Reminiscences of my Flying Career in the RCAF, RNVR, RCNVR, RCN and CAF. (1943-1970)

LCDR (P) E.A. Myers RCN (Ret'd)

At the outset, I want to make clear that, although I served during WWII from May 1943 through VE and VJ days respectively, I did not engage in any direct actions against enemy forces. In other words I did not shoot at, nor was I shot at, in anger.

I did, however, have a rewarding and enjoyable 27.5 year career that started with my serving in the RCAF where, by December 1944, I had earned my Wings flying the single-engine Cornell and the twin-engine Cessna Crane aircraft and received my Commission as a Pilot Officer. Early in the New Year of 1945 the RCAF decided it had an over-abundance of Aircrew in the pipeline and placed recent graduates on Standby Reserve status.

Having decided to resume post secondary school education, it was shortly thereafter that I enrolled in Chemical Engineering at the University of Toronto. I had only just begun my studies when a team of Royal Naval Air Officers arrived on Campus to interview and recruit recently graduated pilots of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The objective was to build up, as fast as possible, the strength of Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm's fighter squadrons to engage the enemy in the Pacific. It didn't take much persuading to recruit over one hundred candidates to become Acting Sub Lieutenants (A) RNVR.

Shortly after VE Day, a contingent of us, ex-RCAF pilots, sailed across the Atlantic, gung ho to join the fray. It was to be a slow beginning, however, since first of all, we had to take, what we Canadians referred to as, a 'Knife & Fork Course'. It was given at the Royal Naval College and designed to expose us to the way an Officer in the Royal Navy should deport himself and carry out his duties and responsibilities.

To prepare us for our future as single engine pilots, it was next necessary for all Canadians to attend a flying course on Harvard Aircraft at RAF Station, Tern Hill. For some, it constituted a refresher flying course, for others, it amounted to a multi-engine to single-engine conversion training course. While at Tern Hill, we were also subjected to a rather strange test. Mustered in the Recreation Hall, we were required to sit on the floor with our backs against a wall while the length of our legs were measured. As it turned out, this was a major factor in the decision of which Candidate would be selected to fly Seafires and which would fly Corsairs. The shorter legged pilots were slated for Seafires while the longer legged candidates were to be assigned to Corsair Squadrons.

Not withstanding that WWII was over, rationing was still in effect in U.K., and meals at Tern Hill were subpar for Canadians. Most of us subsisted on 'fish and chips', 'toast and marmalade' and 'teatime sandwiches'. Teatime thus became a bone of contention between the RAF Officers and Canadians. Shortly after we arrived, it became apparent that if we waited until the WAF Stewardess guided the Tea wagon into its usual place in the Officers Mess, it was immediately surrounded by Officers in light blue who left little for the starving Fleet Air Arm recruits from Canada. It wasn't long, however, before we Naval types learned to intercept the WAF and the trays of goodies as they came down the hallway leading into the Mess. Needless to say, there was little left on the sandwich trays when the Tea wagon arrived at the appointed spot. The RAF types tolerated this for a short time before they began writing some nasty comments in the Mess Suggestion Book. As the name implies, it's the place to enter suggestions for improving the Mess, not for character assassination or waging war.

The first salvo was an RAF Officers recommendation that Canadians be read the rules of etiquette. That was upped a notch by a suggestion that Staff and Students be served Tea separately (Ruled impractical by the President of the Mess Committee). Things got more heated when an Officer in Blue suggested that "Colonials be Barred from the Mess at Teatime".

The last entry before the Suggestion Book was removed from the Mess was by a 'Canadian Colonial', who suggested that RAF Officers be issued running shoes so that they might become more competitive.

Fortunately within the week our training at Tern Hill was completed and we departed for our next establishment, H.M.S. Macaw near Buttle in Cumberland.

H.M.S. Macaw was a shore-based establishment designated and used exclusively as a holding unit for Fleet Air Arm Officers between appointments. This was our third and last visit to Macaw and most memorable because halfway through the very early morning piping of reveille, someone shot and silenced the Tannoy (the loudspeaker). Because hearing random shots was not uncommon during brief layovers at Macaw, one never ventured out of one's cabin without looking cautiously up and down the corridor and maybe even giving a warning cry.

