

# LEAD AND LINE

## NEWSLETTER OF THE NOAVI

<p><b>Bras d'Or's disaster</b> <i>The bright side?</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Page 3</b></p>	<p><b>New Naval Monument</b> <i>On the Prairies of course</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Page 5</b></p>	<p><b>Why Canada needs a larger Navy</b> <i>In one sweet chart</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Page 4</b></p>	<p><b>The official poop on wearing a uniform post retirement</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Page 9</b></p>
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### *A terrible tale ...*

**By CPO1 (Ret'd) 'Buster' Brown,**  
"Outside Wrecker",  
HMCS *Okanagan*, July 28, 1973

The 1973 incident of the underwater collision of HMC S/M *Okanagan* with RFA *Grey Rover* in the Clyde Estuary was a significant event in Canadian submarine history. From the 60s to the 90s, there have been near misses and bottomings as

well as Argus/Aurora weapon hits, "Julie" bomb scares, and ships' sonar domes banging into fins, that drew moments of anxiety in the minds of all submariners. Loud echoes of "Sonavabitch, that was close!" when witness to the superficial scars in black paintwork became the sporadic norm.

But there was nothing quite like the day when a tanker ran over a submarine. Had the boat been a few feet

*Continued on page 7*



### **NOAVI 28 Oct Luncheon**

*Guests - spouses, friends, family are most welcome at our luncheons*  
Lunches are at the Fireside Grill at 1130 for 1215  
4509 West Saanich Road, Royal Oak, Saanich, cost \$25.

**A special presentation on the Canals of France by 2 of our recently returned members. This will be a unique opportunity to experience the many aspects of canalling**

**through videos and photos narrated by Bill Conconi and Steve White.**

**We encourage all to attend and look forward to having many of our Special Associate members join us.**

*25 Nov. Cmdre. Bob Auchterlonie, Fleet Cdr*

*9 Dec. Our Annual NOAVI Christmas Luncheon*

*Reservations to Bud Rocheleau, 250-386-3209 or  
bnhrocheleau@shaw.ca by noon on Thursday 19 Sept.*

*When making your reservation, please advise of any food allergies or sensitivities.*

# NOAVI LEAD AND LINE



## President's Column Oct 2013



Thanks are due to all those who turned out for our Extraordinary General Meeting at the Fireside grill last month. The number was a bit lower than I was expecting, but we certainly had a good cross-section of the membership to take part. With only 44 attending we had to move upstairs to the smaller room, so it was a cosy meeting! As was announced previously, the purpose of the meeting was to finish up a couple of items that were not actioned at the AGM last June. Bill Con-

coni, our Treasurer, reported on last year's financial operations (we are still in the black), and the membership accepted the statements as presented. The other item of business was the expansion and simplification of our membership criteria. You may remember that this motion was put to the AGM for information only, as we had not given it the required notice needed under the BC Societies Act. Simply put, membership in the NOAVI is now open to anyone "of good character" who is interested in and subscribes to our objectives. After some discussion the motion was passed unanimously. It is not a *carte blanche* situation by any means, and your Executive Committee will establish a procedure for the vetting and approval of applications. So now we have Regular members who can vote and hold office, as well as our Special Associates (as before) who can now also vote and hold office (this is a change). Thus those who were

*Continued on page 3*

## NOAVI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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# NOAVI LEAD AND LINE

Associate members now are included as Regular members. As before, the Executive Committee can offer an Honorary membership to suitable candidates (we have none at the moment).

I have to admit that I was a bit disappointed by the low turnout – I did receive some calls and mail from some



**By Geoff Craven**

Just before completion and a commissioning ceremony, the Royal Canadian Navy's first and only \$50-million-dollar hydrofoil HMCS *Bras d'Or* was sitting in her cradle at Levis, Quebec.

Sometime that night she caught fire and was gutted with considerable damage to the complex drives and electrical systems.

