



CANADA'S NAVAL MEMORIAL

HMCS SACKVILLE

March / April 2007

Captain's Cabin - Preparing Ship for Summer Visitors By Wendall Brown

With spring's official arrival as I write this article I am reminded of how little time is available to prepare HMCS SACKVILLE for our summer 2007 visitor season.

The major task, which has appearance, preservation and safety aspects, is stripping of all exterior deck areas which are open to the public, carrying out an effective preservation process and refinishing the decks using a non-slip coating in traffic areas.

The restoration and improvement of the hydraulic system for simulating the operation of the main engine is in progress. The repair of the system was required when the hydraulic pump failed. The repair will improve the system by allowing the engine to rotate at variable speed in both forward and reverse direction. System design and material selection has been completed. Parts are on order and installation should be complete before the summer season.

The Ship's Operations Committee is developing plans for the next docking of HMCS Sackville. The only naval facility in Halifax capable of docking SACKVILLE is the synchro-lift in HMC Dockyard. The only commercial facilities are the large and expensive floating docks or the graving dock at Halifax Shipyards

SACKVILLE is scheduled to be docked in 2007. (Every six years). It is not apparent, with the current synchro-lift schedule, that SACKVILLE can be docked at naval facilities this year. All effort will be made to closely monitor the ship's condition and ensure that watertight integrity is maintained until the synchro-lift is available as all other options are cost prohibitive. Regardless of where or when the ship is docked, extensive effort is required to survey the ship and determine refit requirements to plan for effective docking time.

The captain's cabin furniture, originally fitted in HMCS TRAIL (K174), is now in the after mess decks where it is being assessed for refurbishment requirements and suitability for installation in the captain's cabin; it would replace furniture fabricated in the 1982-1985 period when SACKVILLE was restored to its 1944 configuration.

The only genuine WWII photo of a corvette captain's cabin found to date is a photo of Vice Admiral Hugh MacNeil's father, LCdr R.A.S. MacNeil, CO of HMCS Dauphin, seated in front of the bunk of the captain's cabin in Dauphin. We would be most interested in possession of wartime photos of a corvette captain's cabin that would assist us in determining the items of furniture and their location in the 1944 configuration of SACKVILLE's captain's cabin.

Although SACKVILLE is alongside in the south end of the Dockyard in its winter berth, she is in demand for visits and tours. On Sunday Feb 11 we hosted Vice Admiral Michael Gretton RN (ret'd) (son of Admiral Sir Peter Gretton of WWII fame), president of the Royal Naval Association-Northern Ireland branch. He is very involved in an RNA initiative to buy back from Egypt a 1942 Black Swan class destroyer sold to Egypt after the war. This ship will be berthed in Liverpool and restored in a similar manner to our SACKVILLE. He was most interested in the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust organization and terms of reference for its officers and committees. SACKVILLE hosts tours for individuals, schools and cadet corps throughout the winter. Out of town guests this winter included cadet corps from Ottawa and Edmonton.

A mid-winter brunch in SACKVILLE's mess decks for trustees and their guests was well attended (60 plus) and well received. These events are important to maintain esprit de corps among CNMT Trustees and in maintaining and enhancing Canada's Naval Memorial.

As we go to press we are looking forward to the Battle of the Atlantic weekend May 4-6. The combination of concert, formal dinner in the mess decks, and memorial service and committal of ashes at sea provide a fitting tribute to the achievement and sacrifice of the battle. This year we already have more than 20 urns of ashes for committal and the ship is very close to capacity limits for attending next of kin.

If you are in the Halifax area this summer, be sure to visit HMCS SACKVILLE in her summer berth at Sackville Landing adjacent to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

Cdr(Ret'd) Wendall Brown

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Chair's Update Capital Campaign Activities Underway

Kelly Power has been with us for just two months as director of development and already her work has rejuvenated the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust (CNMT) in different areas of fundraising. I have received several specific initiatives which will serve us well, including planned giving, communications, annual fund and our major activity, the capital campaign. We have gone out for sponsors of both our re-enactor and cadet employment programs and are optimistic that we will find financial supporters.

I am very pleased to announce that Nova Scotia's former Lieutenant Governor and Honorary Captain (N) Myra Freeman has agreed to be the chair of our National Councilors group as we head into our capital campaign. Welcome aboard Your Honour and what a pleasure it is to have you with us as we actively pursue placing HMCS SACKVILLE in a permanent complex for presentation and preservation.

