



CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum is located at Naden on Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in the city of Victoria, which is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, province of British Columbia, Canada.

The museum's goal is to collect, preserve, interpret and display the history and heritage of the naval presence on Canada's West Coast and of the military on Southern Vancouver Island.



www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org

# Our museum is a hit with visitors

It's always a joy, if not a little bit of a self-affirming exercise, to go through the visitor comments book that sits in the entrance to our naval exhibits. It feels good to know what we are doing strikes a cord with our visitors and can often encourage them to extend their visit to behind the scenes – that is our archives.

Here are a few examples of what people are saying about us:

D. McIntosh of Winnipeg, Manitoba says, "I will always remember this day!"

R. Bennett of Kelowna, BC wrote: "Amazing displays and so well kept. Thank you."

Amber of Victoria, B.C. stated: "It was cool. Mannequins are creepy." Well, we can't argue with that Amber. More than a few have remarked on just that.

We get visitors from all over the world such as A. Lindstadt from Sweden who says, "This is a wonderful exhibit. I was in the Swedish Navy, 1962-63 U.N. Medal Cyprus." Or H. Frost of Australia who said, "Thank you. The Canadians played such a great part in the war."

We also seem to be a destination of choice despite being off the beaten path. J. and S. Rumsey of Richmond, California wrote, "Coming here was our #1 priority! Thank you!"

The museum is also an important

site for B.C. schools to visit. A group from Bodwell High School from North Vancouver said, "Excellent connection to B.C. curriculum! Bravo!"

Some visitors just want to make that connection to a family member who served such as D. Sale of Carrying Place, Ontario who was quite surprised to see something in our museum. "Found my father-in-law's signature on the Uganda life preserver!"

Or maybe visitors want to connect with their own naval past such as J. Russell from Newcastle, Ontario. Mr. Russell who served on K179, HMCS Buctouche, said, "Enjoyed the reminiscence. Thank you!"

Of course there is one comment that is my personal favourite and it comes from E. Jack of Duncan, B.C. who wrote, "Drop my pants fun!"

Well, I think that says it all!

By Debbie Towell,  
Curator



# THE MUSEUM *Team*

## Our Staff



Debbie Towell – Curator  
 Joseph Lenarcik – Assistant Curator  
 Clare Sharpe – Exhibit Designer/  
 Administration Assistant/Webmaster/  
 Volunteer Co-ordinator  
 Rob Nichol – Archival Assistant  
 Tatiana Robinson – Archival Assistant  
 Todd Hinks – Workshop staff

## Our Active Volunteers

Cecil Baker	Michael Harrison
Don Bendall	Bob Hewitt
Valerie Chatten	Angus MacKenzie
David Churchill	Robert Matthews
Jeremy Clunn	Paul O'Reilly
Marilyn Cunningham	Tom Pound
Janet Kay Curley	Zoila Proud
Nathalie Earl	Don Ramsfield
Dave Freeman	Don Thomas
Shawn Gillis	Norm Truswell

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with links for Home, Museum Information, Articles & Projects, What's New, and Links. The main content area features several articles and sections:

- CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum is located at Haden on (Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt), in the city of Victoria, which is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, province of British Columbia, Canada.**
- Historical Tidbit for September 27, 2013:** September 26, 1945 - HRC's *Nasuno* is paid off. Once sold, she is put into mercantile service and converted into a whale-catcher under the Dutch flag as *Arvo W. Jansz*. The *Arvo Nasuno* is finally broken up in 1965 in South Africa.
- Learn about the Museum....** Find out about new artifacts and happenings at **the CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum**. Select **current offerings** to learn about:
  - Visiting the museum including: opening hours & admission, take us out to the museum, and more.
  - History of the museum, including its buildings, and the surrounding military base.
  - Museum Services, including archival research and photo reproduction services & facility rentals.
  - How to get involved in the museum.
- Read about people, things, & events....** Choose the **articles & projects** section to read brief items about:
  - local heroes
  - ship histories
  - local vignettes
  - outstanding women
  - characters & controversies
  - facets of a sailor's life
  - defending the west coast
- We need your help!** CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum's project to gather information about women who served in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) during World War II has just reached a milestone: 1000+ WRCNS names and service numbers were received. To find out more about this project, visit [the WRCNS Project](#).
- To learn more about the custom of using ship's bells for christenings aboard Canadian naval**

**Visit the museum online**  
[www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org)  
 Daily interesting historical facts, updates on exhibits, West Coast lore and characters of CFB Esquimalt's past

## To Our Readers

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*Merçi!*

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# Managing the Collection: modern collectibles

There can be little doubt that a museum can only be as good as the collection it holds, but how do you determine what should and should not be held as part of that collection? In some respects you need to be like Nostradamus, for you are not just collecting for today but more importantly, you are collecting for tomorrow.

