

LEAD AND LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND

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HMCS Fredericton's CH-124 Sea King helicopter conducting hoists during Operation Reassurance this summer.

Photo: Cpl Charles A. Stephen



NAC-VI 28 Sept Luncheon

Guests - spouses, friends, family are most welcome

*Lunch at the Fireside Grill at 1130 for 1215
4509 West Saanich Road, Royal Oak, Saanich.*

Speaker: LCdr. Martin Head, Executive Officer RCSU Pacific, who will be speaking on the Sea Cadet Program in British Columbia as well as the recent Summer Training for Cadets at HMCS Quadra.

*Please contact Kathie Csomany
csomany@islandnet.com or 250-477-4175 prior to
noon on Thursday 24 Sep.
Please advise of any allergies or food sensitivities.*

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE



President's Message Sept 2015

Welcome back from summer. As you read this, the Executive (Board) will have just completed a strategic retreat and its first meeting.

Given all the changes coming down from Ottawa regarding our governance model and the new priorities presented nationally, we, your Executive, felt it timely to start the year by establishing our goals for the year and to build action plans to achieve them. I will report fully on this in the October Lead and Line.

As to our luncheons this year, they will start on September 28, again at the Fireside Grill. Our speaker is still to be confirmed, we have a number of possibilities at this point and will confirm with you as soon as we know.

See below in this publication for a listing of the new Board as well as members that have taken on special appointments. You will also note that a few former positions, Membership and Programs are still to be filled. These are big tasks and we, as a Board, will be looking at innovative solutions, perhaps breaking up the load a bit.

If any of you have some time, and will be willing to take on some tasks, please contact me and we will gladly include you.

Finally, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our outgoing Executive, especially Mike Morres, our current Past President. He has been a great help to me as I pick up the reins.

Also, a special thanks to Larry Dawe for his work as Secretary and for all the other tasks he took on.

Yours Aye

Bill

NAC-VI Executive Committee				Special Appointments			
President	Bill Conconi	billconconi@me.com	250-652-1634	Editor	Felicity Hanington	felhan@telus.net	778-440-0395
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Director at Large	Ken Summers	kensummers@telus.net	250-370-9954	Historian	Stan Parker	esparker@shaw.ca	1-778-441-3933
Director at Large	Derek Greer	Derek.Greer@telus.net	250-595-1864	Webmaster	Eric Griffiths	eric.griffiths2012@gmail.com	1-250-537-0608
Director at Large	Rod Hughes	rhughes@shaw.ca	250-472-8905	<div> WHERE DO ALL THOSE PHOTOS GO? The photos taken at the monthly luncheon are posted on the NOAVI website each month. You can see them at: http://noavi.ca/events.html Click on the date. </div>			
Director at Large	Geri Hinton	pege398@shaw.ca	250-477-7334				
Director at Large	Bill Macdonald	becalmed1@shaw.ca	250-661-3731				
Director at Large	Gerry Pash	gwpash@shaw.ca	250-658-6509				

NACVI LEAD AND LINE



Join us for A Royal Toast

Greetings and Huzzah!

As you know, on **Wednesday 09 September**, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II shall surpass her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, as the longest reigning sovereign in Canadian (and British) history! Yes, during the forenoon of **Wednesday 09 September**, the Queen shall have reigned for more than 23,226 days, 16 hours, and 23 minutes, the length of time that Queen Victoria reigned.

To celebrate this most skookum milestone, the **NADEN Wardroom** will be laying on some sangies and nibbles and such, so that we can gather in a social setting and raise a glass to Her Majesty, who has so ably lived up to our request that she be "long to reign over us"!

So do come out to the **NADEN Wardroom** between **1130 and 1300** on **Wednesday 09 September**, to share regal dits and royal reminiscences, and to mark our Sovereign's record-breaking reign! Mayhaps we'll even sing "God Save the Queen"!

What else would you do on such a reigny day? (Hoo-hee, that one was just throne out there.)

