

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

October 2010

A Letter from an Original Member

In September, the Club received a gift of a replica of the crest of the *HMCS Haida*, from Raymond Phillips of Ottawa. He writes:

After serving nearly three years with the Royal Navy, I joined *HMCS St. Laurent* in November 1941 and enjoyed some 18 months (two winters and one summer) working the Newfee-Derry part of the Battle of the Atlantic, including the commissioning of the Crow's Nest. In June of 1943, *St. Laurent* left one officer (me) in Derry to man *HMCS Haida* on commissioning on 30 August 1943. I left *Haida* in early 1946, the only officer to serve in her for all her World War II adventures.

Since then, I have kept in touch with the *Haida* Association, and through it, was given a replica of the official crest. Since I am at the "down-sizing" period of my life (89 this coming November), I would like to pass this naval artifact on to the Crow's Nest. I am no longer able to travel, but my son John is a frequent patron of your splendid Club, and I am sure you and he can arrange for the occasion of its reception by the Club.

Best personal regards,
Raymond Phillips,
Captain (Ret), Royal Canadian Navy



VP Tony Dearness (L) receives Raymond Phillips' donation from his son John.

After discovering the Crow's Nest during a visit to St. John's, in 2005 John Phillips brought his father to St. John's and the Club. John said that when they came into the Club, he had never before seen his father speechless, amazed that the Club was well and intact after all this time. Captain Raymond Phillips served during the Battle of the Atlantic and was an original member of the Seagoing Officers' Club.

Coming Next Issue: Interviews with Atlantic Convoy Escort Veterans

by John Moyes

Two veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic have added their stories to the Crow's Nest collection. Earlier this year in Vancouver, I was lucky enough to meet the Hon. John L. Nichol, CC, who was an Asdic Officer on *HMCS Victoriaville* during the surrender of U190, and Cliff Hill who joined the Canadian Navy in Vancouver and then spent much of the war as a Corvette officer on convoy escort. Both still remarkably youthful men, fondly remember the Crow's Nest as it was in the early formative years. Thanks to my son Jonathan's video camera, we have 30 minutes of both men on DVD telling their stories.

I would like to thank John and Cliff for taking the time to tell their stories as personal witnesses of their part in a dangerous and desperate struggle to beat a determined foe. All of the information we have on each will be added to our web site as a continuing record of those who took part in the Battle of the Atlantic and visited the Crow's Nest when it was the Seagoing Officers' Club.

For the next issue of Scuttlebutt, I will attempt to give you a capsule of each story with the hope they will trigger more members' memories of wartime St. John's and the Crow's Nest.

Merchant Navy Holds 2010 Reunion

by Jack Strong

In September, the Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans Association held their 2010 Reunion and Annual General Meeting in St. John's for the first time ever and we wanted to make it a success. Members and their wives or partners came from all across Canada and one couple from the USA. A few were Newfoundlanders who had settled on the mainland and were pleased with the opportunity to return for a few days. An ambitious programme was developed for the period 8th-12th September, with some arriving for a few days vacation before and others stayed after the events.

The mornings of Wednesday and Thursday were visits to the Marine Bridge Simulator programme "An Atlantic Convoy" at the Marine Institute. All were very impressed with the realistic presentation and a few drawn to tears, as they recalled shipmates in the cold Atlantic waters.

By popular requests, during the past year of planning, a "Screech In" was held at the Battery Hotel on Thursday evening, plus some Newfoundland music. Friday morning and afternoon was time for the Board of Directors meetings and the members were free to tour. We were pleased to receive an invitation to a reception at St. John's City Hall for Friday evening. Following the reception most returned to the hotel, but a few ventured down George Street and were not disappointed. Saturday was the Annual General Meeting, followed by a cash bar, banquet and dance.

Since this was a once in a lifetime event, every effort was made to make our annual Memorial Service a special occasion. The Band of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment led the very short parade and played at the service. The Lt. Governor, The Hon. John Crosbie took the Salute and was joined by her

Hon. Jane Crosbie for the Service. Sea Cadets handed out the Order of Service and acted as wreath bearers. Also on parade were three Divisions of the Canadian Forces Naval Engineering Services Detachment at the Marine Institute and two horses from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate and it was very windy and raining. Following lunch at the Marine Institute a special trip had been planned to cross by ferry from Portugal Cove to hold a very brief Memorial Service over the WWII merchant vessels torpedoed off Bell Island.