Meanwhile, activities continue at a high level. We have 15 new life members since Christmas and it seems that those of you who have had so much to do with SACKVILLE and what she stands for are happy to make the financial commitment to keep in touch for years to come. If you were thinking of becoming a 'lifer' it is a great deal for \$1000 and you can pay it off monthly. The benefits include receiving Action Stations throughout the years (a quality newsletter) and the camaraderie across the country is palpable. The Friday noon gathering is extremely popular with the ship's captain, Wendall Brown and friends providing a chowder, chili or soup lunch. Wendall also put on a great brunch in February with more than 80 in attendance. Lots of fun!

The ship has received an original corvette captain's cabin desk and plans are underway to install it. At the same time, preparations for the summer season are well underway as we head toward warmer weather.

We all needed a hooley in dismal March and what fun it was. Neil Black and Debbie Findlay organized one heck of a Saint Patrick's Day party at the Brightwood Golf Club, Dartmouth. More than 100 of us 'come- from- away' Irish people attended including our lifetime trustee and Member of Parliament Michael Savage and his wife Darlene. It was fantastic gathering as we danced the night away and we made money for the Trust. As Neil put it, it doesn't get better than that.

Recently, we received sad news of the passing of our Northern Ireland friend, Derek Stone, president of the Royal Naval Association. He hosted us so well when members of the Trust attended the 60th Anniversary commemorations in Londonderry in 2005. The Trust has sent a sympathy note to the family and his name has been placed in the ship's Memorial Book of Remembrance.

The Queen's Landing Project on the waterfront has been briefed to the Nova Scotia Cabinet and we await the commitment for funding as the project progresses through the bureaucracy. We have to ensure that politicians at all levels appreciate the importance of the development. This is necessary to garner support for placing HMCS SACKVILLE in a building so that Canada's Naval Memorial will be properly preserved in perpetuity. Federal Minister of Heritage, Bev Oda, confirmed to me that Ottawa has established three criteria to be used to determine financial support to national institutions and treasures and the policy on such funding. Canada's Naval Memorial meets all of the criteria so we will be moving quickly and proceed with our support for the Queen's Landing project as its proponents pursue federal funding.

The Capital Committee members have been very active in recent months, providing terms of reference, goals and objectives for 2007 and their budget estimates. The executive committee has tweaked the 2007 budget for board approval and the Trust's finances are in good order.

We will have the honour of hosting Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis at our Battle of Atlantic Dinner aboard on May 5, an event which has traditionally sold out yearly. The Battle of Atlantic Gala at Pier 21 will be held May 3, a very popular event that also sells out ...so get your tickets early. The Stadacona Band and Nova Scotia's Provincial Men's Choir Nova Voce are highlights as are the Shearwater Pipes and drums.

We are all looking forward to a better tourist season, which this summer will include a tall ship visit in July...and some good weather for painting! Have a great spring and don't forget to sign up a new member to support Canada's Naval Memorial; make it a birthday present to a son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter and leave a legacy forever!

Vice Admiral Duncan (Dusty) Miller (Ret'd),
Chair, Canadian Naval Memorial Trust

WELCOME ABOARD

Trustees

Weldon, Richard, Cdr
DeGrace, George, PO1
Ward, Deborah
McMillan, Ken, Commodore
Trim, Lawrence, R.C. Cdr
Campbell, Doug, Lt(N)
Girard, Ronald

Sirman, William G.
Meyers, Ron, Stewart
Power, Kelly
Thomson, John Lindsay
Sears, Allan R. PO
Neal, Earl
Gould, Sidney, C. LCdr

Members of the Ship's Company

McKee, Fraser, M. Cdr

Copeman, Derek



Trustee Bill Gard had as his guest on board SACKVILLE for the Friday lunch on February 16, 2007, Robert Thomson. Robert is the son of Woodburn Thomson who sailed in SACKVILLE in 1943-44. He went on to become CO of HMCS LUNENBURG. Woodburn Thomson passed away ten years ago.

Robert was in Halifax directing the new Canadian Neptune Theatre Studio's play, *Mourning Dove*, based on the Robert Latimer case and was immediately recognized by several of the Trustees when he entered the mess.

Robert is working on a project with the Veterans Affairs to mark the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Also pictured in photo are veterans and trustees, Mark Mayo and Max Corkum.



Crossed the Bar

*Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark.*

*I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar*

Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1809-1892

Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Mr. Alex Budge
Capt(N) Clifford Willis Kenneth Book

REMEMBERING SPIKENARD: A CORVETTE WAKE

Lt(N) Pat Jessup

Community Relations Officer, CFB Halifax

Battle of the Atlantic Veterans from across Canada, Great Britain and Northern Ireland gathered in St.