Much of what goes on at a museum is behind the scenes. What you see when you visit the museum (the exhibits) is only a very small example of what the museum holds – typically 15%. Indeed the primary purpose of any museum is to collect and then to research that collection either by those who hold that collection – in our case the staff – or by visiting researchers. If the museum does not hold a collection outside of what is already exhibited, then it loses its purpose of being a museum. It becomes no more than a small visitor centre.

Now why does a museum need to be like Nostradamus? Well, for

the simple fact that we need to be able to predict what may become a significant or rare piece. Something that is commonplace today, causing one to wonder why it should even be held in the collection, may become an extremely rare piece 10 years later. It could be something that no one ever thought to save for future generations. An example of this is many of the uniform pieces, wartime stationery, tools and equipment or housewares—all can seem commonplace to the user at the time but become highly collectible to a museum of the future.

This seemingly ubiquitous Tim Horton's travel mug is actually quite a rare find. It says something about a service member's time in Afghanistan and is something that all Canadians can relate; we all need reminders of home when we are separated from family and friends

while serving in a conflict zone. Why is it rare? Because it is something that is continually used much like uniform pieces such as trousers or shirts.

So when you wonder why it is important for a museum to collect or why does it choose to collect what it does – think of that Tim Horton's mug. What would it mean to you if you were away from your family? What would it say to fellow Canadians when trying to tell your story? What will it say to future generations? It's all about the story. It may seem like a trifle but it is so much more than that.

By Debbie Towell, Curator



Tim Horton's travel mug from Kandahar.

# Bringing the Fishermen's Reserve to Victoria

A year ago, while researching the Fishermen's Reserve for a museum exhibit, I came across a reference to a collection of 104 Fishermen's Reserve photos and negatives at the Vancouver Maritime Museum (VMM).

It was good news to discover this trove of images existed, since our own photo database is not at all well off for Fishermen's Reserve photos. But how to access these pictures, since they belonged to another museum with which we had no formal connection or history of sharing resources?

Right away I got in touch with Lea Edgar, the VMM's librarian and archivist, to ask how we could begin the process of making these historic photos available for our naval museums. Lea was very helpful and encouraging in this regard - "I can only see a project such as this benefitting us both so I would, personally, like to move ahead with it," she responded.

However, Lea explained that the VMM hadn't yet scanned or catalogued the photos or described them to archival standards. And her museum was also in the process of renovating its library and going through other major changes. Because of this, it wouldn't be a simple matter to immediately open up access to the photos for our own use. But the VMM was at least willing to entertain the possibility. Lea suggested that we leave the request with them for their museum's executive to consider and figure out the logistics. So the idea was put to one side, in the short term.

Then earlier this year, while setting up exhibits for the centenary of the submarine service, our museum made contact with Vancouver-based historian, collector, researcher and entrepreneur Joachim Waibel. Thanks to Mr. Waibel, we were able to borrow from the Vancouver Maritime Museum a gold watch he had

donated to their collection. The watch had once belonged to Adrian Keyes, who commanded the newly formed Canadian Submarine Squadron and the submarine CC1 for several months until he tired of sitting out the fight on the sidelines of WWI. Before Keyes's departure, the crew of CC1 presented him with the engraved gold pocket watch as a token of their esteem. This watch was an important focus of our submarine centenary displays and we were very grateful to Joachim Waibel for arranging the loan of such a valuable and significant item.

This summer Mr. Waibel attended the official opening of our new submarine gallery as a guest, and expressed interest in further helping our museum. When our wish to cooperate with the Vancouver Maritime Museum in obtaining the Fishermen's Reserve pictures was mentioned, he immediately offered to provide a student to the VMM to scan the photographs on their - and our - behalf. An arrangement should soon be in place to carry through on this offer, and with any luck we will be able to see and make use of these important photos before long.

By Clare Sharpe, Museum staff member



**Left: Fishermen's Reserve Training 1940. VR998.458.048**

**Below: Fishermen's Reserve RCNR Esquimalt 1939. VRP991.204.1**



# Questions for the Archives

I would estimate that the museum archives receives three research requests a day. One of our recent requests came from a man in Vancouver who wanted to know if his father qualified for the Arctic Star. His father had been in the Royal Navy but had been loaned to the RCN for part of the war. He had been told by the office which held his father's Royal Navy service record that there was no evidence that his father had ever served north of the Arctic Circle. He was hoping that there was a separate file on his father's Canadian service and that we might have access to it. When I told him that his father's Royal Navy record in the U.K. would include all his postings in Canada, he was disappointed, but said that he would now have to request a copy of his father's service record from the U.K. and examine it himself.

