

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

September 2009

New Executive & Board for 2009-2010

The May 27 annual general meeting produced a new slate of executive officers for the Club. Gary Green became the new President, Tony Dearnness was confirmed as Vice-President, LCdr Margaret Morris continues as Treasurer, Derek Yetman was named Club Secretary, and John Moyes is now serving as Past President.

The Board of Directors was also confirmed, and consists of the executive plus Peter Clarke, Bill Conway, Philip Daniel, Lisa Piercey, Jack Strong, Greg Twining and Gary Walsh. See page 2 for the new President's message.



L-R : Treasurer Margaret Morris, President Gary Green, Vice-President Tony Dearnness, Secretary Derek Yetman, and Past President John Moyes.

Chief of Defence Staff Visits The Crow's Nest

General Walter Natynczyk, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff, and his wife visited the Nest on June 7th and participated in the *HMCS St. John's* gun shield presentation. He spoke to the officers about Canada's role in current world affairs and thanked the men and women serving in *St. John's* for their contribution to the nation's activities.

General Natynczyk also presented the CDS Coin of Excellence jointly to the Club and the Artefacts Association for their work in the preservation of Canadian naval history. This is indeed a great honour for the two organizations.

The Club presented the General with a club tie and membership, and he expressed a desire to return to the Nest in the near future.

Born in Winnipeg, Gen. Natynczyk is Canada's first CDS who is not of French or English descent. He joined the army in 1975 and first served with the Royal Canadian Dragoons before other appointments. He was named Vice Chief of Defence Staff in 2006 and succeeded General Rick Hillier as CDS in 2008.



Gen. and Mrs. Natynczyk with President Gary Green.

Message from the Club President

First of all, I would like to thank the membership for its vote of confidence in electing me president. Never in my wildest dream did I expect to get this honour. In fact, I never thought I would ever be a member of the Club.

I first visited the Nest as a guest in 1971. Though I fell in love with the place at first sight, I was not able to join because I lacked military service. In subsequent years I never passed up an invitation to visit the Club. Then, one Christmas after civilians were allowed to join, my children surprised me with membership as a present. What a present! None of us could have foreseen the changes that membership would bring about in our lives. From meeting new friends to learning so much about naval and provincial history, the ride has been amazing. I hope I shall be able to give back something to the Club.

One of my favourite quotes about the Nest comes from British Admiral Sir Percy Noble who claimed that the Crow's Nest was the repository of the legend and lore of the brave men who saved not only Britain but perhaps freedom itself. It falls to us to ensure that the Club continues to thrive as a living memorial to those brave men while meeting the needs of the current membership. During the past few years, your executive's efforts to strike this balance seem to be paying off. Membership has never been higher and attendance at functions has improved with some events being sold out weeks in advance.

Earlier this year we received the Manning Award for our efforts to preserve the historic elements of the Club. Additionally, in June during his first visit to the Nest, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, surprised us by presenting to the CNMAA and the CNOC jointly the Coin of Excellence for our preservation of Canadian Naval history.

Accepting it on behalf of the two clubs was a great thrill for me. I am also pleased to tell you that we are now under review for possible designation as a National Historic Site. I hope we can continue to make gains in both the historic and social areas during my



The CDS Coin of Excellence

It has been a busy spring and summer with visits by ships from the United States, Russia, Australia and our own navy, including *HMCS St. John's*, which was in port for its change of command ceremony. One of my pleasant tasks was to present a reproduction of Tom Woods' painting

of the Crow's Nest to the wardroom of *HMCS St. John's*. The wardroom is affectionately called "The Crow's Nest" and we hope the painting will help it seem more like the real thing. The tremendous response to the request for hosts for the Russian cadets was very gratifying. Thanks to everyone who participated, especially Margaret Morris who organized the program.

We also received visits from tourists, former members and former employees including Hilda Hiscock who along with her husband, Harold, were the last caterers to live in the building. They and their children lived in the area now occupied by the dining room.

Most recently I attended the annual memorial service for the Merchant Marine held at the Merchant Navy War Memorial. Sad to say each year the number of veterans in attendance is smaller and smaller. We must never forget the vital role the Merchant Navy played in securing our freedom.

We think we have an exciting program for the fall so come along and participate. I look forward to seeing you at the Nest.