John's NL during the weekend of 9-12 February to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the loss of HMCS Spikenard and all but eight of her crew. The 960-tonne ship, and sister ship of HMCS Sackville – Canada's Naval Memorial, was part of the First Escort Squadron on the famed "Newfie-Derry" run when she was torpedoes by German U-Boat 136 near Iceland on 10 Feb 1942.

Alongside in St. John's to participate in the ceremonies was the 4,750-tonne HMCS Halifax with her crew of 209, fresh from nineteen days of fisheries patrol. Jostled by severe winter weather for most of the trip, Halifax battled the same unforgiving elements as did the tiny corvettes 65 years ago. Lt(N) Al Garner, Deck Officer, remarked that "Halifax's crew gained a renewed respect for the sailors of the Merchant Navy, RCN, RCNVR and RN for their heroism against a formidable foe in the North Atlantic in



The Very Reverend Josiah W. Noel, T.S.S.F., Dean of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador blesses the Newfie-Derry Bell in St. John's Anglican Cathedral



At the Government House reception hosted by the Hon. Clyde Wells, LtOR: Trustess Tom Pollock, Sherry Richardson, Howard Wilson, Guy Chauvin and Chief Justice Wells.

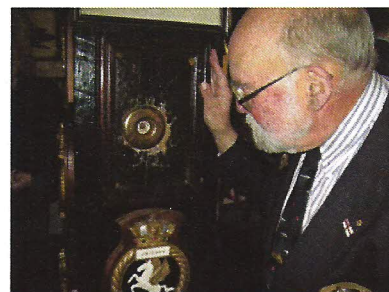
The veterans, rejuvenated by a full slate of commemorative activities were warmly received at Government House and City Hall receptions. In their honour, naval white ensigns flew from flag staffs around St. John's to symbolize their sacrifices while maintaining the Lifeline to Victory by delivering critical food and war supplies to Great Britain. At the "Corvette Wake" mess dinner at CFS St. John's, the veterans were invited to speak of their experiences as teenage sailors and joining the fray to fight for Canada. There were many poignant insights into the conditions at the time. Bob Ennis, a Newfoundlander, mused about demobilizing in Halifax at the end of the war and having to go through immigration before continuing on to a job in Toronto. He said: "They made me apply for immigrant status because I wasn't a Canadian!" Newfoundland did not join Confederation until the first of April, 1949.

Art Taylor described surviving the sinking of the Jervis Bay. His ship, an armed merchantman on escort duty, was an ill-equipped match against the German pocket battle cruiser Admiral Scheer. Taylor spent 2 months recovering from shrapnel wounds in Camp Hill Hospital in Halifax, one of 65 out of a crew of 260 to take to lifeboats before their ship sank. Taylor

fondly remembers a Swedish captain who risked his ship that night, "if he hadn't come back, there wouldn't have been any survivors."

During a ceremony at St. John's War Memorial in which a 50 person guard from HMCS Halifax and CFNES in St. John's and HMCS Cabot's colour party represented today's navy, Tahirah Shadforth, laid a wreath in memory of her grandfather, Lieutenant Commander H.G. Shadforth, Spikenard's captain. A heartwarming moment occurred when sisters Leslie and Dawn Cowie, along with National President of the Naval Officer's Association of Canada, Ron Harrison read the names of the crew who were lost. The Cowie family journeyed from Alberta in memory of their late father Jim, who championed the Three Days of Remembrance, but recently passed away.

The Crow's Nest Seagoing Officer's Club dates from 1942 when Shadforth - known in the custom of the time as "Spikenard," became one of its founding members. The night before leaving St. John's on his first "Newfie-Derry" run, Shadforth and his officers challenged others from the corvettes Dauphin, Lethbridge, Louisburg and Chilliwack, to a friendly competition to see who could drive a spike into the floorboards with the least number of blows. Shadforth won the contest handily. It was agreed that his spike would stay in the floor until the next time everyone returned. Days later, Shadforth and 55 of his crew were lost when his ship was torpedoed. When news of the Spikenard's sinking reached the Crow's Nest, Shadforth's spike was sawed out of the deck and mounted on a pillar in the club for posterity, where it remains today.



Trustee Dr. Guy Chauvin inspects Spikenard's Spike

St. John's Mayor Andy Wells at the City Hall reception spoke of the historic commitment of Newfoundlanders to Empire and Canada, remembering recent losses in Afghanistan. Similarly, HMCS Halifax's captain, Cdr Scott Bishop, remarking on the strong representation of Newfoundlanders serving in his ship said: "coming to St. John's isn't so much a port visit but more of a home coming."