Our next posting, in mid-Sept 1945, was at long last to our first operational unit, 883 Seafire Squadron at Arbroath in Scotland. Equipped with Mk.IIIs, we were all excited to fly this famous aircraft. The squadron comprised the C.O. LCDR(A) King-Joyce RN; Senior(P), Lieutenant(A) Rip Petrie RNVR; Able Flight Commander, S/Lt (A) Roe Wadham RNVR; Bravo Flight Commander,

Pete Beresford S/Lt (A) RNVR, and 32 ex- RCAF Acting Sub Lieutenants(A) RNVR.

The 32 first solos went with varying degrees of success. The narrow undercarriage of the Seafire caused it to be difficult to control directionally both on take-off and landing with the result that many a wing tip, and an occasional propeller had to be replaced before first solos were over.

During this stressful period there was very little banter in the Dispersal Hut where we all hung out when on flying duty. That was with the exception of one pilot, who shall remain nameless, who was merciless in his haranguing of anyone who was unlucky and pranged (bent) an aircraft.

When it came his turn to solo, the entire squadron turned out to bear witness. I doubt there was one person rooting for him., What we witnessed however, was a smooth take-off and climb out and a subsequent approach and landing that were of professional calibre. As he rolled down the runway, a number of us goofers (onlookers) began turning back towards the Dispersal Hut, thinking that there'll be no living with him now, when there was a great roar that brought everyone's attention back to the landing aircraft. Just in time to see it tip up on its nose and shatter the prop all to hell. There were smiles on all faces as we entered the Dispersal Hut. Not so our hero. When he entered much later, his parachute over his shoulder, he mumbled something about "Don't anyone say a f.....g word."

It's difficult not to feel you're part of a much-sought-after group when, in the relatively short period of 6 months, you're courted by the Royal Navy Feet Air Arm and then the fledgling Royal Canadian Naval Air Service.

During the first weeks of October, a team of Canadian Navy Officers that had arrived from Royal Canadian Naval Headquarters, Ottawa, interviewed all Canadian Pilots serving in Royal Navy Squadrons. The purpose being to select a number for transfer to the RCNVR to man the newly created Royal Canadian Air Service. On October 18th, 1945, the strength of 883 Squadron was reduced to 13 Canadian pilots, reflecting the loss of those who had not sought to transfer, preferring to return to civilian life back in Canada, plus those who had not been selected for transfer.

During the first week in November 1945 the much diminished Squadron packed up and relocated to RNAS Nutts Corner in Northern Ireland, about 10 miles South of Belfast. A temporary, wartime-built Airfield, it was quite rustic and lacking in creature comforts. Accommodations for both Officers and Troops were Nissen Huts, each with a single potbelly stove in the middle and a ration of one scuttle-full of a mixture of coal dust and sand per night.

When carrying out Evening Rounds, Squadron Duty Officers soon discovered that the men's quarters were toasty warm although heated by the same type of potbelly stoves as those in the Officer's Quarters. The only difference being that their stove had been modified by the occupants to burn discarded aircraft engine oil.

{ A brief digression to share the ingenuity of the Canadian Sailors, of all trades, who maintained our 883 Seafire Squadron Aircraft.}

The potbelly stove modification involved affixing, by wire, a juice can, open at one end, to the stove's metal chimney. A hole had been drilled in the bottom of the can to accept the flush soldering of a length of copper tubing. Six inches down from the bottom of the can, a simple on/off cock was installed. Next, a hole was drilled in the top of the stove through which to feed the copper tubing. The bottom end of the tubing was adjusted to sit an inch or so above a house brick that had been set on a non-combustible stand set on the grate on the bottom of the stove (ie a stack of bricks or a cement block).

Operation of the stove/furnace involved:- 1) filling the juice can/reservoir with oil, (ensuring that the on/off cock was off), 2) placing a small oil-soaked rag on the brick and 3) lighting the rag. As the flame begins faltering, open the cock and adjust the drip of oil until the oil dripping on the brick sustains the flame. Voila a cozy Nissen Hut.