Gary Green, President

Recently Crossed the Bar

LCdr (Ret) C. Ian P. Tate

Club member LCdr (Ret) Ian Tate died on June 23 at Port Hope, Ontario, at the age of 87. LCdr Tate was one of two officers to survive the torpedoing of *HMCS Valleyfield* on the night of May 6-7, 1944.

The River Class frigate was hit by Gnat torpedoes from U-548, 50 nautical miles south of Cape Race. She broke in two and sank within minutes. Of her complement of 10 officers, 111 seamen and 2 passengers, only 2 officers and 36 men survived the sinking.

LCol (Hon) Kevin Hutchings

LCol (Hon) Kevin Hutchings passed away on August 27, aged 63 years. The Crow's Nest member leaves to mourn his wife Dale and sons Ian and Jason.

As honorary colonel of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, LCol Hutchings mostly recently participated in the dedication of the regimental plaques at Bowring Park. The event took place on 01 July.



Russian Naval Cadets Visit the Crow's Nest

by Gary Green

The second largest tall ship in the world, the Russian *Kruzenshtern*, arrived in late July sunshine to a warm reception on the quay. On board were 120 of the top young cadets from Russia's nautical training institutes. Several members of the Board were invited to a reception on board in the wardroom and were treated to a sampling of Russian food and beverages.

The Nest returned the hospitality by hosting an open house for the cadets on Saturday and Sunday. Of special interest to the cadets were the artefacts from ships which had participated in the Arctic Convoys to Russia. Thanks to the members of the Club and the Artefacts Association for staffing the Club on those days.

A number of members responded to the call for home hosts and opened their doors to about 50 of the young cadets. The day's activities varied from host to host but included such events as shopping, sight seeing, golfing and home for a meal. From all



Veterans greet the Russian naval cadets at the War Memorial, prior to a wreath laying ceremony.

reports, a great time was had by the students. A big thank you goes to Margaret Morris for coordinating the hosting programme. As I understand it, we are the only group to provide such a service to the cadets in any port and they were totally blown away by the members' generosity. Well done!

One of the highlights of the visit was the wreath laying at the National War Memorial. The cadets and local veterans of the Arctic Convoys laid wreaths in memory of those who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of freedom. After the ceremony, the veterans were treated to a reception on board the ship.

New Gunshield Art Adorns Club Walls



Two new gunshields are on the walls. While in port for Battle of the Atlantic weekend in May, *HMCS Ville de Quebec* presented its gunshield to the Club. As can be seen in the accompanying photo, the gun shield represents VDJ's outstanding effort in suppressing pirate activity off the coast of Somalia and allowing much needed food aid to reach the people of that war torn country. The gun shield speaks volumes about Canada's role as a peacekeeper.

Cdr. Luc Cassivi of *HMCS Ville de Quebec* presents the gunshield artwork to Club Past President John Moyes. See the *HMCS St. John's* presentation on page 4.

HMCS St. John's Gunshield Art Presented



During the change of command activities in June, Lt (N) Roberts of *HMCS St. John's* presented the ship's gun shield which he designed and painted. The lion's head is taken from the ship's badge.

When *St. John's* arrived in port last year, Lt. Roberts had just put the finishing touches on the ship's gun shield and the smell of fresh paint was in the air. He promised a copy for the Nest upon the ship's next visit and he was true to his word.

Local Authors Present Books to Crow's Nest

During the summer two books were released on the province's naval history. Dr. David Parsons (father of club member Andrew) and Ean Parsons released **The Best Small-Boat Seamen in the Navy: Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve 1900-1922**.

It is an account of the early days of the Reserve, complete with stories, pictures and service numbers. Because members of the Reserve served on any number of ships and not as a single unit, the Reserve's story is not nearly as well known as that of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. The book does a great job of getting the story out and is a "must have" for anyone interested in the navy, WWI, or the province.

Club member Senator Bill Rompkey launched his new book, **St. John's and the Battle of the Atlantic** at the Crow's Nest because, in his eyes, it was the only place it could be done to honour the people about whom the book was written. The book, edited by Senator Rompkey, is an anthology of writings by people who lived in St. John's or operated from *HMCS Avalon*, the naval base, during the war years. The photo section contains some pictures never before