Another request we received came from the U.K. It was from relatives of Michael Charlton, Asst. Engineer

of HMS Topaze, who was accidentally shot, in 1861, by a companion while walking a narrow trail in Esquimalt Harbour. Tom Pound, one of our museum volunteers, was able to locate a copy of the death notice from Anglican Church burial records. He discovered that the deceased was buried in an unmarked grave in Pioneer Square, near Christ Church Cathedral. When I examined the area in person, I found that the City of Victoria had set up a large memorial to all RN and RCN sailors buried there. Robert Weissmann, the groundskeeper at the Veterans Affairs Cemetery in Esquimalt, also found a memorial plaque to Michael Charlton in the cemetery chapel. I passed on this information to the person who requested it and was told that he planned to come to Victoria next spring with other relatives and visit both memorials.

Often people requesting information

are also eager to share what they have found so far. One such person, initially asked for a crew photo of HMCS Wildflower, a convoy escort ship which was rammed by a merchant ship in fog, off the coast of Newfoundland, and sank on December 4, 1941, with twenty-three casualties (including the second cousin of the person requesting the info). When I was unable to find any information on her relative or the ship's crew, I was surprised to receive emailed copies of everything this researcher had found so far on the topic. She wished to make the information available to the families of other crew members.

At this time of the year, as we prepare to celebrate "The Holidays", I am reminded of the dozens of people who have donated their time and family photos to the archives over the years and I wish one and all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Joseph Lenarcik, Museum staff member

## BOOK REVIEW

**Gentleman Air Ace – The Duncan Bell-Irving Story**  
By Elizabeth O'Kiely  
Harbour Publishing

Many Canadians might know the leading Canadian aces of the Great War (Bishop and Collishaw) but few know of the first Canadian-borne ace.

That honour falls to Duncan Bell-Irving of Vancouver, B.C. At the start of the war, he enlisted in the army hoping to get into the fledgling Royal Flying Corps (RFC). At that time one couldn't join the RFC directly as you had to join from a recognized unit so Duncan joined the Seaforth Highlanders as a Private motorcycle driver.

Once overseas, he applied for a commission and expressed a desire to undergo flying training. Being rebuffed initially, he sought a transfer to the

Gordon Highlanders where he was successfully gazetted in 1915.

Following a tour in the trenches, he was accepted for flying training, initially as an Air Observer and then as a Pilot. As such, he distinguished himself in action with No 60 Squadron and eventually was appointed Flight Commander. He was shot down twice, but managed to attain the status of "Ace" with 6 kills in 1916.

As his last action saw him severely injured, he was sent to England to recuperate and, once healthy, he was posted to a training squadron where he introduced a syllabus emphasizing combat maneuvering – the first instance of what is now commonly called a "Top

Gun course".

Following the war, he remained in the fledgling RCAF as an Auxiliary Officer and held that rank into the Second World War.

This book, written by his daughter, is an excellent description of the early development of aviation and combat tactics. It is also an excellent description of the class structure of society in Canada and the United Kingdom at that time as the Bell-Irvings were a family of substantial means. A most fascinating read. The book is out of print, but may be found in used bookstores.

Reviewed by Paul O'Reilly



# Armistice Day in New Zealand, 2014

While travelling around New Zealand last November, Marion and I found ourselves in the city of Napier on the east coast of North Island on Monday, November 10. Once settled, I walked to the local equivalent to our Legion, the Returned and Services Association (RSA). There I was informed that the service next day would take place in the municipality of Taradale, about a 20 minute drive to the north-west.

We arrived the next day in time to join the several hundred folk, including all the children from the nearby elementary school. The ceremony was similar to ours but different enough to merit a description.

In New Zealand, 11 Nov is called Armistice Day, not Remembrance Day, and is neither a national nor local holiday. The day's purpose is to recall the end of the First World War. Other conflicts are remembered on ANZAC Day on 25 April.

Once assembled at 1035, the service started with God Save The Queen. The local air cadets provided eight sentries for the cenotaph. This is a clock tower located at one end of a grass triangle on the junction of two roads. Miss Sylvia Frame, the Taradale RSA president, gave an introduction to the service. She was followed by a prayer from the RSA Padre and a fine historical speech by a local politician. Since this speech finished at 1055, we had a bit of a stand easy. At 1100, a distant siren sounded to mark the beginning of one minute of silence. Traffic did not stop.

After the siren sounded a second time to mark the end of the minute silence, two high school students took turns reading aloud the names of 61 local lads who died during The First World War. After a brief historical intro, the high school Principal gave



a stirring reading of *In Flanders Fields*.

Next, the choir from the Taradale RSA sang "a cappella" the hymn *Let There Be Peace On Earth*.