End of digression and return to recollections.

Throughout the Winter of 1945/46, the Squadron continued its work-up towards the goal of becoming operationally ready for Carrier deployment to the Far East. During this period a couple of events of note occurred.

Firstly, on November 30th, I flew as wingman to Rip Petrie, our Senior (P), on an Oxygen- climb to 20,000 feet. On completion of the Oxygen-climb, which we had carried out over the Irish Sea and entirely in cloud, Rip called for an HF/DF (High Frequency/ Direction Finding) homing to our Base (Nutts Corner). During the descent, again through cloud, Rip and the Operator were exchanging information while I concentrated on formatting on my Leader. When we broke out below the overcast at about 1,000 feet, I saw that we were still over water and heading for a large Island that I didn't recognize. I heard the operator tell Rip that he should be able to see the runway strait ahead. I found this rather strange, because I couldn't see any runway and the upcoming island and countryside were unfamiliar. Understandably, I remained glued to Rip's wing as he wheeled around obviously in search of something familiar. Suddenly, Rip pointed down and, turning to port, called to say he was going to land and to follow him. I didn't have a clue where we were.

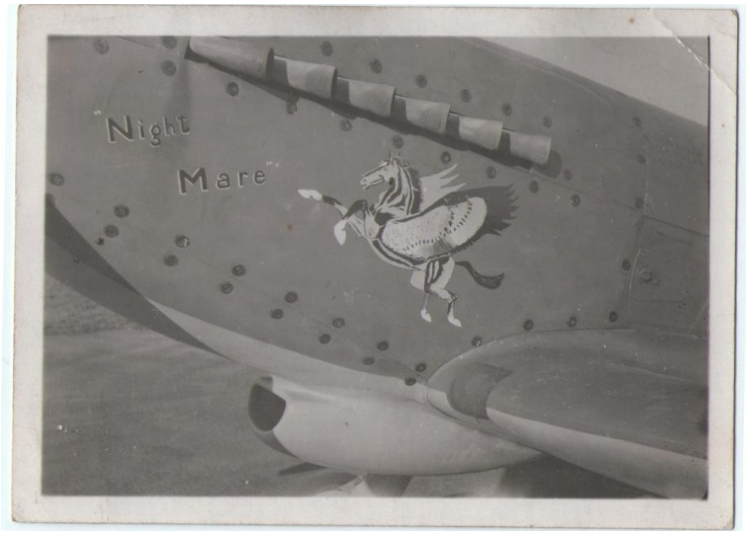
By the time I landed and parked, Rip was talking to a person who turned out to be the caretaker. He had informed Rip that we had landed at Ronaldsway on the Isle of Man and that the airfield had been closed for months and had no fuel to offer. Having been airborne for 1:25, we were both very low on fuel with me having the least because I had been the one doing the formation flying. After a few phone calls to the Squadron back at Nutts Corner, Rip arranged for delivery of fuel from Douglas, the Isle's Capital City.

In answer to the question of what had gone wrong, it was reconstructed a day or so later, that the operator, in all likelihood, had fallen victim to the dreaded '180 degree ambiguity syndrome' inherent in all HF/DF installations. Had Rip and I run out of fuel and ditched, any ensuing search would have been centered to the Northwest of Nutts Corner rather than to the Southeast or 180 degrees to what would have been our actual location. It could have been a mysterious disappearance.

So much for event #1, event #2 began playing out at Nutts Corners when, in December of 1945, an early Winter Storm dumped a foot or so of snow on the airfield. All Canadians were astonished on learning that the entire Base, Officers and Men, was to 'Turn To' to shovel the snow off the runways. That decision reflected the lack of experience that Headquarters and Base Engineering Staffs had coping with snow. It didn't take a science degree to know, from the forecast of warmer weather ahead, that given a day or two the snow would be gone or so diminished as to not impede flying activities.

The inevitable happened with the shovel brigades ,however, when one group of shovelers tried moving the snow to the sides of the runways whilst others were busy moving the snow ahead down the axis of the runways. Both ended up with mounds of snow that they couldn't move any further in any direction. The final result of the exercise was, as expected, the snow that had not been disturbed disappeared by the end of day 2, whereas the mounds created by shoveling, interfered with flying operations for the better part of a week. Thank goodness there wasn't a war on.

