

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

April 2005

U 190 - Sixty Years On (Part II)

by Dick Hyslop, Vice-President

Remember that I went to Hamburg with the intent of visiting the U-Boat Archive? When I got there I found that it's located an hour's train ride outside Hamburg. However, when I finally arrived I found two volumes on the U 190. They waived the search fees as I provided them with copies of pictures from our own U 190 album. Interestingly I found:

- One complete volume of pictures, including some taken in St. John's. I made some copies including the Christening (Indienststellung) of the boat and one of "Nach der Kapitulation" (no translation necessary.)

- A second volume was all written material that even contained such things as letters home. It contained an explanation as to why the U 190 underwent a significant refit that kept it out of the war for some time, much to the delight of the crew, I'm sure, as by that time the U-Boat losses were multiplying due in part to the growing ability of Canadian Corvettes and their crews. The real reason for the refit appears to have been to improve the boat's performance, as the Type 1XC seems to have been a bit of a cow at sea. Later I toured a Type 1XC, which is now a museum piece just outside Kiel, a major U-Boat port during the war. At the time I did not know it was a sister ship of the U 190.

- Surprisingly, I found copies of both the Evening Telegram and the Daily News in their files. Most of the articles concerned the visit of Captain Reith to the Club back in 1982.



HMCS Victoriaville, in this picture dated 1944, took the U 190 under escort to Bay Bulls in May 1945. Her captain at the time was Lieut. Commander L. Hickey RCNVR, who was born in St. Jacques and grew up in St. John's.

- Amongst those papers I also found a picture of Bob Sparkes, a Newfoundlander who served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War. He passed away in the 1980's, but unbeknownst to me, his family still lives in their home around the corner from my house.

Bob Sparkes, RN submariner, makes yet another connection in my unofficial history of the U 190. He was one of five RN submariners who came to Newfoundland to take charge of the U 190 after capture. His picture as part of the crew is in the Club's U 190 photo album. I believe that he transferred to the RCN with the U 190 to assist in training and familiarization and that he kept a memento or two as well. Remember that Canada had no submarines at the time and hence had limited, perhaps no, ability

to take over the running of such a sophisticated piece of equipment.

Back to the bar stool in the Nest to get the next part of the story. I was sitting at the bar when a lady climbed the narrow staircase and asked if she could be permitted to come in. Sensing the possible sale of a beer or two or perhaps one of the Sixtieth Anniversary books we invited the lady in. In conversation she explained that her father had something to do with the Crow's Nest. He in fact is Lt. Mewburn (Philip) Wood RN, who along with the aforementioned Newfoundlander Bob Sparkes came to Newfoundland in the Spring of 1945 to take charge of the U 190. By this time the German crew was on its way to POW camp 20, I believe around Gravenhurst, Ontario. Needless to say, more stories: **cont'd on p. 2**

Message from the President

This will be my last message to you as President of the Crow's; at the AGM on May 25 a new executive will be elected. I have enjoyed eighteen months of stewardship of the Club and would commend to other members volunteering to work as executive or as a board member. During my tenure we have undertaken refurbishment of the entrance and dining room, installation of security systems and preservation of the exterior of our building. I take no credit for these efforts, but was delighted to be able to assist Board members and contracted personnel to

ensure these matters were addressed. Particular credit goes to Gary Walsh (property committee) and thanks to Robert Croucher-Wiles and Target Marketing for their efforts and cooperation.

Many thanks to the Board members past and present (especially Bill Conway, Secretary for the past 8 years) who have offered their support and assistance to the executive in ensuring that our little corner of the world is preserved and enhanced. As a regular user of the Club I can attest that usage of the facility has increased

and participation in Club events (assisted by some imaginative planning, timing and execution by our very cooperative caterer Red Oak and their invaluable staff) has been strong.

Every visit to the Club evidences an issue to address or an improvement that can be made. While I will continue to work to enhance the Club and expand our services, I look forward, with mixed feelings, to resuming my former role as "ordinary member".

Yours aye,
John P. Andrews

U 190 - Sixty Years On (cont'd from p. 1)

Our visitor, Philippa Wood, called her father on her cell phone and as vets are able to do, he told many stories, some of which included the U 190. Their own RN submarine was in refit in Philadelphia at the time the war ended. That was when the call came that assistance was required to get the U 190 to Canada (Confederation was post-war in 1949).

