

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

August 2008

***Jervis Bay* Survivor Marks Battle of the Atlantic Turning Point**

by Gary Green

Club member and Battle of the Atlantic (BoA) veteran Art Taylor, accompanied by his wife Jesse and Gary and Ruth Green, returned to Halifax after 68 years to celebrate a milestone. May 2008 was the 65th anniversary of what the Germans called Black May. To the Allies, May 1943 was anything but black - it was the turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic.

To commemorate this event, *HMCS Sackville* held a special dinner to which Art was invited by First Officer and Nest member Jim Reddy. Art had not been back to Halifax since he was taken there in November, 1940 to recover from the wounds he received in the battle between *HMS Jervis Bay* and the *Admiral Scheer*. Art is now one of only three living survivors of that heroic battle for which the Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously to the skipper, Fogarty Fegen.

Club member Bill Graham and his wife Sharon graciously offered to be hosts for the weekend. And, what hosts they were!

Art and his companions went to RA Park, the oldest mess in Canada, where they dined at the Admiral's Table with club member Russ Comeau and met many members of the mess.

One of the many highlights was the BoA dinner at *HMCS Shearwater* which was attended by Her Honour the Lt. Governor of Nova



Club member Art Taylor at the *Jervis Bay* monument in Saint John.

Scotia and a number of veterans including some original members of the Nest. The history in the room was unbelievable. At one table sat four skippers of corvettes which operated out of St. John's. At the next table sat a survivor of the *Athena*, the first ship sunk in the BoA.

Sunday morning was spent at sea aboard *HMCS Sackville* off Point Pleasant Park. There was a memorial service at which Art placed a bouquet of flowers over the side in memory of comrades lost in the *Jervis Bay*. The memorial service was followed by more than twenty burials at sea. After returning ashore, a hearty welcome

awaited him at the RCN Peregrine Club where he and other veterans of the BoA paused to drink a toast to fallen comrades.

On to Saint John, New Brunswick where he was greeted by the members of the *Jervis Bay* Memorial Legion. Art toured the display of artefacts and visited sites in the city associated with the *Jervis Bay* including the park and monument built as a memorial to the ship.

The final stop was at CFB Gagetown for a tour of the base and the museum before returning to Halifax for the trip home.

Message from the President by John Moyes

Thank you for re-electing me President for 2008-09 at the Annual General Meeting on May 28th, with Gary Green as Vice-President. Margaret Morris and Bill Conway continue their excellent work for the club as Treasurer and Secretary of the Executive.

Many thanks to Tim Anderson, who has taken a break from the Board after many years service. Greg Twining, ex-President of our Artifacts group has now joined the Board. Welcome Greg. I know you will continue to make a significant contribution to the Club. Otherwise, all of last year's Board members will continue to serve the Club, and I thank them for their work.

Our first Board meeting for the fiscal year took place on board *HMCS Athabaskan* during her visit to St. John's. The meeting and lunch on board were organized by LCdr. George Forward, originally from Brigus and one of the many Newfoundlanders on the ship. It was, I think, the first Crow's Nest Board meeting to be held on a warship in active service.

After the meeting, the ship's Captain, Commander Steve Jorgensen joined us for lunch, pointing out the original framed illustrated letter which hangs in the ship's wardroom, a copy of which was presented to the Crow's Nest at a Wardroom RPC held at the Club that weekend. Look out for *HMCS Athabaskan's* gift, soon to be proudly displayed in the club. The hospitality we received from the *Athabaskan's* captain and Wardroom will long be remembered, and we thank them for their kind gift.

While I am on the subject of gifts, a very special bequest was unpacked at our July 27th Board meeting. Brian and Margaret Smith of Norfolk in the UK, presented the Club with a splendid bronze/copper ship's lantern, circa 1850, which is believed was last used aboard one of Nelson's ships, laid up in the Medway estuary in



The 2008-09 Executive of the Crow's Nest, ratified at the recent AGM. (L-R) Gary Green, Vice-President; LCdr Margaret Morris, Treasurer; and John Moyes, President. Secretary William Conway was away at the time.

the county of Kent. The gift to us is in recognition of the hospitality they and the *HMS Newfoundland* Association received during their visit to the Club in 2006. The lantern is a wonderful and historic addition to the Crow's Nest. Thank you Brian and Margaret.