Mike "We Are Much Amused" Erwin
Lieutenant-Commander
VPMC NADEN Wardroom



A Lynx Mk8 helicopter from 815 Squadron lights up the evening sky with a massive flare release during an exercise in the Indian Ocean. The Lynx Mk8 shown is on a nine month cruise aboard HMS *Richmond*, a Royal Navy Type 23 frigate which you see looming in the background.

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE

HMCS Haida in drydock for repairs

HMCS Haida, a Parks Canada National Historical Site at the Catherine Street Pier is undergoing \$3 million of structuring assessments of its hull to determine what type of repairs may have to be made next year. the project is expected to take two years.

This could mean the *Haida*, which was commissioned in 1943, and served in the Arctic, English Channel, Normandy and Biscay in 1944, and during the Korean War in 1952-54, could be laid up for a second time for repairs.

Prior to locating permanently to Hamilton as a floating museum from Ontario Place in 2003, the *Haida* was sent to Port Weller dry docks for nine months of repairs. The work involved replacing over four tons of steel plates



HMCS Haida in the Port Weller Dry Dock in 2009.



HMCS Haida arriving at her new berth at Pier 9 in 2003

and improvements to its superstructure.

Parks Canada took ownership of the ship in 2002, and the *Haida* opened to the public in 2004.

In 2010 the federal government provided the *Haida* with \$100,000 in funding so repairs could be made to the ship's deck.

Quick Facts

- *HMCS Haida*, a Tribal Class destroyer built in England, was commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy in 1943 and served in many theatres of operation through the Second World War. After a post-war refit, *Haida* continued in service through the Korean Conflict until she was decommissioned in 1963.
- The ship was designated as a National Historic Site of Canada in 1984 by the federal government. *HMCS Haida* arrived at Pier 9 in Hamilton Harbour on August 30, 2003, the 60th anniversary of her commissioning.
- *HMCS Haida* National Historic Site welcomes between 12,000 and 16,000 visitors every year.

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE

New Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship to be named in honour of Halifax Naval hero William Hall

Petty Officer William Hall, a Canadian naval hero, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at the Relief of Lucknow, India on November 16, 1857 during the Indian Rebellion.

Then Able Seaman William Hall was serving in the frigate *HMS Shannon*, when the ship was ordered to Calcutta, British India, when Rebellion broke out in 1857. A group of gunners, sailors



and marines from *HMS Shannon* were formed together (the Shannon Brigade) and took part in the Relief of Lucknow. On November 16, 1857, naval guns were brought up close to the mutineers' fortification. Gun crews kept up a steady fire in an attempt to breach and clear the walls, while a hail of musket balls and grenades from the mutineers caused heavy casualties.

Able Seaman Hall and Lieutenant Thomas James Young were the only survivors of the Shannon Brigade, all the rest having been killed or wounded. Between them they loaded and served the last gun, which was fired at less than 20 yards from the fortification's wall, until it was breached.

Quick Facts

- In September 2014 Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the forthcoming AOPS will be named to honour prominent Canadians who served with the highest distinction and conspicuous gallantry in the Navy. The lead ship was named Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Harry DeWolf* and the class is known as the *Harry DeWolf* Class. Other announced ships' names in the class include HMCS *Margaret Brooke*, HMCS *Max Bernays* and, now, HMCS *William Hall*.
- William Hall is one of a number of prominent black Canadians recognized during Black History Month, a time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions throughout history of black Canadians who have helped make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation it is today.
- On January 23, 2015 the Government of Canada announced the awarding of the build contract with Irving Shipbuilding Inc. for the construction of six Harry DeWolf-class AOPS as part of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS). This contract, valued at \$2.3 billion, marks the start of the construction phase under the NSPS. Construction is set to begin in the fall of this year.
- The RCN will employ the AOPS to conduct sovereignty and surveillance operations in Canadian waters on all three coasts, including in the Arctic. The AOPS will also be used to support other units of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in the conduct of maritime-related operations, and to support

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE



Operation Reassurance - NATO at Sea

Above a marine systems engineer keeps things running in HMCS Fredericton. Below, Fredericton does a RAS with the German ship FGS Spessart and to the right a member of the Enhanced Naval Boarding Party rappels down the hull of HMCS Winnipeg to the waiting RHIB.



NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE

PROJECT RESOLVE: Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment Ship

The Government of Canada has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Chantier Davie Canada Incorporated and Project Resolve Incorporated to continue discussions on pursuing an at-sea support services contract.

The LOI provides Chantier Davie and Project Resolve with the ability to start limited activities to advance the schedule. It will also provide some financial protection to the shipyard for these expenses, should a contract not be awarded. Any proposed costs would be pre-approved by the government, which will require Davie to provide a rationale in every instance.

The first Joint Support Ship (JSS) is anticipated to be operational in late 2020. The JSS will provide a robust war-fighting capability with all military crewing and contain the capacity to be continuously upgraded over the next 30 to 40 years to meet the Navy's evolving operational requirements. An interim supply ship will provide a more modest capability and will not conduct full-spectrum military operations in high-threat environments.

Project Resolve involves the conversion of a modern, European-built containership (rumoured to be the Asterix a Liberian flag ship built in 2010) into an Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ship. The concept of



The container ship Asterix currently at sea in the South China Sea

converting a containership into a naval fleet auxiliary ship is not a new one – it has been performed on several occasions over the past decades including by the Royal Navy and the United States Navy. The converted vessel will be fully compliant with all international regulations and will fully replace the lost capability from the legacy AOR class.

Designed by NavTech, the ship will be converted in two locations: AECON Pictou Shipyard in Nova Scotia and then Chantier Davie Canada in Quebec. A pan-Canadian supplier network spanning six provinces has been selected to provide equipment and services for the program.



NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE



Russia's Messy Naval Day

One of the highlights of summertime is Russia's annual Navy Day proceedings held in ports across Russia on the last Sunday of July. This year's parade at Sevastopol in the Crimea, was quite a bit more exciting than

the others. The Russian Frigate *Ladney* fired a missile which subsequently landed in the sea shortly in front of the frigate. President Vladimir Putin was in Baltiysk observing other celebrations at the time. That can't be good for a sailor's career.

Ed

New location for Maritime Museum

The Maritime Museum Society office is moving to 634 Humboldt Street in Nootka Court. (The entrance is opposite Miniature World). This 3600 foot facility will be open to the public and will also have limited exhibit and programming space as well as a research cell.

A tentative opening is scheduled for around Labour day. The new MMBC Society Office, located directly across from the Empress Hotel and steps away from Victoria's Inner Harbour, will be developed in a phased approach and will feature administrative offices, a research lab, and a gift shop in its first phase.

In the meantime the Museum has received a promise of \$500,000



to renovate the CPR steamship terminal if an agreement can be reached on a long term lease.

THE LIFE OF RADM RICHARD LEIR

Rear Admiral (ret'd) Richard Leir died this Spring after a long and remarkable life. Captured by the Japanese in WWII, he spent three and a half years in a Japanese POW camp, from which he emerged emaciated but undaunted. He spent his considerable back pay on a sports car with which to woo his future wife, and spent the rest of his life looking for adventure and fun. No one who met Richard ever forgot him - loud, fun-loving, family oriented and always with an outrageous idea of how to make life more interesting. These are some memories.....Ed

Memories of Peter Chance

My first encounter with my cherished friend was when a group of 15 hopefuls sailed from Quebec City on the *Duchess of Bedford* bound for the UK and subsequently to the Royal Naval College Dartmouth to begin our training as Naval Cadets and eventually to be naval officers.

In England we joined other "Special Entree Cadets" which marked us from the regular entrees who were 12 and 13 years old. We ranged from 18 to 19 years and were mostly from the UK altho one of our people came from South Africa, another from India, one from Kashmir and some Poles who had escaped when the Nazis invaded.