However, weather conditions had deteriorated in the area and conditions were extreme, with the ferry rolling and pitching heavily. Bearing in mind the age of these Veterans and that many were already unsteady on their feet on shore, and we did not want accidents to occur, it was with great reluctance that the trip was cancelled.

During this week, a number of Merchant Navy Veterans and their partners took up the challenge of the 59 steps and visited the Crow's Nest. They were very impressed with the setting, the welcome, the history, the U-Boat periscope and the other artifacts.

Treasurer's Report by LCdr Margaret Morris

I'm pleased to report that over 80% of membership dues for 2010/11 are in. Reminders will be sent out soon for those in arrears. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any question about your status. There are always a few mistakes made by a simple, errant keystroke.

Besides keeping the books, I also maintain the email database. There, too, a hastily entered amendment can cause enormous grief. This happened

recently when I accidentally deleted the entire in-town email list. I have put it back together but if I have missed someone, please send the Club an email and I will put you back on. At the same time, if I have put you on there by mistake, let me know & I'll take you off.

We've got a great program lined up for the fall. I look forward to seeing you at the Club.

Your Board of Directors

The Crow's Nest Board of Directors met last month for the first meeting of 2010-2011. The Board accepted the resignation of Peter Clarke and thanked him for his lengthy service, while ratifying the appointment of David Moores as a new director. This year's members of the board are:
Gary Green - President
Tony Dearness - Vice-President
John Moyes - Past President
Margaret Morris - Treasurer
Derek Yetman - Secretary

William Conway - Director
Philip Daniel - Director
David Moores - Director
Lisa Piercey - Director
Jack Strong - Director
Greg Twining - Director
Gary Walsh - Director

These individuals may be reached through the Club's e-mail address: crowsnoc@nf.aibn.com.



Report from the President by Gary Green

Welcome back! I hope you had a good summer and are ready to participate in what we hope will be an exciting year of activities. Every dinner for the fall season has a theme. In October, we paid tribute to Military Nursing Sisters who played and continue to play an important role in military operations and our biannual formal Trafalgar Dinner honours Admiral Lord Nelson who used to spend time in The Ship, the pub on the site now occupied by the Nest, and his victory in one of the greatest sea battles of all time. In November, we pay tribute to both the veterans of WWII and the current conflict and mark the Centennial of the Canadian Navy. The holidays are front and center in December as we have our Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations. All are bound to be good times with musical and/or speaking guests. Details will be sent via e-mail prior to each event. You will not want to miss a single one. Seats go quickly so book early.

During the last few months my wife and I travelled much through the province and eastern Canada in part conducting research (more on this in my CNMAA report) and visiting with some Crow's Nest members. Long-time member Bill Graham and his wife Sharon are always most gracious hosts when we visit Halifax. Bill is also a member of the Royal Artillery Park Mess, the oldest officers' mess in the country, and we always go there at least a couple of times during a visit. One of the reasons I enjoy going to the mess so much is that I meet so many out-of-town members there, including some who were members during the war. It is great to hear stories about the Nest and some of the characters of an earlier time. While there one day for lunch, Club member, LCdr. Sherry Richardson (Ret), who previously donated a tot measure to the Club,

offered a tot barrel to replace the one we previously had on loan. It has since been presented to Bill Graham who will arrange for shipment to the Club. The barrel will be a welcome addition to club functions. Thank you Sherry!

Actually, I saw Sherry earlier this summer in St. John's when she was about to get aboard the Marine Institute's simulator for the WWII convoy trip. I am glad to hear that a number of our members were able to get on this outstanding tour. I understand that quite a few of the Battle of the Atlantic veterans who took the tour were visibly moved by the realism of the events portrayed. Hats off to Club member and simulator director, Captain Chris Hearn, and his team for a job well done.

While in Ottawa, Ruth and I met with Club member and senator Bill Rompkey and his wife Carolyn who, as always, made us very welcome. Bill and I discussed Newfoundland and Labrador's role in WWII and future research possibilities. Hopefully we can look forward to another book on this subject from Bill.

An interesting part of the drive to Ottawa and back was visiting places for which we have gun shields in the Club. Of the ones we visited, we particularly enjoyed exploring Levis in Quebec and Sackville in New Brunswick. Next time out we want to explore more.