You may remember NOAC member Christopher Justice from Victoria, BC, whose idea it was to present a commemorative bell to Derry for the 60th year anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic. Christopher spearheaded the organization of our 'Corvette's Wake', designed the bell and shield, paid for the 2 dolphins and transportation to

Newfoundland. Now, the Derry Bell and Shield has been carefully repacked in its original shipping crate by the City of St. John's and, courtesy of the Canadian Navy, LCdr. Pat Jessup and Cdr. Max Harvey, taken aboard *HMCS Toronto* for shipping via Halifax, across the Atlantic to Londonderry, where it will be officially accepted by the City and the Royal Navy Association, we think in June 2009. I will keep you posted.

Yours aye,
John Moyes
President



This Month in Naval History

In August, 1940, Hitler announces a total maritime blockade of Britain. Any neutral ships transporting cargo to be sunk without warning.

In August, 1941, German submarines sink one Norwegian and 3 British ships from convoy OG-71.

On August 6, 1942, *HMCS Assiniboine* destroys U-210. Weeks later, on August 28, *HMCS Oakville* is credited with destroying U-94.

On August 22, 1944, the RN Fleet Air Arm begins 4 days of attacks on the German battleship Tirpitz and other shipping in Alten Fjord.

Searching for *HMS Tweed*

by Desmond Markus

How can a town lose a ship? It's a question I've been asking myself ever since I first stumbled across a mention of *HMS Tweed* (K-250), last November, while researching the history of Hatfield, Hertfordshire in England. A place that may be familiar to some readers as it was home to the de Havilland Aircraft Company (Tiger Moth and Mosquito aircraft produced here and at other sites - in the UK, and its operations in Canada and Australia - were vital to the war effort). While another company, Jack Oldings & Co., readied imported armour - including Canadian Ram tanks - for action.

Even though it has been my home since 1990 I had never heard the ill-fated vessel being mentioned. As a member of the Friends of the Imperial War Museum with a keen interest in WW2, it would have instantly got my attention.

Brian G. Lawrence's book 'Hatfield at War' revealed that Hatfield District, as part of the 1942 National Savings campaign 'Warship Week', raised more money than needed to sponsor a corvette. So much so that the Navy were able to offer them a frigate already at sea (Incidentally, the Admiralty initially called River Class frigates 'Twin-screw Corvettes' but a *fait accompli* by the Royal Canadian Navy, who had already named a class of destroyers after rivers, led to frigates once again becoming part of the fleet). The offer accepted, a formal exchange of plaques is reported to have taken place at St Audrey's School in Hatfield in spring 1942.

The rest is now history: *HMS Tweed*, under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. Robert Stevenson Miller RNR, was torpedoed and sunk by the U-305, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Rudolf Bahr, on 7 January 1944. She sank in two minutes with the loss of 83 crew - given that it was a clear day in relatively warm waters it was a higher than expected death toll, so a Board of Inquiry was convened.

The ship had split in two and her own depth-charges detonating as she sank is thought to have been a major contributing factor. Shockingly, given that this was 1944, it seems that naval recruits were not given advice or training on how to survive their ship being sunk (evidently the powers that be thought it would affect their morale, and there seems to have been a gung-ho attitude: if there's any sinking to be done, we'll be the ones doing it to the enemy!).



Gunshield artwork of *HMS Tweed*.

U-305, which had sunk *HMCS St Croix* on its previous patrol, never returned to base. The vessel and all 51 hands were lost around 16/17 January 1944. The destroyer *HMS Wanderer* and frigate *HMS Glenarm* are credited with sinking her on 17 January 1944. However, post-war research suggests they sank U-377 and that U-305 was destroyed when one of her own torpedoes malfunctioned.

St Audrey's School (and some neighbouring houses) was destroyed by a V1 on Tuesday, 10 October 1944. Fortunately, it struck around five in the morning - but it still killed four civilians in their homes.

With ship and site destroyed it appears that *HMS Tweed* disappeared from the town's consciousness. Perhaps more unforgivably it appears to have disappeared from the nation's -

a search for a picture of the ship drew a blank at the National Archives, Imperial War Museum, Royal Naval Museum, National Maritime Museum, and the Mitchell Library (where the papers of her makers, A & J Inglis, are lodged).

I was surprised and delighted, having trawled through some 600+ Google entries, to find the Crow's Nest Officers' Club held perhaps the only remaining sizeable relic of the ship (no one seems to know what happened to the plaque presented to the Hatfield Council). Margaret Morris has very kindly supplied me with information on the club and agreed to publish this appeal for information on how the gunshield came to the club, and any further information on *HMS Tweed*, particularly any photos - as I'm compiling a website on the town but I'd also like to pass a copy to the Imperial War Museum.

