



The Signal



65 Years And Counting!

by Gordon Longmuir, Class of '57

Some sixteen years ago, I took on the twin tasks of maintaining the register of the Venture Association and producing this periodic newsletter. In one of our many visits to the Esquimalt home of our dear late friend and colleague René D'Hollander and his wife Ruth in the early 2000s, we ran into Jean Veronneau (Class of '56) then Venture registrar and editor of *the Signal*. Jean wanted to “retire” from these onerous duties and thought René might take them on. After a third or fourth scotch, this innocent bystander was persuaded that the production of the newsletter would be a piece of cake. René was to look after the maintenance of the database. As it turned out, René had more pressing issues on his plate, so I ended up doing both jobs, a fairly logical conclusion. Somehow, “by popular demand”, I am still at it. This year, having returned early from our annual pilgrimage to our Mexican getaway, and having survived the COVID “quarantine” in good health and spirits, here I am again. I have never numbered the editions of *the Signal*, but my rough count is that this is #33, all of which, I think, are archived on the website www.hmcsventure.com.



In actual fact, I left things Naval a half century ago after four years as a sea cadet, a couple of years as an AB in the reserves, seven, including Venture, in the RCN (SSA) and three more as a Lt, RCNR with two summers on the Great Lakes. In 1965, upon graduating from UBC, I joined the Foreign Service and, although I stayed in touch with old Venture chums, I never really looked back until I retired in 1999. So why, aside from René's good scotch, have I continued to subject myself to all this? There was obviously something very special about the Venture experience that has never let me go, in spite of the fact that I found another profession that suited me better than being a naval officer. During one of my mid-level postings, I started receiving, once or twice a year, a copy of *the Signal*. I don't recall who the editor was at the time, although I see John Littlefair's name on two or three old newsletters that I've turned up. And the serendipitous reminders kept popping up: I walked into the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo one day in the early 80s and was astonished to run into my old classmate from the Class of '57, Jim Spalding (of fond memory) who was our new Canadian Forces Adviser. He and Sheila and Kazuko and I bonded instantly. On our assignments back in Canada, we always connected with old friends, especially in Victoria. Since my retirement in North Vancouver, we have attended, I think, four Reunions, in Victoria, Halifax, Ottawa and, again, Victoria. That most recent one, last September, was priceless, and we regret not having had more time to hang out with some folks we hadn't seen in many years, and to remember a good many who were no longer with us. After all these years, I am still a “Venture”. We continue to travel, but not much to other parts of Canada any more, so don't expect to see us in Ottawa or Toronto or Halifax. We will, however, keep in touch, if not through Canada Post or regular emails, texting, “zooming” or “facetime” (the latter pretty much reserved for grandchildren) then by way of this little newsletter for as long as I can keep it up and there are no strident calls to “give it up, Gord!”

The Signal is published twice a year by the Venture Association. Send letters, articles, photos, etc., to the Editor and pay dues by cheque payable to the Venture Association, c/o D. G. Longmuir, Editor and Registrar, 903-168 Chadwick Court, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L4; e-mail dglongmuir@gmail.com. Changes of address and other personal info should be sent to your Class Rep (see p.7) with a copy to the Registrar. Go to our comprehensive website for breaking news: <https://www.hmcsventure.com>. and keep Darryl Harden, our webmaster, in the loop: webmaster@hmcsventure.com. And, if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, contact us by e-mail or Canada Post.

Venture Reunion September 2019



Lots more photos on the website
www.hmcsventure.com

Letters to the Editor

From Edmonton, AB

Dear Editor,:

... I previously sent you some info about this peak named after “Hammy” Gray and his brother. Attached is a little more info from BC Geographical Names, which provides the official conformation of the registration of this feature.

I’ve looked at various websites to see if there was a really good photo of this peak, in the event you might include this item in a future edition of *The Signal*, but was unsuccessful.

In any event, I hope you are well and coping with the “social distancing” and other restrictions imposed by the current epidemic. As they used to say on the Monty Python Flying Circus; “. . .nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition”!

Yours aye,

Fred Harvey, Class of '60

The link for the BC Geographical Names records is as follows:

<https://apps.gov.bc.ca/pub/bcgnws/names/2651.html>

[Ed. Note: See the website www.hmcsventure.com for more on the proposed Hampton Gray memorial (and how to contribute to it) I too was unable to find a good photo of Gray’s Peak, but here is what Fred sent earlier. Hampton Gray was not, of course, a Venture, but was obviously an inspiration to many.]