In mid-February, the Squadron's last month at Nutts Corner, I was assigned my own aircraft, Seafire XV Serial Number C 476. Almost immediately my Canadian Navy Fitter and Rigger set about painting an excellent version of the Texaco Pegasus (The Flying Horse) on the left-hand engine nacelle. Unfortunately, their efforts were to be short lived. A week later, with little warning and no fanfare, the Squadron was decommissioned, and all aircraft were flown, I in 476, to RNAS Machrihanish on the West Coast of Scotland and handed over to Civilian contractors to be quillotined into scrap. No amount of pleading or cajoling by me would convince the demolition contractor to let me salvage the painted nacelle.



As previously mentioned, the Squadron was decommissioned late in February, 1946 . The night before we were scheduled to depart Dear Olde Nutts Corner, en masse, 883 Squadron hosted a monumental bash for all members of the Officers Mess. The timing for this party turned out to be ill advised. We failed to take into consideration that the next day we would be flying all 16 Seafires in line astern formation to Machrihanish Scotland. Notwithstanding that the duration of the flight would only be 0:30 minutes, it was hell all the way. Picture this, 16 Seafires being flown, line astern, by 16 hung-over pilots and you have the ingredients for chaos, if not something worse. I was number 15 in the gaggle and my Buddy, Rod Bays, was number 16, or Tail-end Charlie. He always maintained that I was out to Kill him. Although that was untrue, I can see how he might get that impression. While the first few pilots in line astern might find it a piece of cake to maintain position, the further one is down the line, the larger become the throttle movements to maintain station. When you get back to where Rod and I were, throttle movements ranged from fully off to wide open. One minute you're leading the parade the next you're playing catch up with all cylinders on steroids. It must have been a sight to behold. Fortunately all landed safely and we turned our lovely Seafires over to the Contractors for demolition. A sad day.

Thus ended our tours as RN Sub Lieutenants (A) pilots and happily began our Royal Canadian Navy careers as Lieutenants (P) pilots.

After a leisurely mid-March 1946, cruise across the Atlantic, aboard the 'Ile de France', Rod Bays and I took up our appointments to Canada's West Coast to serve in HMCS Charlottetown, a Town Class Frigate. To qualify as an Upper Deck Watch Keeping Officer, was in keeping with the Canadian Navy's policy that all Executive Branch Officers shall be Naval Officers first and Pilots second.

On January 14th, 1947, whilst still undergoing training as Ship's Officers, Rod and I were granted our Permanent Commissions. Three months later, he and I were awarded our Upper Deck Watch Keeping Certificates, and re-appointed back East to Royal Canadian Naval Air Station Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Within a month, I was aboard HMCS Warrior headed back to the U.K. for Operational Flying Training at Royal Naval Air Station Lossiemouth in Northern Scotland to fly Seafires Mk III, Mk XV's and XVII's and undergo deck landing qualification training. The operational training at Lossie which began 01 Sept, 1947, was wide-ranging, thorough and comprehensive, and added greatly to what we had learned while serving in 883 Seafire Squadron. Total Seafire course flying time (All Marks) – 52.35 hrs; Sorties – 53; Average – I hr/sortie.

01 Dec, 1947, we commenced the Deck Landing Training (DLT) segment of the Operational Flying School, at RNAS Milltown, a Satellite Airfield to Lossiemouth. There the training focused on getting candidates qualified to operate off an Aircraft Carrier. With the occasional short sortie set aside for Aerobatics and formation flying, the syllabus was heavily weighted on ADDLS (Assimilated Dummy Deck Landings).

A breakdown by flying hours/sorties for training at Milltown:- Flying Time – 16.00 hrs; Sorties- 54; Average – 0.30 hr/sortie. ADDLS 172; Average – 10.75 ADDLS/hr.
Deck Landings onboard HMS Implacable:- 8 arrested landings in 0.40 mins.