Following our one term course, as newly minted Midshipmen we travelled by train to Scapa Flow in the Orkney

Islands, north of Scotland. My ship was a Colony Class Cruiser HMS Mauritius and Richard was appointed to HMS *Prince of Wales* bound for Singapore with HMS *Repulse*. Both the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk in December with much loss of life. Dick survived however and was sent to join HMS *Exeter*. Proceeding to the Battle of the Java Sea, *Exeter* was also sunk along with other Allied Ships. Again Dick survived but was rescued this time by Japanese forces and has said, "I became a guest of the Emperor." From February 1942 until his release in 1945 his description of life as a POW including the privations which he and his fellows had to endure is a remarkable testimony to his courage and indomitable spirit.

Memories of Graeme Allen

One of two midshipmen who with Richard Leir survived the sinkings of HMS *Prince of Wales* and *Exeter* and was in captivity with him in Japanese POW camps from 1942-1945.

We all know what happened to the *Prince of Wales* and I remember seeing Richard swinging hand over hand from the POW to the Express. I thought at the time that he was fitter than I and so did not attempt to do the same, but



10 Dec 1941 HMS Prince of Wales departed from Singapore to investigate reports of Japanese landing forces at Kuantan. On arrival they found the reports to be false. At 1100 Japanese bombers and torpedo aircraft began their assault. At 13:15 the order was given to abandon ship and at 13:20 Prince of Wales sank; Vice-Admiral Tom Phillips and Captain John Leach among the 327 fatalities.

THE LIFE OF RADM RICHARD LEIR

swam as fast as I could across the gap. Most of the Midshipmen survived and were posted to HMS Exeter and were captured on March 1st 1942.

Life under the Japanese had a few problems, as you can imagine. There was hunger, discomfort, and brutality in that order. One could avoid the worst of the brutality of one kept one's wits about one and didn't do anything stupid.

The problem of discomfort was continuous and Richard was very smart at making the best of any situation in which he found himself. For example, he made himself a proper bed whenever he could scrounge the materials. But a decent bed brought other problems, chief of which were bed-bugs. Here, Richard was an inspiration to us all in keeping these nauseating creatures at bay, by keeping the feet of the bed in a mixture of water and paraffin; and by rubbing the joints of the bed with soap. (if you had any).

After a year or so, when the officers were separated from the lower ranks, we were all paid a small amount of the Japanese version of the Dutch currency, and we could spend this money with a local trader. The food available was usually bananas (*you could eat 16 before your digestive system fell apart...Ed*) and a coarse unrefined sugar "goela Java".

Now Richard had a sweet tooth, and, like Oscar Wilde who could resist anything except temptation, ate all his goela Java at one go and suffered a long period of bilious remorse. So he made himself a container from a large bamboo, and this he plugged with a carefully carved stopper. This was effective against all but the very smallest ants. To thwart these, he stored the bamboo on top of an ant heap of large ants, who could not get in themselves but could keep the small ones out.

I would not recommend a spell in a Japanese prison camp to anyone but if it has to be, I could not imagine a better companion than Richard. Always resourceful, usually cheerful and able to look on the bright side of most

situations, he has left me with some unforgettable memories, and my life would have been the poorer without his friendship.

Richard Hugh Leir

was born in Penticton, BC, in 1921. He joined the Royal Canadian Navy as a cadet in 1940, after attending Shawnigan Lake School, as well as the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England, continued his early training with the Royal Navy.



During World War II, he witnessed the sinking of the battlecruiser HMS *Hood*, and survived the sinking of the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and the cruiser HMS *Exeter*. Following the latter, he was officially listed as dead for three years while actually a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese.

Between 1945 and 1954, Leir saw service in five destroyers and two frigates, including duty as Operations Officer in HMCS *Athabaskan* during the Korean War in 1950-51. Between 1954 and 1962 he commanded the destroyer HMCS *Crusader*, attended the RN Staff College, served as Executive Officer of the aircraft carrier HMCS *Bonaventure* and was the Training Commander in the Fleet School at Halifax.

He commanded the destroyer HMCS *Skeena* in the Pacific in 1962. In 1963 he took command of HMCS *Venture*, the officer cadet training establishment in Esquimalt. In August 1964, he was appointed to Canadian Forces Headquarters. In 1965 he was made Commander, First Canadian Escort Squadron based at Halifax and the following year promoted Commodore as Senior Canadian Officer Afloat Atlantic.