Each year since 1950, the Province of British Columbia has named geographical features after men and women who lost their lives on active service overseas during World War II. This soaring mountain was named Gray’s Peak in honour of John Balfour (Jack) Gray and Robert Hampton (Hammy) Gray, VC. The brothers, from Nelson, B.C. were that town’s first and last fatalities of World War II. Gray’s Peak is located in the beautiful Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park, 20 miles north of Nelson (Photo courtesy of Stu Soward)

Letters to the Editor, cont'd

From Vancouver, BC

Dear Editor

Thank you for your patience; your long wait is finally over.

The long anticipated printing of this narrative, which offers riches far in excess of merely being A Memoir of Naval Aviation, Firebombing and Theatre as proclaimed pithily on the cover, is now complete, and may be purchased on Amazon, Chapters, and soon on Barnes and Noble.

However, I would like to self-servingly encourage you to purchase directly from the publisher, Friesen Press, which maximises my royalties.

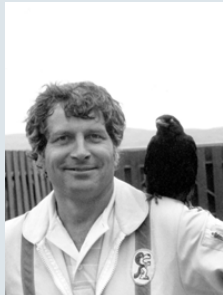
Go to Friesen Press Bookstore and type in my name, or the title Never a Dull Moment, and after a nod from your financial institution, the world according to Plawski will wing its way into your imagination.

With best wishes for a transformative reading experience,

Yours aye,

George Plawski, Honorary Member

[Ed Note: This is a great read, by an esteemed Honorary Venture who served as a tracker pilot in Bonaventure prior to a period at UBC and a long career as a firefighter and, inter alia, founding director of a distinguished theatre company in Vancouver. A must read for every former Navy aviator but a treat for the general reader as well. Available from the publisher, of course, but also from amazon.ca as a Kindle e-book.]



George Plawski was born in Gdynia, Poland, in 1934. His father, Eugene, was a senior naval officer who fought in both World Wars in the capacities of pilot, and as the commander of surface ships as well as submarines. Before the war, he lived with his wife Maria in Warsaw.

Never a Dull Moment lives up to its title as George takes us back to his youth under the Nazis in WW2, describes his and his mother's separate escapes from Communist occupied Poland to join his father who spent the war years in the Polish Navy in England, and their subsequent immigration to Canada in 1948.

This colorful memoir traces the family's unusual history, and recalls the severe hardships which faced his parents in starting their lives anew in this beautiful and free, yet in the in the immediate post-war years, a thoroughly challenging land.

In a series of humorously recalled anecdotes, the author portrays the process leading to his commission in the Royal Canadian Navy, to obtaining his wings, and to becoming a pilot flying off the aircraft carrier, HMCS *Bonaventure*.

After leaving the service in 1964, Plawski returned to UBC to finish his BA, then completed three years of post-graduate studies in theatre, specialising in directing, which was funded by his summer job flying air tankers on forest fires.

The book continues with suspenseful accounts of Plawski's founding of Vancouver's City Stage, the thrilling saga of the often hair-raising pioneering days of firebombing in California and in Canada, and of the hilarious aerial circus of budworm spraying in New Brunswick.

This story is embellished with a telling of his meeting with a beautiful and cultured girl from Paris whose name is Rita; of their unconventional romance, their travels around the world, of her loving and essential collaboration in the author's idiosyncratic lifestyle, and of their eventual marriage which is happily doomed to continue to the end of this grand adventure.

G. E. PLAWSKI

A MEMOIR OF CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATION, FIREBOMBING AND THEATRE



GEORGE E. PLAWSKI

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

A MEMOIR OF
CANADIAN NAVAL AVIATION,
FIREBOMBING AND THEATRE



FriesenPress

Letters to the Editor, cont'd

From Calgary, AB

Dear Editor,

As noted in the latest edition of the *Signal*, I would like to continue receiving a hard copy of the newsletter. Thanks very much.

Aye, Jeff Gilmour, Class of 65

From Ottawa, ON

Dear Editor,

I will start by expressing my appreciation to you for keeping me on the "Snail Mail" list and allowing me to stay in touch with the Association and my fellow Ventures. ... I thank you.

The last edition of the *Signal* said those of us on that list who wish to receive the *Signal* should tell you. I wish to continue getting it. Please keep me on the list.... All the best in the New Year.