Having a couple of months free time before having to report in May 1948, to RNAS Culdrose for an Instrument Flying Course, I volunteered to remain at Milltown and offered my services ferrying Seafire Mk XV and XVII's and Firefly Mk I's between Milltown and Lossiemouth.

Boarding HMCS Magnificent in late May, 1948 as a passenger enroute back to Canada, I was privileged to observe close up the launch of our new Sea Furies on their maiden flight to their new home at HMCS Shearwater. It was an impressive sight.

After some shuffling between Shearwater and Stadacona attending short courses, mid-November 1948, I was appointed to 19th Carrier Air Group, 883 Sea Fury Squadron under the Command of LCDR(P) Ray Creery RCN. It didn't take long to get into the swing of Squadron life again. By the end of 1948, the squadron was heavily engaged in fighter tactics and drills and preparations for embarking on HMCS Magnificent.

It was during preparations for Carrier Ops that we became familiar with the changes that had been made to the Batsman's signals. Deck Landing Seafires on HMS Implacable had been under the RN Batting System whereby the positioning of the Bats indicated where the Batsman wanted the aircraft to go, i.e. if he moved the Bats down he wanted the aircraft to go lower and visa versa, if he wanted the aircraft higher he moved his Bats up or higher.

When flying our Furies aboard Maggie we were "Batted" using a modified American System. The main difference being that the U.S. system is predicated on the reverse of the RN System, in the sense that the Batsman in the US system indicates where you are i.e. Bats high you're high; Bats low you're low. All other signals were fairly common.

The entire month of March 1949, was spent operating from Maggie and taking part in NATO Exercises in the Western Atlantic region. Due to Sea Fury serviceability problems the flying hours that Squadron pilots were getting was less than ideal. April, May and June saw pilots logging 05:00; 16:00 and 24:00 hours respectively with June's total included the 10:00 hours deploying to C.J.A.T.C. Rivers Man.

On landing at CJATC Rivers June 22, 1949, the RCN's entire fleet of Sea Furies was grounded for a Major engine Modification program.

While our Furies were grounded, a makeshift program was hastily put together to keep us pilots busy. Included were: (A) checking out on the Army's Auster aircraft, (B) practice bombing using RCAF Harvards, and (C) attending the Army's Parachute Jump Course - up to, but not including a live jump. Ottawa withheld approval, not wanting to risk injuries to its costly-trained pilots. Not all pilots were disappointed. Some even voiced the observation that it was contrary to their ethic to jump from a serviceable aircraft.

A secondary effect of grounding the Sea Furies was that the RCN had previously signed-on to provide a flying contingent for the 1949 Toronto International Air Show portion of the Canadian National Exhibition, with the intention that 19th CAG's Sea Furies would take part.

However, with all Sea Furies grounded, Ottawa had to scurry to de-mothball the Seafire XV's that just a couple of years ago had been placed in long-term storage. The "Seafire Exhibition Flight" was hastily created and personnel appointed from within 19th Carrier Air Group and elsewhere. I and several of my 883 Squadron Mates were appointed to the Flight, whereas the Commanding Officer, LCDR 'Clunk' Watson RCN, took up his Command from Shearwater. All aircraft, aircrew and maintenance personnel were ready to go by August 1st.

With less than 5 weeks available between re-familiarization Flights on the Seafire XV's and the end of the Exhibition, it was an enormous challenge to create, then practice solo, three and four-plane formation routines and then collectively rehearse an 8 aircraft, half-hour air show. On top of all that, the quality of the

performance must bring credit to the Royal Canadian Navy and Naval Aviation.

A Seafire XV being marshalled at HMCS Shearwater

performance must bring credit to the Royal Canadian Navy and Naval Aviation.

By the middle of August, the C.O. had settled on the content of the air show, which would comprise a three-plane aerobatic group that he would lead, a solo aerobatic performer, and a four-plane precision formation group. The Show would open with a fly past of the entire Flight from which the three-plane group and the solo pilot would peel-off and the four plane group would continue on. The sequences to be performed by the three plane, solo and four plane elements during the show was based on there being one element before the spectators at all times.