The five RN submariners arrived in Bay Bulls and on initial view found that the U 190 was not in the best of shape. The plan was, therefore, get it to St. John's for temporary repair before the trip to Halifax. But they had another problem. There were only five of them to run a submarine/U-Boat that normally had a crew of around fifty. That was easily solved, they simply conscripted additional crew right off the wharf in Bay Bulls. (I guess a few people didn't get home to supper.)

The short trip from Bay Bulls to St. John's was successful but even the bravado of young officers fresh from a war victory was a little tamed by the prospect of a 600 mile (forget the metric bit) sea voyage to Halifax when all the instructions were in a foreign language. There was a need for some testing to ensure they knew what they were up to.

One of the tests was to determine that if they submerged this somewhat unfamiliar German U-Boat, could they actually get it back to the surface. To check this out they simply decided to submerge the boat at the wharf with the idea that if they could not get it to come up again, they could still get out. Apparently the plan worked, otherwise the U 190 would still be on the bottom of the west end of the harbour.

About a year ago, Margaret Morris, the Club's Treasurer, visited Philip Wood at his home in Halifax where she was shown the flag that Lt. Wood RN had as a memento from the U 190 - Flag #2. More recently Margaret showed me an article indicating that yet a third person had the flag - Flag #3. There's no need for debate as I understand that all sea-going vessels carry many flags.

They did get to Halifax, obviously, as the earlier part of this story would have been fictional had they not. What's interesting to me is that Lt. Wood RN emigrated to Canada after the War. He did some work for the provincial government

and he visited the Club in the 1960's.

Another participant in the surrender of the U 190 also emigrated to Canada after the war. In our book "A Safe Haven" (still on sale) you will find an article by Werner Hirschmann, who was the Chief Engineer on the U 190. The reasons for mentioning him:

- As with Lt. Philip Wood RN, Hirschmann also emigrated to Canada after the war and I have a newspaper picture of Hirschmann and Wood sharing a drink at a Battle of the Atlantic reunion.

- Hirschmann, whom I understand has also visited the Club, has compiled his memoirs in a book titled "Another Place, Another Time". I intend to read it closely.

John Andrews and Bill Conway, amongst others, have taken to calling me the Nest's U 190 expert. Any member can be an expert. The Artifacts Group are updating their catalogue which will give easy reference to anything the Club might have on which you, your friends or colleagues might enquire. As well, the Artifacts Group is thinking of building a model of the U 190 and I've heard from a retiree in New Zealand who, strangely enough of the thousand plus U-Boats constructed, has also chosen the U 190 for a model project of his own.



Members to Attend Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration in Ireland

by John Moyes

In just a few weeks, Dick Hyslop, Bill Conway, Gareth Cook and John Moyes will be in the ancient city of Londonderry, representing St. John's, Newfoundland and, of course, the Crow's Nest, at the 60th anniversary of The Battle of the Atlantic.

In the six years of World War II, more than 55 million people died. The longest and one of the most bitter battles was The Battle of the Atlantic. The Canadian city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, as well as the city of Derry in Northern Ireland played a crucial role in the battle. All three became main escort bases in the Western approaches, with Derry a "home away from home" for service men and women of many nationalities, including Newfoundlanders, Canadians, Americans, the free French, Polish and Norwegian Navies.

We will bring greetings from St. John's City Council to our hosts, the Mayor and Council of Derry, who have already said they would like to make an official visit to St. John's in 2006.

The 180 strong Canadian delegation, including veterans of the battle, will attend the service at St. Colomb's Cathedral in Derry. A unique 'North Atlantic Convoy Bell' has been commissioned by the Canadian Naval Trust, representing all navy and merchant service personnel, and will be dedicated by Dean William Morton. The bell is on its way to Derry (along with Ossie Jones's Crow's Nest painting of HMCS Sackville), aboard HMCS Shawinigan, which left Halifax on March 20th, for ceremonial duties in Holland and Ireland.

After the service, the muffled bell and four wreaths will be taken on board "Toucan One" and HMCS Shawinigan, out along the River Foyle to sea, and the wreaths will be cast on the water in remembrance of the

sailors who lost their lives during the long battle.