The next morning the Project Manager, Commander (E) Dudley Allen and the Project Director, Commander (N) Constantine Cotaras were standing on the hard at Marine Industries looking at the charred wreckage of their baby.

After a protracted silence Dudley turned to Constantine and said "Tino, how can this be turned to our advantage?"

who could not attend, expressing their support for the motion at hand, but our average at lunch has been in the 60's in recent months. I can only assume that many were just not interested in the business of the Branch, which is most unfortunate. Branch business aside, our contract with the restaurant mandates that if we have less than 50 attending we have to move to the smaller room – this was OK for a business meeting, but, as those were there can testify, it would not be suitable for a meeting with a speaker as there would be no room for the screen, podium etc. Your program team works hard to bring in speakers of interest, so I hope that this situation was an anomaly and that we will be back to our normal numbers (and our normal room!) this month!

On a related matter, it has been suggested that we modify the dress for our lunches to be "smart casual" as opposed to jacket and tie. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on this matter – pro or con. The Executive Committee will mull this one over, and if there is time we can discuss at the next lunch.

Yours aye

*Nike*

Contributions to The Lead & Line costs gratefully received from Associate Member David Nicholson



David has been providing trusted investment advice for over a quarter of a century!

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# NOAVI LEAD AND LINE

## *A bit of a prang...*

**Dear Editor**

When I read the lead article in September's Lead and Line I wondered for a moment whether it was tongue in cheek. I think the collision between the two ships last month was rather more than just 'a bit of a prang.'



Yes the surface damage was slight overall but a collision that returns two ships to the dockyard and to have one's operational deployment cancelled is more than just a prang, or at least the consequences are.

because of flawed seamanship, not least because we have so few available platforms. So what is the answer? Get OOWs out of the simulators and into more sea time in small ships?

I would never applaud the zero tolerance for mistakes that the USN operates under. Equally we simply can't afford to suffer damage to our ships during exercises

I am sure valuable lessons were learned during this prang; but at what cost?

Sincerely David Collins

Diagram by John Webber



## WHY CANADA NEEDS A LARGER NAVY



# NOAVI LEAD AND LINE

## *Naval Shipbuilding Down Under* Are there any lessons to be learned here?

**Article by Sarah Martin in The Australian**

*THE \$8 billion Air Warfare Destroyer program has been plagued with design changes "way beyond" expectations because of problems with Spanish designer Navantia, according to the head of the company building the vessels.*

Steve Ludlam, chief executive of shipbuilder ASC, speaking for the first time about design revisions that have disrupted the building of the first of the navy's new destroyers, said that the experience should be a warning to Defence as it prepares to build its \$30 billion future submarine fleet.

"We get the drawings, we start building to the drawings . . . and then we get the next update to the drawings and there is a lot of change. There is an enormous amount of change in that," he told The Australian yesterday.

"It is way beyond anybody's expectations. It has been very difficult to manage."

Mr Ludlam warned the ongoing problems made the 2017 schedule for the second destroyer's delivery "tight", raising fears of further delays to the nation's biggest defence project.

ASC, which is the lead shipbuilder in the AWD Alliance, had been forced to deal with revisions to the so-called "build to print" design drawings from Navantia on an ongoing basis, he said.

The navy's three new 6500-tonne destroyers, based on Navantia's F104 ship, have already been delayed by two years because of construction problems, budget cuts and skills shortages.

In 2011, the project was thrown into disarray when the central keel block of the first warship was built with a "distortion" at defence contractor BAE's Williamstown shipyard.

The construction fault sparked a rift between the government's Defence Materiel Organisation and BAE over who was to blame.

Last September, the then defence minister Stephen Smith announced a "re-baselining" of the project, which

pushed delivery of the first ship back to 2016, with the third and final destroyer scheduled to be in service by 2019.

Mr Ludlam said while delivery of the third ship by 2019 "should be OK", he suggested the schedule might be disrupted by ongoing design revisions.

"The second ship shouldn't encounter those same issues, (but) it looks to be, on the current stated schedule, a bit tight," he said.