In May 2005, 125 Canadian veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic and the "Newfie-Derry Run" attended commemorative ceremonies in Londonderry, Northern Ireland. During these events a specially made "Convoy Bell" was consecrated at St. Columb's Anglican Cathedral of that city. The bell, commissioned by the Naval Officers Association of Vancouver Island, is installed in HMCS Sackville where it is used during the Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies. Similarly, a "Newfie-Derry Run" bell was cast for the Three Days of Remembrance ceremonies. The bell was consecrated at the Anglican Cathedral of St. John the Baptist and in a reciprocal arrangement will be installed in St. Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry. The bells commemorate the 4,234 Canadian naval and merchant sailors, and airmen who lost their lives between September, 1939 and May, 1945 while maintaining shipping links from North America to Europe during the longest single campaign of the Second World War.

The Crow's Nest Seagoing Officers Club served as command-and-control for The Three Days of Remembrance, which was expertly overseen by LCdr Max Harvey, Commanding of HMCS Cabot and Club Treasurer, LCdr Margaret Morris, Mr. Gary Green, Mr. John Moyes and their strong organization. During a "Make and Mend" at the Club on Saturday evening and at the exact moment when Spikenard was lost, veterans issued with a tot of rum, raised their glasses in remembrance. "We will remember them, it is our duty" said John Moyes, vice-president of the Crow's Nest Club at events earlier in the day.

This moment was not lost on Trustee Bob Daniels whose "Uncle Bob" was Spikenard's First Officer, Robert Hughes. Lt Hughes was Bob Daniels' father's best friend, and to a five-year-old was affectionately known as Uncle Bob. All of Spikenard's officers were lost when she was torpedoed.



Bob Daniels and Tahirah Shadforth at Crow's Nest Club reception.



1st Lt Jim Reddy, LCdr Peter Nicholson, RN, Cox'n Guy Ouelette and Gordon Wright, RCNA Edmonton at Blessing of the Bell ceremony.

HMCS Sackville was well represented at the Corvette Wake weekend. Many of the Trustees who participated in the Derry commemorations made the trek to Newfoundland for those ceremonies as well. LCdr Sherry Richardson, ret'd, past CO and representing Sackville's current captain, Cdr Wendall Brown, ret'd, presented the Crow's Nest with a 65 year old Barber Pole artifact from the Sackville collection. Sackville's First Lt LCdr Jim Reddy, ret'd, and representing the Dartmouth-based Convoy Cup Foundation, presented nine veterans with the Convoy Cup tribute medallion.



LCdr Sherry Richardson presenting Barber Pole artifact to the Crow's Nest President Dick Hyslop

At the closing ceremonies, the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable Edward Roberts remarked: "You couldn't grow up in St. John's without being aware of the Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy. The Spikenard story embodies all of those ships that sailed out of the Narrows and never came back." Describing LCdr Shadforth's spike as the Crow's Nest most treasured artifact, he said: "that it is a shining example of what it was all about."

The Three Days of Remembrance ended with Capt (N) John Pickford, Project Manager for Canadian Navy's Centennial summarizing the commitment of the navy to "honour the past, celebrate our achievements and recognize our obligation to Canada." Capt(N) Pickford urged all in attendance to take the memories of this weekend of remembrance back to their communities in preparation for 2010.

At the Crow's Nest reception, Tahirah Shadforth read the following letter received by her great uncle William Shadforth from one of Spikenard's survivors.

Dear Sir,

Today I received your letter enquiring for your brother, my late Commander. I'm sorry I cannot give you any hope of his survival. You no doubt would like to know why and also what happened to convince me Lieut. Commander Shadforth was lost.

On the night of Tuesday, 10th February [1942] at 11:30 p.m. a torpedo struck the Spikenard just forward of the bridge and must have killed any one of the officers who happened to be in the wardroom. Your brother, I believe, was on the bridge at the time of the explosion. I was asleep in the petty officers' mess at the time and upon arrival on deck saw part of the bridge blown away and the forward end of the ship right back to the life-boats – this included the bridge – in flames.

Someone on the bridge, I think Lieut. Commander Shadforth, was blowing "Abandon Ship" on the whistle. She went down by the head very fast and disappeared in three minutes. She was a small ship and the torpedo must have nearly broken her in halves. Eight of us were picked up the next evening after 18 ½ hours on a raft. The port life-boat was smashed in the explosion. The starboard boat was in flames and one Charlie float lashed near the boats, and could not be reached and went down lashed to the ship. There was one other float and the raft back aft. I got the float free and three others got the lashings off of the float and picked up four others who were in the water.

Immediately after she sunk there followed an underwater explosion. It may have been the boilers or a depth charge. I had a miraculous escape after being blown off the raft and coming to under the water going down with the ship. I made the surface, heard them talking on the float and swam to them. We changed over to the raft and heard a few cries in the water. We managed to pick up two, an ordinary seaman and a leading stoker but both were injured internally and died before noon the next day. There were no more cries and we settled down to wait.