Capt. J.J. Strong, Eastern VP of the Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans, will cast one of the wreaths on behalf of all merchant service personnel and the 335 Newfoundlanders who lost their lives.

At the formal dinner, Capt. Strong has been asked to speak on behalf of the Merchant Marine. Jack will describe, from his first-hand experience, a typical convoy of 50 merchant ships leaving St. John's, all close together, travelling at the speed of the slowest, and zig-zagging to avoid German U-boats, through fog and storms, without radar, gyrocompasses or satellite navigation aids. They faced mine fields, torpedoes, surface German war ships, aerial attacks at sea and while in port. The warmth and friendship of the people in Derry was very important to every

seaman. (Jack is perhaps better known in St. John's for his weekly gardening column in 'The Telegram').

I will report on the events when we return in May. In the meantime, we look forward to enjoying the Irish hospitality and the company of veterans who were onboard the corvettes and merchant ships of the convoys. Sadly many more veterans of the sea battles have recently answered the last call, including Latham B. Jenson, who "with wit and characteristic modesty, described his lively adventures and narrow escapes during an incredible 'naval journey' between 1938 and 1945 in his autobiography Tin Hats, Oilskins and Seaboats." He developed considerable skill as a naval artist and some of his sketches of a sailor's life aboard ship while on convoy duty, are being shown at the Battle of the Atlantic art show in Derry.

Michigan Sixpack Visits Crow's Nest

by Margaret Morris

Two Detroit-based C130 aircraft of the U.S. Air National Guard recently had a stopover in St. John's before proceeding on to the U.K. Bad weather extended their stopover and, just by chance, two crew members discovered the Crow's Nest on a very quiet Saturday afternoon.

Our Andrea, being a friendly and hospitable bartender, quickly made them feel at home. In no time other members of their crew were

rounded up from their hotel and a fun-filled evening evolved. Although they were not officially "screeded in", each eagerly sampled a shot of Newfoundland's most famous rum!

The squadron's unofficial name is "Michigan Sixpack" and their decal is now displayed behind the bar. They expected to be stopping over in St. John's on the return portion of their deployment. Stand by for another fun evening!

Welcome to New Members

In-Town

Chris Daley, John MacDonald, Dave Williams, Frederick Ross Armstrong, David Bromley

Out-of-Town

John Lubar, John Shaw, Bruce Alcock, J. Mark Ralph, Senator J. Michael Forrestall, William Bradbury Yeo, Dave John Anderson, Dennis Peter Byrne

Crow's Nest Military Artifacts Association

By R. Croucher-Wiles & N. Jeffrey

Monthly "Open" Executive meetings and frequent Wednesday evening get-togethers of the Working Group have continued through the past two months. The remainder of the ship's badges, some of the gun shield art and a few pictures, removed during dining room renovations and upper deck cleaning, have been remounted throughout the club.

Gary Reddy has completed and delivered two sets of black and white copies of the artifacts inventory volumes. These books include artifact photos and they are frequently used by visitors, staff and club members to locate and describe the acquisitions and items on display. One of the copies will be kept behind the bar and the other will be the CNMAA "working copy". It is intended to put the original volumes in safe, off-site storage.

The CNMAA Working Group's priority project, led by Greg Twining, is the updating of the artifact accession information. Greg has been instrumental in developing a proposal for a CNMAA crest which could be used on letterhead, business cards, or even blazers, T-shirts, caps or other items of clothing. He has been assisted by other members and Dave Hoddinott (well known local artist). Greg's efforts to raise money to support CNMAA projects continue. The Flagon Draw was very successful and some great ideas have been generated for future events.

Serious consideration is being given to refurbishing the Air Canada DC-8 model hanging above the bar. A suitable small plaque would be attached to identify the donor. Past President Harvey Bishop is checking into the background of this model, reviewing the 60th Crow's Nest anniversary booklet, and also providing names missing from photographs and other items in preparation for the next anniversary publication. A museum

quality model of the Avro Arrow has been presented to the club and now hangs with the aircraft collection courtesy of Steve Foster. Steve, Greg, David and Norm have lots of "Arrow" information which they would be willing to share with anyone interested in the topic.