He urged the government to ensure the future submarine project involved the builder of the new fleet - likely to be ASC - in the design process to avoid similar problems occurring.



On Sept 22 the people of Regina gathered for the unveiling of a new monument on the HMCS Queen grounds in 100 Navy Way. Dedicated to all who served in the Navy, it is especially meant for those who died onboard HMCS Regina and HMCS Weyburn. Doug Archer, Chairman of the Friends of the navy and former mayor said, *We are so truly blessed that others have gone before to preserve our freedom and our democracy. We need to honour them and never forget the contribution they've made.*

## NOAVI - THE LEAD AND LINE

### *The terrible tale of a tanker and a submarine...*

shallower and the same distance forward, the result could have been fatal. The present day former crew often look back to the time it happened, but not in a way as most would expect, as a bad memory. Instead, we reflect on the event as a bonding experience, a fraternal relationship, and an expression of confidence in how efficiently we reacted in this extremely serious situation. Some may have felt indifferent at the time, but all of us in the end, gratefully realized how lucky we were.

This unexpectedly memorable and sudden event came during the very last serial of WUPs at 0743(Z), July 28, 1973 with just 17 minutes left before surfacing and heading back to the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane, Scotland. *Okanagan* was required, for this exercise, to conduct an Underwater Look (UWL): to practise gathering intelligence by means of periscope photography of underwater fittings, propellers, ancillaries, etc., upon the Royal Navy 7,600 ton Auxiliary Oiler RFA *Grey Rover*, the assigned (target). An unfortunate choice of words, indeed.

In order to obtain photography without breaching the surface, the boat maintained a depth some 10-15 feet below standard periscope depth of 59-60 ft. As *Grey Rover* closed, a combination of depth, course, range, and speed became factors that with a slight error in calculation had inherent risks.

To avoid a crash the submarine was hastily ordered to go deep by flooding D and Q tanks as compensation for quick change of safe depth to 180 feet, but it was too late. A sudden underwater pressure surge caused the boat to heel nearly 15 degrees to starboard and then as the boat rolled back towards equilibrium the tanker's churning propeller blades, for a number of revolutions, cut into the fin, making it resemble the teeth of a giant hacksaw.

The noise and clamour of rattling periscope rams with venting air and seawater from D & Q tanks gave every-



one fear of flooding. All compartments quickly shut down watertight bulkheads. Expecting that *Grey Rover* was now safely clear, the boat was ordered to surface in emergency by blowing all main ballast and auxiliary tanks from the ordered safe depth. A red grenade, warning of this submarine emergency, was fired. From this depth, emergency surfacing required much greater volumes of H.P. Air than when doing so from periscope depth as was the norm.

*Continued on page 7*



# NOAVI - THE LEAD AND LINE



*Okanagan* went bows up and rose rapidly to the surface. When she arrived “on the roof”, she did so ahead of the emergency red grenade, the signal that all surface vessels steer clear at the rush.

After the boat eventually achieved full buoyancy, it was impossible to exit via the conning tower hatch so a forward hatch was finally opened. Those on the casing witnessed and shuddered at the extensive damage. Shocked minds resulted from both the adrenaline reaction and the physical irregularities of structural damage. The sudden execution of these emergency procedures combined with the bizarre “new look” of the fin, made it tempting to be confused but long-practised cool heads prevailed. With elements of embarrassment and exasperation it was now the painstaking and awkward to execute task to head into Faslane.

The crew would have to exhibit the obvious evidence of its chagrin at having been “caught” to other submarine crews alongside and staffs ashore. Gone was the general acknowledgement that HMC S/M *Okanagan* was nearing the end of one of the most successful work-ups a submarine had ever accomplished.