Richard Leir went to the National Defence College in 1967 and to National Defence Headquarters as a Director General in 1968.

He was promoted to Rear-Admiral on June 18, 1970, and appointed Commander Maritime Forces Pacific in which capacity he served for three years until designated Chief of Maritime Operations in Ottawa, retiring on 14 August 1975.

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE

Recovery of Bell from HMS Hood

A research team led by U.S. philanthropist and entrepreneur Paul G. Allen has successfully recovered the bell of the battle-cruiser *HMS Hood*, sunk in 1941, during World War II. Once restored, the bell will respectfully serve as a tangible and fitting memorial for the 1,415 lives lost when the *Bismarck* sunk the ship in the North Atlantic.

The bell was first discovered and photographed in a July 2012 Allen-led expedition. The bell was found lying on the seabed well away from the parts of the battle-cruiser's hull. The bell is in good condition, but will require a year-long expert conservation and restoration effort because it has spent so long in deep seawater.

Director of Blue Water Recoveries, David Mearns, said: "I am extremely pleased that we have been able to fulfill one of the last wishes of Ted Briggs, one of only 3 survivors of Hood's crew of 1,418 men, to recover the ship's bell as a memorial to his shipmates.



Despite 74 years of immersion in the hostile depths of Denmark Strait the bell is in very good condition. The inscriptions decorating its surface clearly indicate that the bell was preserved for use on the battle-cruiser *Hood* after first being used as the bell of the Battle-ship *Hood* from 1891 to 1914.

This bell has therefore seen action in two Capital ships of the Royal Navy spanning a period of 50 years.

An engraving on the bell also records the wishes of Lady Hood who launched the ship in memory of her late husband Rear Admiral Sir Horace Hood KCB DSO MVO who was killed in the battle of Jutland.

This was clearly a special bell for a special ship and it will forever serve as a fitting memorial to the Mighty Hood and a reminder of the service and sacrifice of her men."

HMS Hood is the largest Royal Navy vessel to have been sunk, causing the largest loss of life suffered by any single British warship. The recovery is fully supported by the HMS Hood Association whose members include veterans who served in the ship before her final mission in 1941, and relatives of those lost with her.

Once conservation of the bell is complete, it will be put on display by the National Museum of the Royal Navy. It will form a major feature of the new exhibition dedicated to the 20th and 21st century Navy, which opened at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard in 2014.

It is a fitting location as *HMS Hood* was based in Portsmouth.

Pacific's new Commander



Maritime Forces Pacific's (MARPAF) new commander, Rear-Admiral Gilles Couturier, took command July 14, 2015.

Among his biggest achievements of his 32 year career was being selected as the Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander in 2014 for Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), the largest mari-

time exercise in the world. This was the first time a Canadian had taken on the role.

This isn't RAdm Couturier's first posting to the West Coast. He served on Pacific fleet ships early in his career and later commanded Maritime Operations Group Four. Then, in 2008, he served as the Maritime Component Commander for Operation PODIUM, the Canadian Armed Forces' contribution to the overall security effort for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE

Blackbeard's Revenge



A cast-iron cannon from Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Photograph by Robert R. Clark, National Geographic

The Maritime Museum of North Carolina has been investigating a shipwreck off the coast of Beaufort North Carolina for some years now, convinced that it must be the wreck of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, flagship of the famous pirate Blackbeard. Recent discoveries have confirmed the theory with archaeologists bringing up 13 cannon, a small anchor (grapnel) and a 12 foot anchor.

Other finds include Apothecary weights stamped with tiny fleurs-de-lis, royal symbols of 18th-century France. *Queen Anne's Revenge* was actually a former French ship, *Le Concorde*, captured by Blackbeard in 1717. He forced *Le Concorde's* surgeon to join the pirate crew, and a surgeon at that time likely would have had apothecary weights.

A small amount of gold found among lead shot. Archaeologists think a French crewman might have hidden the gold in a barrel of shot to conceal it from Blackbeard's pirates.