On being picked up by an English corvette, I learned we had not been reported sunk and no one knew we were lost. The English corvette queried our whereabouts at 11 a.m. and obtained permission to return and search for survivors. The first definite information regarding her loss was gained from us. Therefore, I fail to see how any others were picked up before us or they would have known, and I don't think anyone in the water at the time of the explosion would have escaped injury. If anyone did get clear, I don't think they would have survived as the temperature of the water was 42 degrees F. I am very sorry I am unable to give you more pleasant news, but I think you would rather know the truth.

The Spikenard was a very happy ship due to the consideration shown the crew by her officers. Your brother, Sir, did not stand on formality, but treated us all as human beings. However, he was regarded with the greatest respect. We lost a man we could ill afford to lose. You have every reason to be proud of your brother. Thank you for your good wishes.

*Yours sincerely,
Alex A. Day*

The following was contributed by Gary Green, The Crow's Nest. It goes well with what the Lieutenant Governor said.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the Battle of the Atlantic was confined largely to the Eastern portion of the ocean. However, with the increase in both the number and range of U-boats the conflict spread west to the coast of North America. Both Halifax and St. John's were considered as possible base of operations to combat this threat. For practical and political reasons, St. John's was chosen. St. John's harbour, though not large, provided a snug haven from the stormy North Atlantic and a narrow, easily defended entrance to keep the U-boats at bay. Inland, just beyond the city's boundary was ample space for a military air base. With these resources and strategic location, St. John's was able to provide much needed extended sea and air escorts for the vital supply convoys bound for Europe. Over night St. John's was transformed from a city paced by a seasonal fish trade to one driven by the urgency of war. The change was dramatic and St. John's bustled like never before. On May 27, 1941 Commander J.D. Prentice arrived in St. John's aboard HMCS Chambly, the lead vessel of a group of seven corvettes which would establish the Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) later to become the Mid-Ocean Escort Force. In very short order at any one time up to 80 warships from several countries called St. John's their home port. Add to this the tankers, supply vessels and tugs needed to support such a base as well as the merchant ships seeking repairs and provisions and you have one busy crowded port indeed.