Thank you for your attention.

Desmond Markus
5 The Pastures, Hatfield,
Hertfordshire, AL10 8PB, UK
Email: markusdes@hotmail.com

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club
P. O. Box 23161
Churchill Square
St. John's, NL
Canada A1B 4J9

Phone: (709) 753-6927
E-mail:
crowsnoc@nf.aibn.com
Website:
www.crowsnestnf.ca

Editor: Derek Yetman



HMCS St. John's has new Gunshield Art

When *HMCS St. John's* visited her namesake port early this summer she was sporting brand new gunshield art on her forward gun. Earlier in the spring a design contest was held among the ship's company. The winning design was painted on just hours before *St. John's* came through the Narrows. The accompanying picture was taken while the smell of paint was still in the air. *St. John's* has promised us a regulation two feet by two feet version for the Nest. *Fredericton* and *Halifax* have also promised artwork. Let's see which will be the first on the wall. The race is on!



Recent Presentations made to the Crow's Nest



Left photo - Cdr. Steve Jorgensen, CO of *HMCS Athabaskan*, presents President John Moyes with a framed reproduction of an illustrated letter written on the original *Athabaskan* during WWII. The letter provides interesting details of life aboard ship.

Right photo - WestJet representative Ashley Randolph presents VP Gary Green with a model of a 737 aircraft.



For details on other donations made to the Club, see the CNMAA report on page 7.

Remembering *FNFL Mimosa*

by Ralph L. Hennessy, VAdm (Ret'd)

Re: the April 2008 Scuttlebutt article on *FNFL Mimosa*. Since I was there when she was sunk, I am in a position to provide you with information on her demise of which you may not be aware.

At the time, I was XO of *Assiniboine*. Our CO, Lt. John Stubbs, was the Escort Force Commander. After being royally thumped by the Wolf Pack that night, we were re-organizing the convoy at dawn when we noticed that *Mimosa* was missing.

John said he remembered hearing an explosion well astern of the convoy that night.

On the assumption that this might have been *Mimosa* being torpedoed, he turned the convoy over to one of the other corvettes and we took off at 20+ knots down the convoy track. In due course, we came across a collection of cork life floats strewn with oil-soaked bodies. Only three were alive so we picked them up and hared back to the convoy.

The three survivors, after we de-oiled them, turned out to be the XO, a Midshipman and a Stoker. The XO was a particular pal of mine. He and I hoisted many a belt together in the Crow's Nest that summer. After we got back to St. John's, Adm. Murray's wife hosted a lunch for the XO and the Midshipman to which I was invited. The whole thing was just too much for the young Midshipman and he fainted in the middle of the meal. Recovery, however, was complete.

Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town

John Murphy, Gemma Giovannini, Mark Doxey, Chris Whelan, Marc Nicholson, Patricia Mercer, Paul Vincent, Tom Mackey, Michael Kay, Anthony Neale, and Kenneth Anderson (the Club's first member under the new Student category).

Out of Town

Robert Bateman, Charlottetown, PEI
Shawn Woodford, Corner Brook, NL
Dianne Garley, Toronto, ON
Frederick Berglund, Dartmouth, NS
Bruce Gale, Anchorage, AK
Joel Brown, Georgetown, ON
Victor Santos-Pedro, Nepean, ON

Roger Carpenter, Eastport, NL
Paul Leonard, Edmonton, AB
William Hampson, Calgary, AB
Brady Aubin, Winnipeg MB

A hearty welcome to all our new Crows!

A Reminiscence of *HMCS Mulgrave* by C. Ian P. Tate

Although it is highly improbable that I shall ever get to the Crow's nest again (last time: 1945), I do enjoy receiving Scuttlebutt. Thank you! The issue just received, containing the poem re the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla and the photograph of *HMCS Mulgrave* has prompted me to reminisce about that worthy ship, as she was my first.

I had been ordered to report to Port Arthur by a particular time on a particular date in November, 1942 to join her, a new construction Bangor. On my arrival, on date and on time, I was advised that she had left for Halifax four hours earlier. And yes, she would be stopping in Toronto. So off I went to my then hometown Toronto to await her. My parents were astonished to see a ship smaller than the Centre Island ferry, destined for the Atlantic.