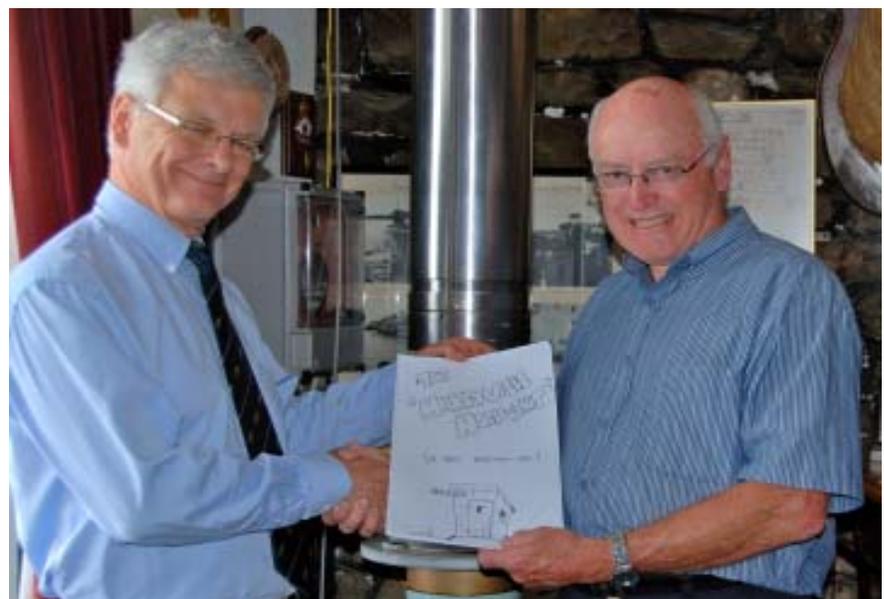
published in a book.

St. John's, arguably the most important port on the western North Atlantic during WWII, has long been ignored by historians. This book is the first one to be devoted totally to telling the story. The Senator made good use

of the Artefacts Association's archives in writing the book and gives credit to it in his opening pages.

Both books are available from local sellers. You might want to put them on your Christmas list for yourself or someone else.

Copy of *Victoriaville* Log Donated



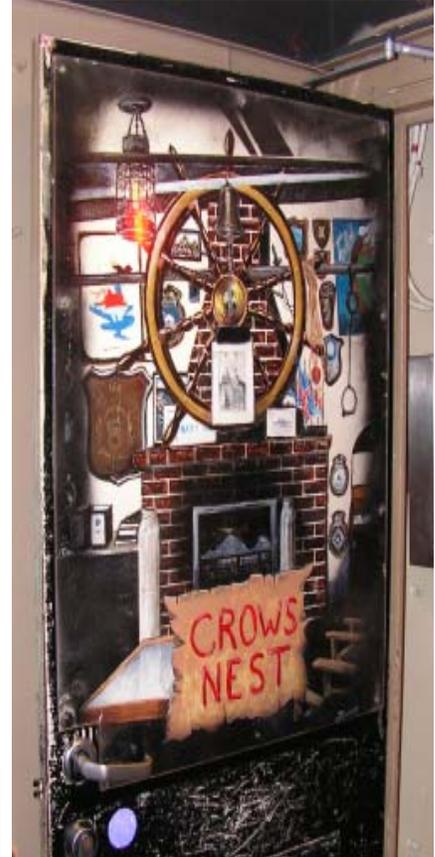
A copy of the wartime log of *HMCS Victoriaville* is presented to VP Tony Dearness (L). The ship took possession of U-190 after its Newfoundland surrender. Tom Hickey, son of the captain, made the presentation.

A Visit to the Wardroom of *HMCS St. John's*

Photos taken during the ship's summer visit to St. John's



President Gary Green presents a copy of the Tom Woods painting to the wardroom.



Door to the wardroom, also called the Crow's Nest.

E-mail and Tall Ships

by LCdr Margaret Morris

The value of our in-town e-mail list was demonstrated recently with the visit of the Russian tall ship *Kruzenshtern*. There was little advance notice for their arrival in St. John's but we did learn that they were hoping to have cadets do home visits.

With a quick and easy e-mail, dozens of Club members responded, resulting in approximately 50 cadets getting a personalized tour of St. John's. Some were taken hiking while others went swimming; some were golfing while others were playing soccer. In short, it was a great experience for both the cadets and our members.

If you are not on our email list but would like to be, simply send the Club an e-mail at crowsnoc@nf.aibn.com and we'll add your name.

Although I call it the "in town" e-mail list, it is really for all members, wherever they might be, who like to keep in touch on a regular basis with Club events. In order to keep things simple, we can only accept one e-mail address per member.