Just two hours had gone by since the collision and every man aboard had many questions. What went

wrong? Why did it happen? What did a submarine and her crew that performed so well in WUPS do to have to suffer this? How close did they come to sinking? Messages were flying back and forth. People on the casing and bridge were straining to focus on the tasks at hand; and down below, others summoned their presence of mind to operate effectively under these strange circumstances. Now destined to live with a memory that shall never go away, each man in the crew inherited some constant reminder of that bittersweet day in the Clyde approaches. While the crew endured this severe embarrassment, an inquiry began immediately, in order to review the proceedings that led to this near disaster.

Earlier this year, crew member long retired submarine CPO (Electrician) Brian Lapierre took it upon himself to rally the group of special shipmates who were then aboard the boat. The intention was to re-unite for a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to commemorate the event. His efforts extended across Canada and as far away as Mozambique. After much computer research into their whereabouts and in chasing guys down, he was successful to the extent that from a complement of 65 officers and men, 15 were to attend a private and exclusive get-together which took

*Continued on page 8*

# NOAVI FEATURE STORY

place July 28, 2013, a sunny Sunday morning, at RCNA Peregrine on Agricola St. in Halifax.

It was an opportunity to recall the moment when their teamwork, precision and quick reactions saved a submarine and themselves from near death. With the symbolic Jolly Roger flag in attendance, the event kicked off with seeing faces that hadn't been seen in years while the increasing crowd rejoiced in bear-hugs, rigorous handshakes and very noisy "Well, I'll be's!" among greying and balding guys from B.C., Quebec, Ontario and indeed Halifax. There would be a (submarine) Grace of Thanks preceding a Crunch Brunch of eggs, hash browns, bacon, bangers, french toast and shirtlifters. Duff would follow; instead sharply substituted with a 40 oz. bottle of (wait for it), the original RCN's Pusser's Neats supplied by Brian, who acquired it in 1976.

Toasts would ensue: First to "Okanagan at Minute 43", followed by a Silent Toast in recalling the names of 13 messmates who through those 40 years, have since "Gone Deep". With printed words in hand they all then joined in unison in reciting The Submariners' Prayer. It was amazing how everyone could account of their experience and how these independent details agreed accurately with the events as they unfolded.

A year later in 1974, that crew was well into exercises off Puerto Rico when a message arrived onboard declaring that, fresh out of the yard, *Onondaga* had completed a major refit and was on this day, sailing for the U.K. and her turn at the grueling seven-week WUP in Scotland. In the mess, we decided to send her a message recognizing her good work in getting out of Halifax and indeed underway, which in itself was a major accomplishment. The message read:

*QUOTE FROM THE CHIEFS AND PETTY OFFICERS OKANAGAN TO THE CHIEFS AND PETTY OFFICERS ONONDAGA- GOOD LUCK-GOOD SAILING-YOUR REFIT IS OVER- WHEN YOU GET TO FASLANE, LOOK OUT FOR GREY ROVER UNQUOTE.*

Name:	HMCS <i>Okanagan</i> (S74)
Builder:	<a href="#">Chatham Dockyard</a> , <a href="#">Chatham</a>
Laid down:	25 March 1965
Launched:	17 September 1966
Commis- sioned:	22 June 1968
Decom- missioned:	14 September 1998
Motto:	<i>Ex imo mari ad victoriam</i> ("From the depths of the sea to victory")
Status:	To be scrapped

## General characteristics

Type:	Attack/patrol submarine
Displace- ment:	Surfaced: 2,030 t (2,000 long tons) Submerged: 2,410 t (2,370 long tons)
Length:	295.25 ft (89.99 m)
Beam:	26.5 ft (8.1 m)
Draught:	18 ft (5.5 m)
Propulsion:	2 diesel electric engines
Speed:	Surfaced: 12 kn (22 km/h; 14 mph) Submerged: 17.5 kn (32.4 km/h; 20.1 mph)
Range:	9,000 nautical miles (17,000 km; 10,000 mi)
Endurance:	56 days
Test depth:	120 metres (390 ft)-180 metres (590 ft)
Crew:	69
Sensors	Type 187 Active-Passive sonar Type 2007 passive sonar
EW	MEL Manta UAL or UA4 radar warning
Armament:	8 × 21 in (530 mm) tubes (6 bow, 2 stern), 18 torpedoes