Her Captain was Lieut. Dermot T. English, RCNR, former

First Officer of the *Monarch of Bermuda* of the Furness-Bermuda Line. This was his first command. The other original officers of the ship were Lieut. Ian Oglvie, RCNVR, First Lieut; Skipper Harry Mossman, Navigator; Lieut.(E) Sam Carr RCNR, the "Chief", shortly to be joined by Warrant (E) Stuart Adams, and two very green Subbies in their first ship: Al Ericson and me, both RCNVR.

Also mentioned in the poem are *HMCS Milltown* (J317) and *HMCS Blairmore* (J314). Over the next few months, both of them and *Mulgrave* (J313) sailed variously in company with each other, on the Triangle Run, before we were all sent across to England, via the Azores.

Before she left this side, I left *Mulgrave* to take a course (that's another, sordid story), but on its conclusion, ran into my former Captain, now a two-and-a-half, about

to get a new frigate. I asked if I could join him. His reply, in the non-committally normal way of the Navy was, "I'll see what I can do." So I wound up with him again.

Some months later, enroute across the Atlantic, escorting SC154, circumstances put us into Horta, in the Azores. There, we came across our old ship *Mulgrave*. She was anchored alone and somewhat forlornly, with a compartment full of concrete. When she was heading across to England with others in her group, they all put into the Azores to refuel. In *Mulgrave*, the required pilot forgot that he was facing aft when the ship was slowly backing toward the rocks. He somewhat agitatedly ordered "HALF ASTERN! HALF ASTERN!" So, in spite of her Captain's initial inquiry, astern she went, and onto the rocks.

cont'd on p. 6

“It is hoped that they will not clutter up the bar”



Times have certainly changed since the rules for Ladies' Night were first posted at the Crow's Nest. Pictured at the Club are officers of HMCS Athabaskan. Photo by RAdm (Ret.) Gord Edwards.

New Guest Policy for Club Dinners

The Crow's Nest has enjoyed good growth lately. In the past our guest policy has been generous except for big events such as New Year's and Oktoberfest. For those occasions, members have been allowed to book four places each with any excess

capacity being made available a few days before the function.

Because of our increased membership, the Board is expanding this policy for all events. Reservations will be limited to four places per member and any unsold seats will be

made available three days before the event. If you have any concerns about this change, please direct them to any member of your Executive rather than the bar staff. The staff members are acting on our direction when they follow this policy.

Treasurer's Report by LCdr Margaret Morris

I have been impressed with the prompt payment of annual dues by so many of our members. It is probably the best response yet during my years as Treasurer. For those who haven't paid, I will be sending out reminders in September. As always, don't hesitate to contact me if there is any question whatsoever regarding your status.

As stated at the AGM, the Club is growing. For me, the best part of the financial statement wasn't the modest surplus at the end of our fiscal year but the fact that both our "in

town" and "out of town" membership revenues have grown by over 8%. I think we are the envy of many service clubs with a statistic like that.

All of the Club's contact information is on the back of your membership card. Even if you don't have a question about your dues, don't hesitate to contact us with ideas for new events or any concerns about your membership.

We have a great fall program lined up & I look forward to seeing you at the Nest!

Mulgrave cont'd from p.5

We wound up escorting her being towed by an RN sea-going tug to join a UK-bound convoy from Sierra Leone. We then left for Londonderry to rejoin our Group. Poor *Mulgrave*, she ended her days, after being damaged by a mine off the French coast and subsequently beached, then being towed yet again, back to England, where she was declared a constructive total loss.

CNMAA Report: Cataloguing Complete by Gary Green

This year's summer project has come to a close. Our student and Jacquey Ryan have been cataloguing the photographs in our collection. This completes our updating efforts. From now on it should be much easier to update our records as new items arrive. A big thank you to Jacquey for her outstanding work over the past few years.

Earlier in the spring finishing touches were put on our Community Memories project and it is now up for viewing as part of Canada's Virtual Museum. Visit virtualmuseum.ca and search under "Community Memories" for stories about the Nest and the Battle of the Atlantic. Again, thanks to Jacquey for spearheading this project.

We have had several new artefacts donated during the spring and summer. Bruce Neal donated a WWI era seaman's collar from *HMS Calypso*. This is a great addition as it is the only artefact we have from the ship. Much is known about the Royal

Newfoundland Regiment in WWI but little is known about the Royal Newfoundland Naval Reserve and the role it played both in supplying trained men



Our 200-year old brass masthead light, donated by Brian Smith.

for the Royal Navy and the defence of Newfoundland waters. Vessels used in the patrolling of home waters were given the designation HMNS for His Majesty's Newfoundland Ship. Yes, we had our own navy!