Kisbee ring on loan from the land-based Crow's Nest.

Treasurer's Report: Another Great Year

It was a pleasure to present our annual financial statements at the AGM in May. Like last year, the best part of the financial report was not the modest surplus but the fact that our membership continues to grow! As I stated at the AGM, most legions and service clubs would be envious of our operation. With an active social program, a unique setting and a congenial catering staff, we have had a very successful year. In fact, we've had a good run of successful years!

It is a great effort to maintain an old building & there are lots of ways to spend our modest surplus. Our first project for this fiscal year was the re-furbishment of the floors both upstairs and down. With new sliders on all the chairs and furniture, we hope to keep the floors looking clean and shiny. Next we hope to clean up the deck and exterior stairs before the summer weather is gone.

Dues for 2009/10 have been coming in nicely with the vast majority of members paying up promptly. If you've lost your invoice, I'll be sending out reminders in the next few weeks. As always, please call or email if there is any question about dues. I use an accounting software program to keep the books. It can be magical at

times, producing a profit & loss statement within seconds. However, one errant keystroke can cause enormous grief. If dues have been credited to the wrong member, I will correct the mistake. With almost 500 members administered by a volunteer board, problems like that can easily

happen.

We have another great set of dinners lined up for the fall. I look forward to seeing you at the Club!

Margaret Morris
Lieutenant-Commander
Treasurer

Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town

Gerald Anderson, James Austin, Garry Best, LCdr Stewart Hughes, Cdr Larry Jones, Beulah Pelley, Karl Wells,

Out of Town

Gen Walter Natynczyk, Ottawa, ON
Brad Perrin, Oakville, ON
Cdr Kevin Turner, Canberra, Australia
Brian & Margaret Smith, Norfolk, UK
Brian MacDonald, Ottawa, ON

Carl Bagshaw, St. Thomas, ON
LCdr Bill Mercer, Kanata, ON
John MacIsaac, Antigonish, ON
Peter Faragher, Toronto, ON
Sandra Svendsen, Toronto, ON
Jonathan White, St. Thomas, ON
Robert Fenton, Airdrie, AB
Roderick Stewart, Port Hope, ON
Masumi Suzuki, Port Hope, ON

Life

Cdr Luc Cassivi, Bedford, NS

Members' Accomplishments

Congratulations to **Cdr. Rob Clark** on his appointment as Commanding Officer of *HMCS St. John's*. And welcome to **Cdr. Larry Jones** who has taken over as Commanding Officer of CFS St. John's. We look forward to a continued strong relationship between the Station and the Crow's Nest.

Bravo Zulu to **Dr. Carl Robbins!** He is one of four Newfoundland doctors recognized with a Fellowship in Rural and Remote Medicine (FFRM) from the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada.

Also, President **Gary Green** recently received the Award of Honour, the highest award granted by the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services.

Congratulations to Club member and John Hopkins University professor, **Dr. Louis Whitcomb**, for his role in developing the hybrid ROV (remotely operated vehicle) *Nereus*. It has recently made the world's deepest dive into Challenger Deep in the Pacific Ocean. For more information, see the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution website (www.whoi.edu).



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Successful Membership Drive and Other News

by Gary Green

There was a great response to our membership drive, held in the spring in cooperation with the CNOC. A number of people signed up for the higher categories of membership and will be receiving their pictures in the mail shortly, once activities resume for the fall. The additional funds will be used to provide secure display space for some of our smaller artefacts and assist with the ongoing expenses associated with maintaining the collection.

Though the CNMAA has not held meetings over the summer, it has been a very busy time. A number of new artefacts were donated. The Sparkes family donated the clock from the U-190 wardroom. The late Mr. Bob Sparkes was a member of the Canadian crew that operated U-190.

Gunshield artwork was presented by *HMCS Ville de Quebec* and *HMCS St. John's*. Past president Dick Hyslop presented a

number of books related to naval history from his collection. Club member Barry Davenport presented an autographed copy of **Another Place, Another Time: A U-boat Officer's Wartime Album** by U-190's Chief Engineer, Werner Hirschmann. On the front page, Mr. Hirschmann, a friend of Barry's, wrote a tribute to the Crow's Nest for the preservation of the U-190 artefacts.