And last but not least, a bell engraved with the date 1705. No other ship as big as the *Queen Anne's Revenge* was known to be in the area at the time.

Blackbeard (Edward Teach) was a renowned pirate, his cognomen derived from his thick black beard and fearsome appearance; he was reported to have tied lit fuses under his hat to frighten his enemies. He formed an alliance of pirates and blockaded the port of Charleston, South Carolina. After successfully ransoming its inhabitants, he ran *Queen Anne's Revenge* aground on a sandbar near Beaufort, North Carolina. He accepted a royal pardon but he was soon back at sea, where he attracted the attention of Alexander Spotswood, the Governor of Virginia. Spotswood arranged for a party of soldiers and sailors to try to capture the pirate, which they did on 22 November 1718. During a ferocious battle, Teach and several of his crew were killed by a small force of sailors led by Lieutenant Robert Maynard.



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HERE THERE BE MONSTERS....



Mysteries of the Sea

September's little miracle of the deep is the seriously under-rated sea slug, a name given to anything which looks like a snail without a shell although it actually includes a wider variety of creatures. Ed

So, I am guessing you didn't know sea slugs could be so beautiful, or that I could have filled the pages of this entire newsletter with other photos of equally beautiful but quite different sea slugs and nudibranchs. For this month we will settle for just two little gems:

Nembrotha Kubaryana

A little beauty known as the "variable neon slug" is found primarily in the Indo-West Pacific and can grow up to 120 mm (almost 5" in real measurements). It



Nembrotha Kubaryana

usually sports green stripes, raised spots and fake rolex watches. It is in fact a nudibranch.

Chromodoris Willani

A delightful little creature with what scientists refer to as "many colourful, weird tentacles sticking out of its back" which lives in the Western Pacific around the Philippines. (You may remember the adorable little Glaucus Atlanticus featured in a previous issue which ate



Chromodoris Willani



Portuguese Man O' Wars whole, which explains why these guys get to be in a column on monsters. The Chromodoris, itself, prefers sea sponges being a creature of a more delicate nature.

NAC-VI LEAD AND LINE



Admiral's Mountains of Southern BC

Mt Elphinstone, 4160 ft;

The main topographical feature behind Gibsons (on Howe Sound North of Vancouver) as seen from Georgia Strait. At the time of Admiral Lord Howe's decisive tactical defeat of the French Navy 400 NM East of Ushant, at the westernmost tip of France (Brittany) dubbed the "Glorious First of June" 1794; in which 51 ships of the line were engaged; 26 French, 25 English).

Capt. Richards of the survey vessel *Plumper* named many features of Howe Sound for heroes of the First of June, (notably Howe himself) in 1860. Capt John Elphinstone of *HMS Glory* was singled out by Howe for special honours for his aggressively charging through the French line. The new French revolutionary republic had mismanaged its economy to the point that the financially broke government of the starving country turned to America for support. In repayment for the assistance Louis XVI had given to the American Revolutionary War, a huge food convoy was assembled in the Chesapeake, to support the French revolutionary government.... which ironically had beheaded Louis 15 months previously.

Howe set out to defeat the French Atlantic Fleet, which was protecting this vital convoy. He did defeat the fleet but the convoy reached France. Both sides understandably claimed victory. In the long term, the French navy never seriously challenged the RN until the Napoleonic period.



Also serving in the RN at the time of this pivotal battle, was another John Elphinstone, a 20 year old just-made Commander of a frigate, not involved in the famous battle. This notable Elphinstone, of the same noble Scottish family, served for 45 years and had eleven commands. Capt. Richards of the survey vessel *Plumper* named many features of Howe Sound for heroes of the First of June, (notably Howe himself), but by 1860, he would have been very aware of the younger Admiral Elphinstone who served until 20 years before the naming.

Details from: Cdn Hydrographic **Chart 3579** discontinued; BC Provincial Archives "Place Names on File" by A.J. Harvey and Wikipedia, various.

Service Officer's report

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In Memoriam

20 June 2015 LCdr Frank Allwood
RCN (Ret'd)

7 Jul 2015 Cdr Gene Gosh RCN
(Ret'd)