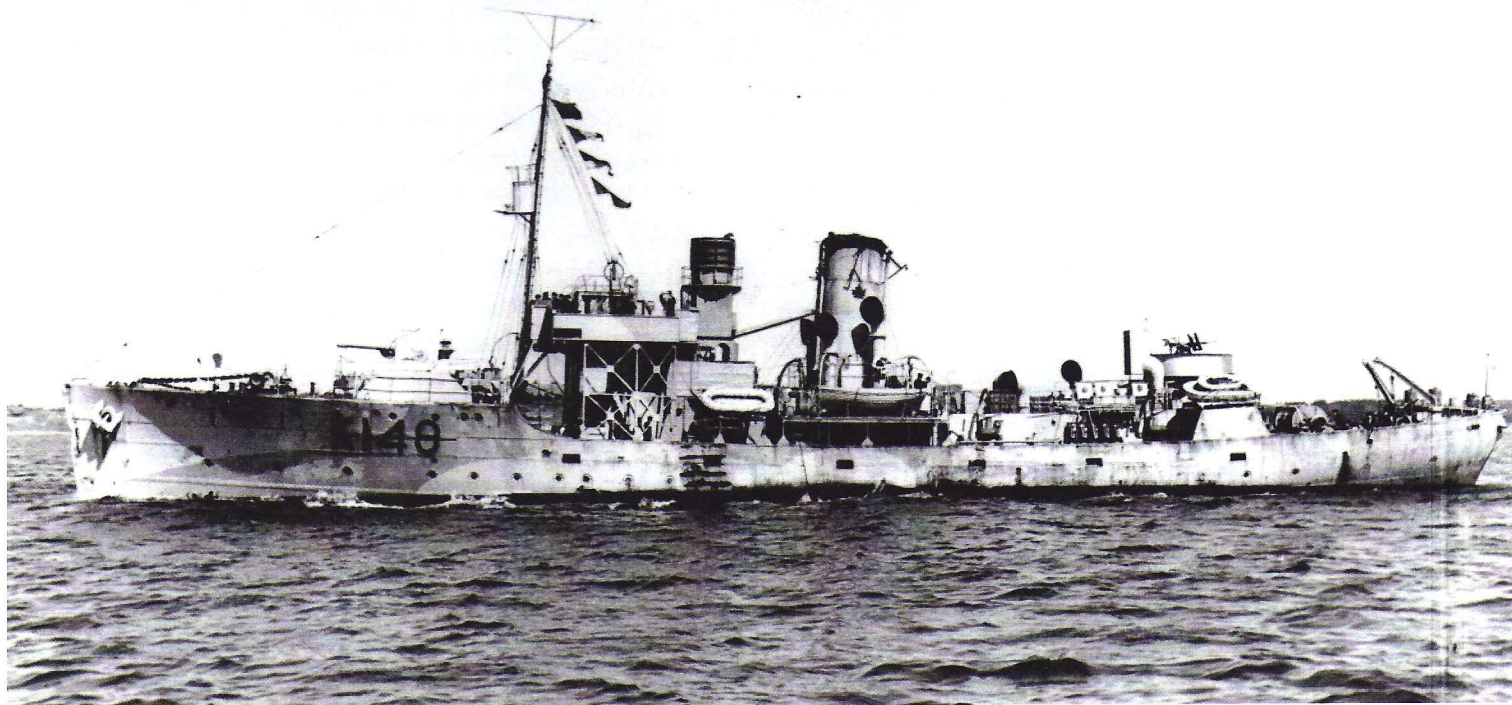
HMCS Spikenard

Recalls Sinking of Ottawa, Merchant Ships

Editor's Note: Trustee, A.J. Cockburn of North York, Ontario, has provided the following account of his experience serving in HMCS AMHERST as part of convoy ON127 and encounters with U-boats in the North Atlantic in 1942. The account is based on a historical presentation he made in 1998.

I found the article 'A Brief but Memorable Friendship' in the Nov/Dec, 2006 issue of Action Stations of particular interest. I was an A/B asdic rating on HMCS AMHERST in convoy ON127 when HMCS OTTAWA was torpedoed.

Convoy ON127 left Loch Foyle, Ireland Sept 5, 1942 with one-day air coverage and escorted by HMC ships OTTAWA, ST. CROIX, ARVIDA, AMHERST, SHERBROOKE and HMS CELANDINE.



On Sept. 10, a U-boat pack of 13 to 14 Vorwarts attacked, torpedoing three merchant ships. One was able to make it to Newfoundland but the other two were badly damaged and had to be sunk by SHERBROOKE. A number of crewmembers were rescued. In spite of special tactics by OTTAWA and CELANDINE and close screening duties by AMHERST and ARVIDA, another merchant ship, the Empire Royal was sunk by two torpedoes just minutes apart. Various underwater contacts were made by ST. CROIX, OTTAWA and CELANDINE but with no success. OTTAWA took survivors from Empire Oil and while this was happening, another merchantman was torpedoed but was able to continue on with the convoy. An hour later another hit and again this ship was able to continue with the group. Later, ST. CROIX detected a U-boat and was able to drive it out of range. ARVIDA, AMHERST and OTTAWA attacked contacts but made no sinkings. They probably forestalled attacks by the U-boats. At this juncture all the escort group's radar failed.

Early on Sept. 11 HMCS ST. CROIX went ahead to investigate a U-boat sighting. At the same time another merchant ship, Hindanger, was hit and AMHERST took her crew aboard, including the dog. We had to sink Hindanger so she wouldn't become a danger to navigation. The escort was now down to OTTAWA, CELANDINE, and ARVIDA as the others were rescuing survivors and finishing off torpedo damaged ships. Thus two more sinkings couldn't be prevented. ARVIDA was told to stand by which resulted in another merchantman sunk and survivors rescued. CELANDINE made contact with a U-boat lurking in the flotsam and attacked but it escaped.

On Sept. 12 two more U-boat attacks were attempted at night, but no sinkings.

The following day, Sept. 13 air support from Newfoundland arrived and drove off most of the shadowers and we were reinforced. However, just minutes after midnight, Vorwarts torpedoed OTTAWA. She was stopped but not badly damaged. St. CROIX swept ahead of OTTAWA when she was torpedoed a second time. OTTAWA sank quickly with heavy loss of lives (113), including the captain C.A. Rutherford who had passed his life jacket to a wounded rating from the first torpedo.

I lost a close friend on the OTTAWA. Freddie Coomer, an East York boy. He and I had joined up together. Another friend survived. He was badly stung by jelly fish.

Seven merchant ships were sunk along with HMCS OTTAWA. Four other freighters were damaged, ships that we couldn't spare. We later learned that one U-boat was damaged. ON127 had the dubious distinction of being the only convoy during 1942-1943 against which all U-boats engaged were able to fire their torpedoes. It would not have helped our morale to know this at the time. This was the price ON127 paid for the early detection by the U-boats, a lack of air coverage and a poorly equipped escort group. The RCN considered we had done our best under the circumstances and blamed the heavy losses directly on the lack of good radar equipment. This is only one example of AMHERST'S many crossings, some worse and some not so unfortunate.