While I was away, Vice-president Tony Dearness did a great job hosting a number of groups and individuals who visited the club during the busy summer tourist season. Among the more notable groups to visit were the University Naval Training Division (UNTD) alumni and WWII Merchant Marine veterans, both of which held reunion activities in St. John's.

During my brief periods at home, along with other executive

members, we attended a special Navy Centennial brunch hosted by the Cupids 400 Celebrations Committee in Cupids. We also hosted a gathering of approximately 40 military attaches from around the world. A number were delighted to see artefacts related to their countries on display in the Nest. Yes indeed, the Club is a busy place these days and we look forward to seeing you there.



Scuttlebutt

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Recently Crossed the Bar..

LCdr Anthony Green-Ayre, OBE

Passed away at the Caribou Memorial Pavilion on September 25, Anthony (Tony) Green-Ayre, aged 93 years. Tony was born in St. John's and was a farmer in both the United Kingdom and several Canadian provinces, a naval reserve officer throughout World War II, and a successful businessman.

During the war years he was posted to both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and post-war he held senior positions within the reserve forces and the sea cadets. He was a long-time active member of the Last Post Fund and the Crow's Nest Officers' Club, as well as a life-long parishoner of the Anglican Cathedral. Tony was also well known as a broadcaster and performer of radio dramas for the CBC.

He was a Chevalier de l'Ordre de Leopold (Belgium) and a Knight, Order of the Oranj-Nassau (Netherlands). He is predeceased by parents Carlotta and James Green, and step-father Hon. Charles P. Ayre.

Hilda Blanche Hiscock

Predeceased by her husband Harold in 1990, Hilda crossed the bar on August 10 at the age of 83. She and Harold were the Crow's Nest Club stewards for over 20 years, beginning in 1950. They raised their family in an apartment that is now the dining room, and provided drinks, meals and conversation to hundreds of post-war members.

Born and educated at Burgeo, Hilda (then Hiscock) worked as a telegrapher for the Post Office. During the war she was transferred to Winterton, Trinity Bay, where she met and married Harold.

Hilda is remembered as a gifted and humorous storyteller who loved to play the piano, crochet and play cards. Her meticulous stitching can be seen on the cloth that covers the coffee table in front of the Club fireplace, bearing the names of Club members from long ago. Her son-in-law, Philip Daniel, continues the family association with the Crow's Nest as a Director.

Vice Admiral Daniel Mainguy

VAdm Mainguy entered the Royal Canadian Navy in 1948 at the age of 18, attending the Naval College at Royal Roads. He received his first command, *HMCS Annapolis*, in 1965 and his second, *HMCS Protecteur*, in 1972. He went on to serve in a variety of roles and was eventually called to Canadian Forces Headquarters to serve as Vice Chief of Defence Staff, from where he retired.

He was recognized as a talented naval officer and a fair leader, who always cared about the lives of the people under his command. He has been noted as instrumental in helping Canada's Navy to acquire new vessels to meet its defence commitments.

His retirement years were spent working as a consultant to, among other projects, the Ocean Ranger investigation and the Canadian Memorial Garden at Caen.

VAdm Mainguy was the son of the Crow's Nest founder and first president, Captain "D".

RCMI Begins Redevelopment Project

The Royal Canadian Military Institute began a two-year redevelopment project this summer. The old building has been demolished and they are currently operating out of the Albany Club, located at 91 King Street East in Toronto.

The Crow's Nest has a reciprocal agreement with RCMI, which had extensive clubrooms, dining facilities and accommodations. During the redevelopment there is a preferred rate for accommodations at Le Meridien King Edward Hotel.

In 1890, the officers of the Toronto garrison founded the RCMI with the then Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey. As its patron, Earl Grey laid the cornerstone of the old

premises in 1907.

In addition to a large library of military books and information, the RCMI has a military museum with curator, a billiards room, trophy room, weapons room, a bar and lounges.

For members wishing to enjoy reciprocal privileges, please email the Crow's Nest for a letter of introduction. More information about RCMI and this project is available at their website - www.rcmi.org.

We wish RCMI every success in this endeavour and look forward to continuing our reciprocal agreement through this temporary arrangement and into their new premises in 2012.



The old Royal Canadian Military Institute. See page 6 for an artist's rendering of the new building.