Yours aye, Bob Howden, Class of '58

*[Ed Note: I will cut the "snailmailers" some slack this time around, but please see the repeated advice below if you wish to continue receiving the *Signal* by Canada Post. This edition may be reaching you late, as it will depend on when (if?) my printing company goes back to work!]*

From Halifax, NS

Dear Editor,

Thanks for a great reunion where I felt privileged, as an associate member, to be in attendance. I visited with many old friends, some of whom I had not seen since 1964. Are there any photos available on line please?

I would be happy to receive *The Signal* via email please. Thanks again.

Yours aye, Nancy Curleigh, Honorary Member

Dear Nancy

*Thanks for this ... I was happy to see so many spouses of departed members; to be technical, you are an "honorary" member, which, to me, carries more distinction than "associate". Even if Colin was not actually a Venture, he had close ties to many of us. ... More photos from the Reunion should be available on the website very soon ... If you pull up www.hmcsventure.com, you will find the most recent *Signal* with a lot of other material on the reunion. ... It is many decades since I last met Colin, but those of us who served with him admired him greatly.*

Aye, Y'r Editor

Note to Snailmail Recipients

A Reminder: As reported in the Minutes of the Reunion General Meeting and in the November '19 *Signal*, it was agreed that the *Signal* will no longer be *automatically mailed out* to those who have not provided an e-mail address. If you are receiving the *Signal* by Canada Post, please let me know asap if you wish to continue doing so. In other words, I will cease mailing out the newsletter to the 50-odd snailmail recipients *unless you actively advise that you wish to continue*. This will save me a good deal of time and will save the Association money in printing, envelopes and postage. Write me at D.G. Longmuir, 903-168 Chadwick Crt, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L4

Y'r Editor

The (New)President's Message

Welcome Ventures

I am starting my simple blurb by saying how happy everyone seemed to be with the last Reunion. I think you all did "real good", excuse the English. It turns out that we did not lose money, we managed to meet all our commitments and had a good time and many enjoyable visits. I believe this was the result of having a strong committee composed of knowledgeable members led by two outstanding officers with a strong sense of purpose. Well done to Wilf and Eric. The East Coast crew was already planning a spring event prior to being elbowed out by Covid 19. They were looking for a good chunk of change to get their event underway since their costs were spiralling upwards. We will try to cover funding requests as we update the by-laws.

As I write this, I am listening to the news about the tragic loss of our Cyclone helicopter, detached from Shearwater to "Freddie", HMCS Fredericton, currently deployed in the Med with NATO forces. A good link provided by the Naval Association is: <https://navalassoc.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=76e75c17fef20d0c22b735731&id=c4a9323530&e=e8ec53bff7>.

In discussion with Gord Longmuir, I realized that I may not be that familiar to a lot of you. I will attempt to fix that. I must say that I proudly started out as a Fishhead, having marched from the Venture graduation parade down to dockyard to join HMCS Margaree, which had just finished her conversion to DDH. Luckily I had the likes of Mac Wilson and Don Prior to settle me in. We sailed for Halifax, after completing sea trials in October and November via the Panama Canal, arriving in Halifax around 8 December, 1965. After that it was a series of short cruises with exercises to Bermuda, Puerto Rico and the Med. I managed to obtain my watchkeeping ticket in the process.. A memorable cruise was to New Orleans in February, 1968 and more, being picked up by Pedro, flown by Goose McLennon and whisked away to Roosevelt Roads for a Herc ride to Shearwater. I then hitchhiked via Tracker to Montreal, Toronto, and then a Herc to Ottawa and Winnipeg and then Edmonton. I believe I was able to catch a ride on a Dak (DC3) destined for Comox from Edmonton (Namao) with an overnight in the cool pool Cold Lake, for Weepers and then on to Comox with a diversion for me to Vancouver—what a good group of folks. The pilots did pull one on me, because when I asked up front if it was ok to smoke they both gave me a hearty thumbs up. So I went back to the radio officers desk and ran out of matches. You see, both the pilots were wearing oxygen masks since we were over the Rockies at about 14000 feet and there wasn't enough oxygen in the air to support combustion for my matches. I never thought to ask about oxygen for me since they were dropping me off in Vancouver. I was returning to see my bride who I had left 3 months earlier and I did not want to make any waves. They managed



Register Changes

Class of '56

Jay Rangel email: jay.r.rangel@outlook.com

Class of '57

Shirley Fischer (Hon), Apt 311, 405 6th Ave SE, Dauphin, MB R7N 3C9

Charles (Irish) Robinson tel: (250) 752-2850; cel: (778) 934-1000
e-mail charlesrobinson546@gmail.com