Unfortunately and sadly, before the show went on, the Commanding Officer and one of his wingmen collided in mid-air during a rehearsal over then Malton International Airport and both were killed. LCR Bill Munro RCN assumed Command and proceeded to put together a much reduced but entertaining routine. The Seafire Exhibition Flight was disbanded, Sept. 13th and I was reappointed to 19th CAG and re-joined 883 Squadron at CJATC Rivers Man.

Our Sea Furies began rolling out of the Major Engine Modification production line in mid-November and we able to start ferrying them in small numbers back to Shearwater. It was in mid-December, during the last of these ferry flights, that my CO Ray Creery, with me on his wing, set an unofficial 435 mph speed record between Malton Airport and Halifax/Shearwater N.S. Not too shabby for a piston driven aircraft that is still competing at annual Air Races at Reno and Las Vegas.

Lt (P) Eddy Myers Lcdr (P) Ray Creery

Beginning of my career as a Flying Instructor

The end of January 1950, saw me appointed to RCAF Station Trenton to undergo Flying Instructor training with the RCAF's Central Flying School. It was a First Class Course with First Class Staff that produced graduates qualified as both Single-Engine and Twin-Engine Instructors. In addition, candidates were afforded the opportunity to fly a number of operational aircraft. I found flying the Vampire Jet and the WWII famous Mustang, to be a pleasure. In my opinion the Vampire was the Seafire of the jet age, giving the pilot the same sensation of being within the aircraft rather than on it.

In the Spring of 1950, I had only just returned to Shearwater when I was seconded back to Trenton for duty as a Flying Instructor, in time to welcome the Summer influx of NATO pilot trainees. At the end of that commitment, I was posted to RCAF Station Centralia, where I continued instructing, and rose to become (B) Flight Commander.

After having been on loan to the RCAF for the better part of 3 years, the Spring of 1953 saw me return to Shearwater as an instructor in the Instrument Flying Section of VT 40 Squadron. Following a brief sojourn as a recruiter for the newly introduced Venture Program, I returned to Shearwater, this time as Officer Commanding the recently created, All Weather Flight (AWF). It was during that appointment that I was promoted to LCDR (P) RCN.

Firmly entrenched in the flying instructing field, July,1955, saw me appointed as Staff Officer Air and Resident Flying Instructor to VC 921, Reserve Naval Air Squadron, HMCS Cataraqui, Kingston ON. With candidates coming

primarily from local Flying Clubs and in possession of a private pilot's licence, it was the task of the Resident Flying Instructor to train these young Reservists to Naval Wings Standard, flying Harvard Aircraft weekends and evenings.

HMCS Cataraqui, Kingston, Ontario. VC 921 squadron. Front row L to R: Mid Julian Freeman, Mid Bob Hicks, Mid John Myers, Mid Lionel Shillington. Rear row L to R: S/Lt Ken McLennan, S/Lt Pat Galt, Lt David Humphries, LCdr Allen Burcham DSC, LCdr Fred Hooper, Lt Donald Chown, LCdr Ed Myers.

On May 1st 1957, after 7 years nonstop instructing, I got a reprieve. I was appointed to VS 880, to fly the CS2F Tracker, twin-engine antisubmarine aircraft. I joined as Executive Officer and second in command to LCDR (P) 'Buck' Buchanan RCN, a highly experienced Naval Aviator with wartime service with both the RN and the USN.

The CS2F Tracker, was designed and built explicitly for Carrier Operations. It had twin engine reliability and greater endurance than had most pilots. It also had lots of power, excellent control response, a respectable load carrying capacity and was pilot-friendly. What more could one ask for?

Returning to my tour in VS 880, I took up my appointment May 1st 1957. The Squadron was still armed with the Avenger Anti-submarine aircraft that had done yeoman's service throughout its many years in the RCN. Our Squadron was not expecting delivery of its Trackers to begin until the Fall. In the meantime, I was welcomed by VX10, the RCN's Test and Development Squadron, to assist with Tracker Projects currently being worked on. These frequent CS2F flights for VX10, proved beneficial to me personally by adding to my accumulation of Tracker hours and experience, and for VS880 when it came time to convert Squadron pilots from Avengers to Trackers.