Mr. Neal also donated a cannon ball of considerable size and weight. The date and origin are uncertain but it could be from Nelson's time. As well, photos on page 4 show presentations by *HMCS Athabaskan* and *WestJet*.

Ruby Dewling presented a copy of the menu for the first New Year's Eve dinner held at the club after the war. It is dated December, 1948. That makes this year the 65th anniversary of the event.

Brian Smith of the *HMS Newfoundland* Association has sent us a magnificent brass masthead light dating from the early 1800's and similar those used on Nelson's "wooden walls". It is a tremendous reminder of the era when Royal Navy ships spent time on the Newfoundland Station and officers spent their time ashore socializing at *The Ship*, the public house that formerly occupied the site of the Nest. Thank you to all who contributed to our collection.

Canadian Author and Historian Visits Club

Noted Canadian historian, author and retired naval officer David Freeman attended the CNMAA June meeting in the Nest. He was in the province doing research for his next book on the badges and gunshield art of the Canadian Navy. David was able to provide some interesting information on items in our collection. We were pleased to be able to provide him with some information as well as digital images of our collection for use in the book.

His last book, *Canadian Warship Names*, provides a thorough introduction to various types of ships in the Canadian Navy and how they are named as well as a comprehensive listing of HMC Ships and their service. It is a must have for any serious student of Canadian naval history.



Pictured is David Freeman (R) speaking with member Ian Wishart about the "Wavy Navy".

Club Dinner Schedule Sept. - Dec. 2008

Saturday September 20th

Fish Cakes

Pan Fried Cod

Chicken with a Maple Cream Sauce or
Pork Tenderloin with Newman's Port
Demi Glaze

Creme Caramel

\$ 20.95

Friday September 26th

Weepers with Complimentary
Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday October 4th

Oktoberfest

Our traditional German Buffet created
and prepared by Executive Chef David
Kannenberg - \$ 24.95 per person

Saturday October 18th

Trafalgar Mess Dinner

Tiger Shrimp Cocktail

Roasted Striploin (Salmon Alternate)

New York Cheesecake

\$ 20.95

Friday October 31st

Weepers with Complimentary
Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday November 8th

Remembrance Day Dinner

Caesar Salad

Calvados Apple Chicken or
Salmon in a Grand Marnier Sauce or
Roasted Striploin

Chocolate Parfait

\$ 20.95

Saturday November 22nd

Seafood Chowder

Lamb Dinner

Strawberry Mousse

\$ 22.95

Friday November 28th

Weepers with Complimentary
Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday December 6th

Spinach Salad

Tiger Shrimp Creole or
Chicken in a Mushroom Cream sauce,
or London Broil

Fresh Fruit Cup

\$ 20.95

Friday December 12th

Weepers with Complimentary
Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday December 20th

Christmas Dinner

Potato and Bacon Chowder

Traditional Turkey Dinner
(Salmon Alternate)

Xmas Pudding with Burnt Rum Sauce
\$ 20.95

Monday December 31st

New Year's Eve

Crab Cakes

Oven Roasted Prime Rib

Pear Strudel

Complimentary Party Favours &
Champagne at Midnight!

\$ 55.00

Theme Dinners & Events by Gary Green

Several special dinners and events are planned for the Fall schedule. The popularity of theme dinners last year showed that you needed to book early to avoid disappointment. Please note the guest policy covered in a separate article.

October 4 will be our annual Oktoberfest complete with German buffet and music.

October 18 will be our first Trafalgar Dinner in a number of years. Trafalgar Day, October 21, commemorates the 1805 victory of the Royal Navy over the combined French and Spanish fleet and the death of Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson. The Nest can claim a connection to Nelson as it is

built on the site of The Ship, a public house where Nelson used to drink. Trafalgar Day and the dinner are major events in the Naval Year and as such the dinner has special features which set it apart from other Naval Mess Dinners. It will be a formal event so break out the tux, mess kit, period costume or business suit and get ready for a night to remember!

The Remembrance Dinner will be on November 8 at which time there will be a special presentation to the club. The Remembrance Day Soup and Singalong will happen immediately after the ceremony at our National War Memorial on November 11.

The holiday season kicks off

with a special Super Weepers on December 12 followed by the annual Christmas dinner on the 20th. Of course, there will be the usual New Year's Eve celebrations and New Year's Day Levee.

Members are reminded that the dress code for dinners is tie and jacket for men and comparable for women. Show your pride in your club by wearing a club tie which is available from the bar staff.

Hope to see you at the Nest!