Help Wanted!

Bookkeeper

The Club's membership has grown considerably in the last few years. Although Margaret is happy to stay on as Treasurer, she would love to have a helping hand with the books. Ideally this person would be able to handle the Club's administration when she is out of town. Margaret is not a trained accountant or even a bookkeeper but she will happily share what she knows with anyone who is keen to learn. No experience is needed, just an eagerness to learn and help out. The Club uses QuickBooks accounting software which is very forgiving for beginners.

This search is not limited to members. If your spouse or partner would like to get involved with the Club's administration, that is fine too. If you have a son or daughter who is in a business program and would like practical "hands on" experience with accounting for a non-profit organization, this is a great opportunity.

The time required would be approximately three hours a week. There is no pay but it might be a good addition to a resume.

Website Support

The Crow's Nest website is an important link to our members, especially to those who live out of town. Unfortunately its content is often out of date, due to a lack of technical skill among Board members, and a lack of time among those who have the ability.

The Club requires the services of a person, not necessarily a member, who is willing and able to give an hour or two a week to the cause. Duties would include posting Scuttlebutt online, posting dinner menus and news of events, and generally keeping the membership informed. The Executive will provide the material - you just need to place it on our site.

This is a volunteer position. Payment will be in gratitude. It is also a great opportunity to practice new skills or to polish old ones. The post will be ideal for a young person wishing to add to their resume, or for a retiree who has time on their hands.

Expressions of interest for this or the Bookkeeper's position will be accepted by any member of the Board.

Plaque Presented to Crow's Nest



RAdm Gardam, (L) Commander Maritime Force Atlantic, presents his command plaque to Club President Gary Green during the Admiral's recent visit to the Crow's Nest.



Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town

Dr. James Hiller, Capt. John Snook,
Georgina Escott, Andrew Collins,
Sheridan Thompson

Out of Town

Phonse Griffiths, Placentia Bay, NL
Geoff Allen, Guelph, ON
Arthur Magazu, Stow, MA, USA

Peter Jarvis, Edmonton, AB
Michel Doiron, Shediac Bridge, NB
Orrett Williams, Inglewood, ON
Mark Allen, Inglewood, WA, USA
Lt(N) Clark Colwell, Halifax, NS
SLt Isabelle Vallee, Halifax, NS
Matthew Hogan, Mississauga, ON
Walter Burton, Tillsonburg, ON
Douglas Alpen, Lewisporte, NL

Colin Laroque, Sackville, NB
Wayne Forsythe, Toronto, ON
Bradley Walters, Sackville, NB

Life

LCdr Michael O'Donnell, Wesley
Chapel, Florida
Justin Milley, Halifax, NS

Current Military Appointments in the Province

St. John's

CFS St. John's - Cdr Larry Jones
HMCS Cabot - LCdr David Botting
1 Bn, Royal Newfoundland Regiment -
LCol Alex Brennan
56 Field Engineering Squadron - Major
Richard Nolan
36 Service Battalion - LCol Chris
Meulenkamp
728 Communications Squadron -
Major Paul Furlong

Air Reserve Flight Torbay - Capt.
Craig Stone
CF Naval Engineering School
Detachment - LCdr Stewart Hughes
CF Recruiting Detachment - Lt(N)
Greg Sabine-Pasley

Gander

9 Wing - LCol Chris Conway
Airfield Engineering Flight Gander -
Lt Lydia Evequoz

Air Reserve Flight Gander - Major
Shane Parsons

Goose Bay

5 Wing - LCol Andrew Fleming
Air Reserve Flight Goose Bay - Capt
Thomas Burkhart

Corner Brook

2 Bn, Royal Newfoundland Regiment -
LCol John MacDonald



New RCMI Building

The Institute will occupy the first six floors of a new condominium development on Toronto's University Avenue. The RCMI gave its land to the developer in return for the new premises - to be completed at no cost to the members.

The Institute will reconstitute its library, museum, accommodations and other facilities at the new site.

What would Earl Grey have thought?



A Summer of Artefacts Research

by Gary Green

During the summer, some artefacts were relocated to make room for additional items to be displayed. Progress was slowed when it was discovered that restoration work on the walls would be required before some of the larger works could be hung. Work on both the walls and the collection will continue during the fall. Over the summer, tours were conducted for several visiting groups ranging from social groups to members of naval vessels.