The Summer of 1957 was rather slow going as VS 880 wound down use of the trusty Avengers and awaited the new CS2Fs, It wasn't until November that Trackers began arriving in the numbers that allowed Squadron Ops to put together a meaningful daily flying program.

The first week of January 1958 saw the Squadron begin flying its Trackers day and night at an intensity in keeping with operational plans and expectations. Senior Crew Commanders were averaging better than 40:00 hours/month. Between then and the last week in August, the Squadron continued to improve general day and night flying skills, anti-submarine detection preparedness plus practicing for Carrier Qualifications.

The last week in August 1958, the Squadron deployed to US Navy Air Station Boca Chica, Key West, Florida, for two months, the prime purpose of which was, to carry out Anti Submarine Training with live US Navy Submarines. This was only partially successful as the Subs were not as available as was had hoped. However, the opportunity to practice Mirror-assisted airfield landings, was a welcomed bonus.

Between October 1958, when the Squadron returned to Shearwater, from Key West, and the middle of January 1959, when it embarked on HMCS Bonaventure, the intensity of flying thus training rose significantly and with the focus mainly on embarking.

The first VS 880 Tracker landed on "Bonny", on Jan17th, 1959 (1 day before my 34th Birthday). By the time the end of the month had arrived, most Crew Commanders plus Cdr(Air) Jim Hunter of Bonaventure, known as "Air Boss", had become Day Carrier Qualified or 'Day CARQUAL'd. It wasn't until March and the start of NATO Exercise New Broom IX, that all Crew Commanders were 'Night CARQUAL'd.

I've operated from 3 different Aircraft Carriers during my career and each time it has been with a different type of aircraft and a different landing system. My first experience was flying MK XV Seafires on board HMS Implacable with an axial deck and a Batsman using the RN System, next, I flew Sea Furies on board HMCS Magnificent with an

axial deck and a Batsman using a modified US Navy system and lastly was flying CS2F Trackers on board HMCS Bonaventure with an angle deck and a Mirror Landing System. Of all three systems, I much prefer the most modern, Mirror Landing System.

This is not to be construed as a negative reflection on Batsmen. Ever since pilots operated off ships, Batsmen have provided excellent, safe and professional guidance, day and night and in all kinds of weather to landing pilots, while mere inches from the wings of speeding aircraft. However, as in many if not most operations in civilian and military activities, the sooner human involvement in the equation can be replaced by things mechanical or electronic, the safer and more consistent the operation becomes. The Angle Deck, coupled with the Mirror Landing System, has made touch and go landings possible and "bolters" (when an arrester wire is missed or breaks) can be encountered with little or no risk to Air and Deck Crews.

On 8th of March, LcdrP) Roger Harris RCN and I shared the honour of having made the 3,000th Landing aboard HMCS Bonaventure. We each were presented with a suitably inscribed pewter mug by the ship's Air Boss to mark the occasion.

April 20th 1959, I was appointed to the Staff of Flag Officer Atlantic Coast as Staff Officer (Air). My first purely Administrative Appointment since I joined the Armed Forces in July 1943. Once desk jobs start, they seem to come in bunches, for, on the 1st of January 1961, I was appointed to HMCS Shearwater as Air Training Officer. My next move was to Canadian Joint Air Training Centre, Rivers Manitoba, effective mid-Summer 1962, as the Senior Naval Liaison Officer to The Commandant (Group Captain Cliff Black, RCAF). It was while serving at Rivers that I qualified to fly Helicopters.

My penultimate appointment in the Service, effective August 1965, was of the nature that I and most of my friends did not relish, to Canadian Forces Headquarters, Ottawa. It was as Staff Officer to the Director of Training, under the Director General Training who was answerable to the Chief of Personnel that I was to serve my time in HQ.

Thank goodness it only lasted 18 months at which time I received a reprieve to take up my final appointment as The Commanding Officer of VU 33 Squadron, located at Victoria International Airport, Sydney BC. Affectionately known as "La La LAND". It truly was an enjoyable appointment and very rewarding. A small unit in its own separate Administrative Building, a full-sized Hangar with a small inventory of CS2F and T-33 Aircraft, and a crew of pilots, maintenance and administrative staffs all of whom were highly professional.

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