David Williams is currently framing the collection of unit and service pins and trade insignias which were formerly attached to shelf edges behind the bar. Paul Sampson has copied the Crow's Nest guest books dating from the 1940's to CDs. Bob Wiles and Gary Reddy have begun to assemble a collection of naval diving equipment and are actively looking for more. Has anyone something hidden in their attic or basement which they could include in a forthcoming display?

"A Corvette Vanishes", a short story of the February 10, 1942 sinking of HMCS SPIKENARD by Charmion Chaplin-Thomas, was recently published by the Department of National Defence in the February 9, 2005 issue of "the Maple Leaf" and on the ADM (Public Affairs) website: http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/fourth_dimension/2005/02/10_fd_e The Spikenard/Shadforth story is one of the most interesting components of the Crow's Nest legend. CNMAA will continue to make sure that copies of the The Maple Leaf are made available on the bar next to the periscope.

LAST ISSUE'S ARTIFACTS QUIZ WINNER:

Quiz question: Aiguillettes are the sign of an Aide de Camp. What is the history of this insignia?

Answer: When field officers attended a battlefield, their aides would carry a length of "rope" and pegs to tether a mount to the ground close by while the action was observed. In time the rope and pegs became the insignia of the aide as worn today. The first correct answer came from Reg Snow who enjoyed his gratis lunch and ale.

THIS ISSUE'S QUIZ:

What is the history behind the name given to the crow's nest onboard a vessel?

The first answer receives a Friday Pub Lunch and beverage of choice. Please send your answer to Crow's Nest Military Artifacts, Crow's Nest Officers' Club, Box 23161, Churchill Square, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J9, or email: crowsnoc@nf.aibn.com.

Conversation overhead at the bar during a recent visit to the club rooms by a Senate Committee: One Senator was heard to ask a well-known member, "What do you do?" The Crow's Nest member stated, "I pay taxes and your salary." The Senator replied, "What else do you do?"



Scuttlebutt

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Club Dinner Schedule May 05 - September 05

Sunday, May 8

Annual Mother's Day Brunch

An array of breakfast and lunch items
(minimum of 30 people required)

\$ 21.95 per adult

\$ 10.95 per child 12 years old and under

Saturday, May 21

Appetizer

Roma Tomato and Juniper Berry Soup

Main Course Selection

Lamb Ragout

Salmon with Curried Fruit Salsa

Sun-dried Tomato Chicken

Dessert

Vanilla Ice Cream with Bing Cherries

Friday, May 27

Weepers

Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres

Friday, June 10

Appetizer

Caesar Salad

Main Course Selection

Lobster Dinner

Alternate menu available upon request

Dessert

Chocolate Mousse

\$ 22.95 per person

Club Dinner Schedule May 05 - September 05

Friday, June 17

Father's Day Weepers

Come on in with Dad and enjoy a pint and
complimentary wings & mussels.

Friday, June 24

Weepers

Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres

Friday, July 29

Weepers

Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres

Friday, August 26

Weepers

Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres

Saturday, September 17

Appetizer

Market Garden Salad

Main Course Selection

Cod Au Gratin

Pepper Crusted Pork

Apple Chicken

Dessert

Apple Pie with Bailey's Custard

Continued on reverse

Club Dinner Schedule May 05 - September 05

Friday, September 30

Weepers

Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres

Friday, September 30

Artifacts Appreciation Night

Appetizer

Jumbo Shrimp Cocktail

Main Course Selection

London Broil with Yorkshire puddings

Dessert

Bavarian Cream with a Newfoundland Berry
Compote

**All Club Dinners, except Mother's Day Brunch
and the Lobster Dinner are
\$ 18.95 plus HST.**

Gratuity is at your Discretion

**Pub Lunch is available every Friday at
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

Private bookings can be arranged through:

Red Oak Catering

Phone: 368- 6808

E - Mail: johnr@redoaknf.com

Letter to the Editor



From: The Equerry to HRH
The Prince of Wales

4th January, 2005

Dear Mr. Yetman,

Thank you for sending through a copy of the
December Edition of *Scuttlebutt* which was received at
Clarence House on 29th December.

This letter comes with His Royal Highness's grateful
thanks and best wishes for 2005.

Yours sincerely,
Squadron Leader Richard Pattle RAF

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