A trumpet player sounded *Last Post*. This was immediately followed by a reading of an Ode by the Napier RSA president. Then we heard *Reveille*.

Two wreaths were laid. Everyone present - with two Canadian exceptions - sang the National Anthem, first in Maori and then in English.

The finale consisted of a single piper in full Highland rig who played a lament. This was not *The Flowers of the Forest* played here but another tune I did not recognize.

The RSA President invited the audience to place their poppies on the cenotaph and most complied. The New Zealand poppy (inset) is somewhat different from ours and is given away on Armistice Day vice being sold.

The RSA president issued a general invitation to the audience to repair to the RSA building some four blocks to the west for drinks and sandwiches. We accepted.

The first person I met was a Second World War navy vet whose son lives near Seattle. This chap, Brian, wore both the Atlantic and Pacific star. His friend was a former Royal Marine.

Also met a bunch of amiable army blokes so it was drinks all round. They were Korea and Vietnam vets, all ranks and regiments. Last, I met a naval padre who had originally served his first five years as a rating. This chap possessed a Canadian Methodist hymn book, given to him several years back by one of our Padres during a visit of four of HMC Ships to Sydney, Australia. Before I got a chance to discuss his History Sheet, his wife took him home.

We met the President herself, a former Wren and later on a nurse with both Army and RNZAF service. She and Marion hit it off and after more wine and many stories, we went out to a former Catholic Mission, now a winery, for an excellent lunch.

At The Mission, our waitress was a former New Zealand sea cadet who had spent a month in our area for the 100th anniversary of the RCN in 2010. The world is certainly getting smaller.

We got back to our hotel about 1700, after a very satisfactory and fulfilling day.

© Dave Freeman

# Wren, lawyer, professor, librarian

*“Style is not something one associates with lawyers and librarians; the latter particularly, seem to be distant and colourless. Such was not the case with Diana Mary Priestly. She had style and panache.” – The Globe and Mail (June 11, 1997)*

Diana Mary Priestly was born in Calgary, Alberta, on Sept. 22, 1922. Her mother was an English Red Cross nurse and her father was a Canadian captain who went to Calgary after the First World War to work as a newspaperman. When World War II broke out, the family was living in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Diana joined the Women’s Royal Canadian Naval Service (W.R.C.N.S.), serving at HMCS Chippawa in Winnipeg and HMCS Cornwallis in Nova Scotia.

Following the war, as a veteran, Diana enrolled at the University of British Columbia and received her B.A. in 1947. She then went into law school, hoping to land a diplomatic job with the Department of External Affairs. However, External Affairs wasn’t taking women in those days and after earning her LL.B. in 1950, Diana articulated with a Vancouver Island law firm. In 1952 she enrolled in the law librarianship program at the University of Washington. She graduated in 1953 and spent the next 10 years running the one-person law library at the University of British Columbia.

Discouraged by her inability to increase funding for the library at UBC, in 1963 she accepted an offer from the University of Toronto to manage their



Diana M. Priestly (1922-1997)

law library, which had a budget double UBC’s.

In 1967, she accepted a position as assistant law librarian and assistant professor at the recently created York University. Here, she was able to build a law library from scratch and the many business links she formed then served her well when she returned to British

Columbia in 1974 to build a new law library at the University of Victoria.

Before moving to Victoria though, she spent 1970 to 1972 as director of research at the University of Western Ontario’s Law School where she taught in both the law and library schools. In 1975 she briefly worked for the federal Department of Justice in Ottawa as a legal officer responsible for developing training programs for law students.

When she was appointed law librarian at UVic in June 1974 she was able to put her stamp on every aspect of the UVic Law Library, which opened on Nov. 15, 1980. It was only fitting that, upon her retirement in 1987, the library was renamed after her. Today if you Google her name, the first reference is the Diana M. Priestly Memorial Scholarship, a \$2,500 scholarship that has been given out annually by the Canadian Association of Law Libraries since 1987.

By Joseph Lenarcik



Photos courtesy of the Diana M. Priestly Law Library

## HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Thursday, December 25, 2014 – Closed for Christmas Day

Friday, December 26, 2014 - Closed for Boxing Day

Thursday, January 1, 2015 – Closed for New Year’s Day

## Write us...

We welcome your questions and comments with regard to any of the articles we have featured in this or past issues of *Headway*.

Please write to the museum at:

**CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum**  
**P.O. Box 17000 Stn. Forces**  
**Victoria B.C. V9A 7N2**

Or email:

[curator@navalandmilitarymuseum.org](mailto:curator@navalandmilitarymuseum.org)

## CFB Esquimalt

NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM

### HOUR OF OPERATION

Monday to Friday  
10.00am - 3.30pm  
(Closed weekends and statutory holidays)

### SUGGESTED DONATION

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