Local authors Dr. David Parsons and Senator Bill Rompkey presented copies of their latest books. Mr. Tom Hickey, son of Captain Hickey of *HMCS Victoriaville*, presented a copy of his father's wartime log. Several visiting ships including the *State of Maine*, *Bowdoin* and *HMAS Ballarat* and *HMAS Sydney* presented their ship's badges. The Australian ships also presented ensigns. Tours were conducted for private companies, the Canadian Navy, the Royal Australian Navy and for the

Kruzenshtern cadets.

We are excited to have partner-ed with *HMCS Ville de Quebec* to produce an exhibit of reproduction gun shield art which is now on tour on board the *VDQ* as she visits ports along the Gulf and River of St. Lawrence. This is the first time we have had a traveling exhibit and we are anxious to hear about its reception.

We continue to get requests from family members seeking information on their relatives and/or the ships in which they served. We also have a request for information for a new scholarly book on St. John's in WWII. Field research continued with visits to sites in Botwood, St. Anthony and the National Archives in Ottawa.

In the spring, our collection was reviewed by a professional conservator from the provincial Museum Association. We have recently received her report and will be using it to develop a long-term plan for the collection.

Australian Navy "Cluttering up" the Club Bar



Club member and naval veteran Art Taylor poses with officers of *HMAS Ballarat* and *HMAS Sydney*.

Club Dinner Schedule Sept. - Dec. 2009

Friday September 18th , 2009

Traditional German Buffet
\$ 24.95

Friday September 25th, 2009

Weepers
Complimentary Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday October 3rd, 2009

Bartlett Dinner
Family Style Olives and Radishes
Kitty Vitty Codfish (Salt Cod with
Homemade Hollandaise)
Beef Signal Hill (Shaved Striploin)
Raspberry Charlotte
\$ 20.95

Saturday October 17th, 2009

SS Caribou Dinner
Beef Vegetable Soup
Choice of:
Roasted Striploin
Traditional Turkey
Salmon with Dill Sauce
&
Grand Marnier Flavoured Strawberries
over Ice Cream
\$ 20.95

Friday October 30th , 2009

Weepers
Complimentary Hor's D'oeuvres

Friday November 6th, 2009

Veterans Lunch
Soup and Sandwich Buffet
\$ 11.00

Saturday November 7th, 2008

Remembrance Dinner
Caesar Salad
Choice of:
Calvados Apple Chicken
Salmon in a Grand Marnier Sauce
Roasted Striploin
&
Chocolate Parfait
\$ 20.95

Wednesday November 11th, 2009

Remembrance Day
Complimentary Soup and Bread

Friday November 27th, 2009

Weepers
Complimentary Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday November 28th, 2009

Curry Buffet
\$ 24.95

Friday December 4th, 2009

Weepers
Complimentary Hor's D'oeuvres

Saturday December 19th, 2008

Christmas Dinner
Potato and Bacon Chowder
Traditional Turkey Dinner
(Salmon Alternate)
Christmas Pudding with a Burnt Rum
Sauce
\$ 20.95

Thursday December 31st, 2009

New Year's Eve
Tiger Shrimp Cocktail
Oven Roasted Prime Rib
Chocolate Parfait
\$ 55.00

Themed Dinners for Fall

As in past years, we have planned a number of themed dinners to mark special events. This September marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Battle of the Atlantic and the capture of the *SS Christoph van Dornan*, the first German vessel seized in North America if not the entire battle. The Artefacts Association owns her registration papers. The opening dinner will commemorate these events and will feature our annual German buffet.

The Bartlett dinner will commemorate Captain Bob Bartlett's 1909 feat of navigation to get Perry close to the North Pole. We have the programme and menu from the original dinner and that will provide the basis for the evening. This will be our formal dinner for the fall so dust off your mess kit.

The *SS Caribou* went down in October of 1942 with great loss of life, including the only nursing sister to die in combat in the Battle of the Atlantic. In November we will, in cooperation with CNMAA and NOAC, host our annual luncheon with a veteran of the

current action in Afghanistan. This will be followed by our Remembrance Day dinner. We hope to have special guests associated with each event present at the dinners. Remember that space is limited, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Dress Code for Club Dinners

Dress for dinner and special functions is 'dress of the day' for male serving members, or suit/sportsjacket/blazer with tie/ascot/turtleneck for civilian attire.

For ladies, 'dress of the day' for serving members, or dress/skirt/slacks for civilian attire.

New Start Time for Dinners

Members and guests please note that dinners will now begin at 1900 for 1930 hours, instead of the previous 1930 for 2000 hours.