Artefacts, mainly in the form of ships' badges, were received from groups and individuals. One exception was a functioning war-time radio similar to the one seen in early photos of the Club which was donated by member Karl Wells. Thanks to all our donors. The new artefacts will be placed on display once the work on the walls is completed.

Research on the Club, artefacts, and Newfoundland and Labrador in World War Two continued with site visits to Saint John, Ripples, Minto and Fredericton, New Brunswick; Red Bay, Labrador; and Ottawa. In Saint John, we were collecting further information on *HMS Jervis Bay* and the battle. Hopefully we will acquire a copy of film footage of the battle shot from the Admiral Sheer. As some of you may know, Club member Art Taylor, who crossed the bar in March, was the last of a handful of survivors of that battle.

In Ripples, Minto, Fredericton and Ottawa we were gathering information on the fate of the Christoph Van Doornum's crew. The Van Doornum was the first German ship captured in North American waters and the association holds her registration papers.

In Red Bay, we were on the trail of *HMCS Preserver* and her attached fairmiles which provided protection to the convoys passing through the straits during WWII. In

Ottawa we spent time with senator, author and Club member Bill Rompkey discussing Newfoundland and Labrador's role in WWII. We also spent several days in the National Archives reviewing files and collecting a fair amount of information on *HMCS Avalon*, Red Bay, the Caribou sinking,

Bell Island, plans for the defence of various ports, and plans for the destruction of St. John's had the enemy launched an invasion attempt. I'll be giving updates on this material as we manage to sift through it over the coming months.



Bill Graham accepts the Club's new tot tub from LCdr Sherry Richardson (Ret) at Royal Artillery Park.

This month in Naval History

Battle of the Atlantic - After lengthy negotiations Portugal granted the Allies the right to establish air and sea bases in the Azores as from October 1943. This greatly extended the Allies' ability to cover the central Atlantic and the convoy routes between Britain and North and West Africa; also between North America and the Mediterranean.

Monthly Loss Summary

- 13 Allied ships of 61,000 tons and 1 destroyer
- 23 U-boats including 4 by RAF and US aircraft in North Atlantic and off Portugal; 6 by escort carriers *USS Card*, *USS Core* and *USS Block Island* off the Azores and in mid-Atlantic.

Club Dinner Schedule - Fall 2010

Saturday October 23, 2010

Trafalgar Formal Dinner

Tiger Shrimp Cocktail
Choice of

Roasted Striploin - Paraded

Whole before Service or

Salmon with Dill Sauce

Nelson Pudding

\$ 22.95

Friday October 29, 2010

Weepers

Complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Friday November 5, 2010

Veterans Lunch

Soup and Sandwich Buffet

\$ 11.00

Saturday November 6, 2010

Remembrance Day Dinner

Caesar Salad

Choice of

Calvados Apple Chicken or

Salmon in a Grand Marnier

Sauce or

Roasted Striploin

Chocolate Parfait

\$ 22.95

Thursday November 11, 2009

Complimentary soup and bread
following the ceremony

Saturday November 20, 2010

Potato Bacon Chowder

Choice of

Champagne Chicken or

Salmon with Citrus Salsa or

Lamb Shank

Chocolate Parfait

\$ 22.95

Friday November 26, 2010

Weepers

Complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Friday December 3, 2010

Pre-Christmas Weepers

Complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Saturday December 18, 2010

Christmas Dinner

Roma Tomato Soup

Traditional Turkey Dinner

(Salmon Alternate)

Christmas Pudding with a burnt

Rum Sauce

\$ 22.95

Friday December 31, 2010

New Year's Eve

Lobster Bisque

Oven Roasted Prime Rib

New York Cheesecake

\$ 55.00

Guest Policy for Club Dinners

Members are reminded of a Board decision taken in March, in response to increased demand for seats at Club dinners. The policy states that dinner reservations may be made for member couples only. A member couple may place the names of two

guests on the wait list, and if space is available on the Tuesday before the event, names from the top of the list will be accepted. Member couples on the wait list will have priority regardless of their place on the list.

Dress Code for Club Dinners

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

For ladies, dress of the day

for serving members and dress/skirt/slacks for civilians.

Please note that dinners begin at 1900 for 1930 hours, unless otherwise specified.