# NOAVI - THE REAL POOP

## The official poop on wearing your uniform post retirement

1. The purpose of this NavGen is to provide direction to RCN members, units and institutions for wearing of uniforms by RCN members after release.
2. The navy is a proud and historical institution that cultivates an ethos for service, loyalty and pride within its members. For many, this ethos does not diminish once a member retires or leaves the Navy. Indeed, it is acknowledged that some former service members wish to demonstrate their continued connection with the Navy, and contribute to the communications of the RCN public messages, by wearing their uniforms on ceremonial and commemorative occasions. Having said this, the irregular application of Canadian Armed Forces regulations as they relate to wearing of uniforms after release requires clarification
3. While wearing of uniforms when no longer a serving member of the CAF is “conditionally” permitted, the wearing of uniforms and insignia is, by custom, governed by and subject to the agreement of the branch/regiment concerned. For the RCN, that authority to permit the wearing of uniforms for non-active members lies solely with the Commander of the RCN.
4. Permission for former service members to wear uniforms is limited and revocable. Accordingly all standing authorities as they may have been created at the formation, unit and institution level for former RCN service members to wear uniforms are revoked. This order shall be substituted in their place.
5. Mess dress is a uniform. Therefore mess dress is not an acceptable order of dress for retired members unless permission has been granted. Similar to other orders of dress, the authority to permit the wearing of mess dress for former service members lies solely with the Commander of the RCN.
6. This NavGen does not affect honorary appointments which are governed at Ref E and does not apply to RCN members who had served previously and are now on terms of service within the primary reserve. Supplementary reserve members are not considered serving members and are not authorized to wear uniforms unless permission is granted..
7. Requests by former RCN service members to wear uniforms, including mess dress, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such approval shall be limited to exceptional circumstances where the wearing of the uniform is necessary and will favourably contribute to the RCN. These occasions must be considered carefully. There are too many possible scenarios to list all of the events that may warrant wearing of a uniform after service. Events such as significant military anniversaries celebrated by mess dinner and award presentations to former service members who are very recently retired may warrant, if substantiated properly, the wearing of uniforms. However mess dinners, in general, do not warrant the wearing of uniforms by former RCN members.
8. All requests to wear uniforms (including mess dress) by former RCN members shall be sent, via local and regional messes and event organizers, to Director Naval Personnel at DGNP. A request should be submitted well in advance of events so as to allow sufficient time to process and provide responses. Sending a request does not constitute receiving permission.
9. RCN institutions such as messes, shall ensure that their constitutions clearly reflect this policy on the wearing of uniforms and articulate the process for requesting permission should there be an exceptional event that would warrant the wearing of uniforms vice equivalent civilian attire. Blanket requests for events will not be considered except in the most exceptional circumstances. Associations and other RCN affiliated organizations are encouraged to include this NavGen in their list of references and are asked to make specific comment in invitations about wearing of uniforms by retired RCN members.

*Continued on page 10*

# NOAVI LEAD AND LINE

10. As Commander RCN, I praise and thank all who have served previously: I am most reassured by the numbers who wish to demonstrate their continued love for and loyalty to their Navy. However as Commander I must also be mindful of the serving members of the day and that they, above all others, remain sworn to unlimited liability if ordered into harms' way, and therefore must be clearly recognizable as such in the many events attended by both current and former RCN members.

11. CRCN sends.



## Service Officer's report

Mrs. Margaret Bartlett,  
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Captain (N) Robert Peers  
Broadmead Lodge

*Please phone prior to visiting*

*The visitation committee is in the midst of a friendly blitz by telephone to our associate members. Two new members have joined our ranks Jay Rangel and Jim Leamey. If you are called, please feel free to ask anything you like. If you would like to join us, phone Irvine Hare 250-592-2268 or Peter or Elizabeth Campbell at 250-478-7351*