I left HMCS AMHERST in January, 1943 and for me the worst days of the Battle of the Atlantic were over.

We who remember appreciate all that is being accomplished in remembering the 'Last Corvette,' HMCS SACKVILLE.

-A.J. Cockburn

A Letter from the Past

Trustee Al Smith from Sackville, New Brunswick writes:

I recently became a trustee of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust and received my first copy of Action Stations. May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on a very interesting and well designed newsletter. I was especially interested in reading Wendall Brown's article on "WW11 Radio Returned to Sackville".

I live in Sackville NB and am Director with the Tantramar Heritage Trust. I have recently been assisting with researching information on the town's involvement with its namesake corvette during the war years. I am enclosing a letter from Lt. Easton (Commanding Officer of HMCS SACKVILLE) written to the then Sackville Mayor, H.A. Beale in January, 1943. You will note in the letter that he refers to two radios – both of which were sent to the ship from organizations in the town. While I have no way of knowing if the radio referred to in Wendall Brown's article is one of these two radios, I suspect that there is a good chance that it might be.

In February 1942, the Sackville Rotary Club purchased a radio with a gramophone attachment that was forwarded to the ship and is referred to in Lt. Easton's letter. The second radio was purchased by the Sackville Corvette committee at a cost of \$37.50 from a local Lounsbury Company store in the fall of 1942. That is the radio Lt. Easton refers to as having been received by the ship in late December, 1942.

I thought you and your readers might be interested in this information.



Memorial Park, Sackville New Brunswick

H.M.C.S "Sackville"
c/o Fleet Mail Office.
January 1, 1943

The Mayor
Sackville N.B.

Dear Mr. Beale:

I received your letter on November 17 together with the large carton of woolen helmets from the citizens of the Town of Sackville on Christmas Eve. As we were in harbour only a few hours I had not opportunity of writing to you at once. And then, on our arrival in harbour the day before yesterday – another port – we found afurther gift for us, a radio and your letter of December 24. The woolen helmets, sixty four in number, were most welcome; in fact their arrival was so timely that I had them distributed as soon as we put to sea that day. They were worn forthwith and I, myself, can testify to their warmth.



Sackville in her early days

It was most generous and thoughtful of our friends in Sackville to present us with a radio. As a matter of fact this also arrived at a most opportune time.

I must explain that last April we installed a public address system in the ship. One of the principle objects of this was to provide radio programs throughout the mess decks. But the radio (donated to H.M.C.S "Sackville" by the Sackville Rotary Club) which served this purpose broke down about three weeks ago and it is almost irreparable, it was actually smashed badly in heavy weather. So you see how very welcome this new radio is to us. We are arranging to have it securely installed almost immediately and it will of coarse serve the entire ship.

In your letter of November 17 you spoke of the Committee having sent us a parcel of books some time ago and not having received an acknowledgement. In June I received a brochure prepared by Mr. N.A. Hesler and much interesting literature about Sackville, the binder itself being handsomely inscribed in gold. I wrote to Mr. Peck, who sent it to me, on June 29 thanking Mr. Hesler through him for the present. I imagine it is this parcel of books that you refer to for we have received no books since them.

You also tell me that the Committee has on hand a sum of \$35 of which they would like to spend on such comforts for the men as I might recommend. I assume that in the meantime this amount has been used to supplement the purchase of the radio that we just received. If this is so it has been very wisely spent I think. But in case this money is still on hand I would like to suggest that electric toasters would be most useful just now. Most of the messes have had toasters at one time but they are like the old radio now mostly broken. This may sound clumsy but it isn't, the lively movement of the ship breaks most things in the long run.

I would be very glad if you would inform the Committee that the ship's company all very much appreciate the generosity which the people of Sackville have shown towards our ship, and their thoughtfulness. To know that we are being remembered by our "home town" as it were, is very encouraging and to be provided with comforts by our own people, as we like to regard you, is very nice to say the least. On behalf of my men I would like to thank you all very much for your generosity.

I may not unfortunately speak of our activities to any extent; however, it would not be committing a breach of censorship if I were to say that H.M.C.S "Sackville" has had a very active time since last spring and has traveled a great distance and far from her native land. As you know she had achieved some success. In fact, I think that if you were to enquire in naval circles you would find that "Sackville" is quite widely known for her exploits.

I might say that the success she has had in her encounters with the enemy could not have been achieved without a marvelous crew. They are a fine lot of men as I have ever seen and they have constantly given me their fullest support.

May we all wish the people of Sackville a very happy New Year and one which will bring us much nearer to victory and peace.

Yours sincerely,

A.F. Easton
Lieutenant R.C.N.R.
Commanding Officer

Ray's Daily Orders - Upcoming Events

Thursday 3 May - Annual Battle of the Atlantic Musical Gala will be held at Pier 21 commencing at 7 p.m., a Queen Elizabeth II Foundation sponsored fund raiser for Camp Hill Veterans. A list has been posted in the Mess. Tickets will be available from the Mess bar with the cost to Mess Chit. Contact the ship at 427-2837. After working hours, leave a voice message.

Saturday 5 May - 1800 for 1900 - BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC DINNER
Dinner will be held onboard SACKVILLE on Saturday 5 May 2007, 1800 for 1900, no host bar. Owing to the limited number of seats available and the popularity of the event, attendance will be on a first come, first served basis. Cost will be on a 'Cost Shared Basis'. A list will be posted in the Mess or contact the ship at 427-2837. After working hours, leave a voice message.

Sunday 6 May 2007 - BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC SUNDAY
0915 - Leave expires onboard for those attending Battle of Atlantic ceremonies off Point Pleasant Park. Scattering of Ashes service enroute to HMC Dockyard. Chowder and refreshments will be available. Ship will leave from and return to HMC Dockyard berth. A list will be posted in the Mess or contact the ship at 427-2837. After working hours, leave a voice message.

Monday 4 June 2007: WE ARE BACK AGAIN!!!!
FIFTH ANNUAL CANADIAN NAVAL MEMORIAL TRUST GOLF TOURNAMENT
Hartlen Point Forces Golf Course - 1:00 pm Shotgun Start followed by Hot Meal & Prizes
Registration forms can be picked up from the Mess Bar or downloaded from the website and faxed to 464-0543, mailed to the address below or drop them off onboard. Space is limited, so registration will be accepted on first come, first served basis.

FORMAT: 18 HOLE TEXAS SCRAMBLE – TEAMS OF 4
ENTRY FEE: \$125.00 PER GOLFER

Mailing address: Fifth Annual CNMT Golf Tournament, c/o Neil Black, 46 Tulip Street, Dartmouth, NS B3A 2S7. For further info re.. Sponsorships, Contact Neil or Debbie at 902-464-1623 or dfindlay@accesswave.ca

Friday/Saturday 29/30 June 2007 - (NOTE DATE CHANGE)
21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007
The 21st Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust will be held on Friday and Saturday June 29 and 30, 2007. **(NOTE DATE CHANGE)**
FORMS FOR AGM AND ANNUAL DONATION
Forms and Schedule have been inserted in the centre of Actions Stations and may be easily removed for forwarding.

NOTE : The ship is now berthed at our normal dockyard berth. The Mess will be open Fridays from 1200 to 1400 approx. Sandwich requirements to CBM dockyard Tel: 427-2837, (leave voice mail msg if calling after hours) NLT end of business Thursdays, or if you plan on visiting every Friday, feel free to place a standing order. It is intended to remain at our winter berth until early late May/early June 2007.

ADDRESS LABEL: The address label located on the back page of Action Stations or on the envelope used for general mailouts has the Trustee name preceded by the acronym LDR for Last Donation Received followed by the year/month/day - As a reminder, this is the approximate date (usually within a week) when your last donation was received by the Trust. Should you have paid for two successive years then the year 2007 will appear (as per the example below). In the event you are a Life Trustee then the year will be shown as 2099.

e.g. LDR20070429
Raymond Soucie

Last Word

Dear Editors;

I want to thank you for the article about my Dad, Ray Skillen, in the Nov/Dec 2007 issue of Action Stations. The family, including my sister Roseann, is planning to meet Leah Cameron. Quite naturally the Cameron family want to learn more about Dad, about his life and the circumstances which brought about Leah receiving the C-leg. Your article will contribute a lot to this understanding of that day in Sept. 1942 when Dad lost his leg.

Sincerely,
Ray Skillen

Editor's note: We have been informed that since receiving this letter the Skillens have met with Leah and her family and the story from Action Stations was presented to Leah.

8.

ACTION STATIONS

Editors

Dennis & Marlene May
dcmay@hfx.eastlink.ca
(902) 477 1615

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Editorial Committee

Ray Soucie
Len Canfield

Contributors

Cdr (Ret'd) Wendall Brown
Vice Admiral (Ret'd) Duncan Miller
Ray Soucie
Pat Jessup
Al Smith
A.J.Cockburn

Photography

McBride Collection
Pat Jessup

Design & Layout

J&S Print and Design
(902)468-5558
Jim Mackie

HMCS Sackville
PO Box 99000 Station Forces
Halifax NS B3K 5X5



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