Class of '59

Ron Perks email roncfperks@rogers.com

Class of '60

Pierre Yans email: pjyans@gmail.com

Class of '62

Class of 63-II

Madeline Price (Hon) email madelineprice@gmail.com

Honorary/Associate

Nancy Curleigh (Hon) email nancycurleigh@gmail.com

In Memoriam

**Ed McNulty, Staff
Lou Farrell, Class of '56**



to land the Dak in the fog at Vancouver and I got to see my new wife. I was very happy with the Air Force. After a weekend with many of those happy moments, I had to fly Air Canada to Toronto to catch a train to Camp Borden to be instructed by the likes of Gary Swiggum, Son of the original Swiggum. It was nice to be on the airfield flying Chipmunks then enjoying a cool one at Maple Mess. Then off to Moose Jaw where I had the benefit of being instructed by one Jake Birk, who provided me with my only known blackout from excessive, unannounced G while doing Vertical rolls in the Tutor. He got a kick out of me announcing that we were encountering hypoxia (black out from lack of oxygen) while I fumbled at the Tutor dashboard looking for the 100% oxygen switch. I am running out of space so remember to tune in next time when I go over my round trip across Canada with one Goerge Pumble in the trusty T-33. The navy gets in your blood. In the words of my ex shipmate in HMCS Provider, Bonnie Henry, stay safe, wash your hands and for you Ventures, this is not forever, just for now.

Aye

Peter Bey, President, Class of '65

The Editor's Corner

One positive thing about the current COVID-19 pandemic lockdown is that, for many of us, it frees up time for neglected chores (e.g., getting out the next *Signal*), copious amounts of reading and “bingeing” on *Netflix*. I trust all our readers are safe and well as we get through this awful period. Fortunately, most of us have great, easily accessible technology that keeps us in regular touch with family and friends, near and far, especially, in our case, the youngest grandchildren. We returned from our annual getaway in Mexico to “self-isolate” for two weeks, which didn’t hurt a bit since our daughter was good enough to stock our fridge and a Japanese neighbour even brought us sushi.

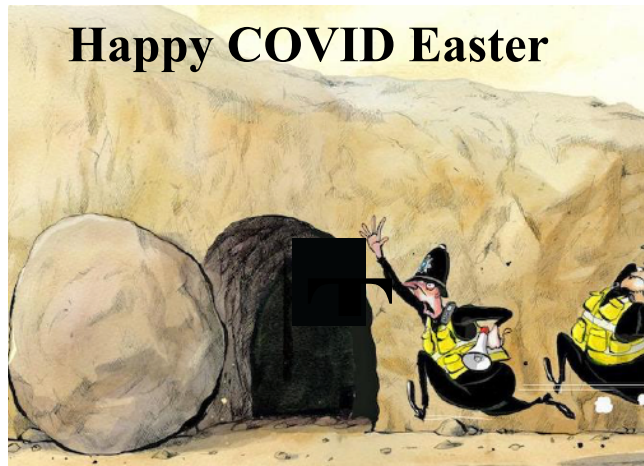


We still have good memories of the September Reunion, and I am including a few more photos in this edition, but there are lots more on the website www.hmcsventure.com. If you have anecdotes or observations to share about the Reunion or the Association in general, please pass them on to me and the webmaster. Same goes for news of address changes and, especially, slipped cables. And I always need short but readable letters to the editor (especially to point out shortcomings), recollections, articles, commentaries on current issues, jokes, cartoons, and photos, e.g., from the September Reunion, *ou en anglais ou dans la langue de Molière*.

Without your input, there will be no more *Signal*!

*Aye,
Gordon Longmuir, Class of '57, Registrar and Editor
of the Signal*

Happy COVID Easter



Two “Tribals”, Athabasca and Cayuga, home to some of us “early” Ventures in the mid-50s



The Executive*

Peter Bey ('65) - President and Responsible for West Coast: (250) 652-2225; peterbey@yahoo.ca
 Matt Durnford ('65), Vice President, Halifax: (902) 766 4104; cormorant@eastlink.ca
 Richard Duffield ('62) - Vice President, Central: (613) 837-1346; duffieldcga@rogers.com

Ed Vishek ('61) - Past President: (250) 598-9794; ekvishek@telus.net
 Ron McLean ('65) - Treasurer: (250) 595-5087; ronmclean@shaw.ca
 Gordon Longmuir ('57) - Registrar and Editor of the *Signal*: (604) 760-7038; dglongmuir@gmail.com

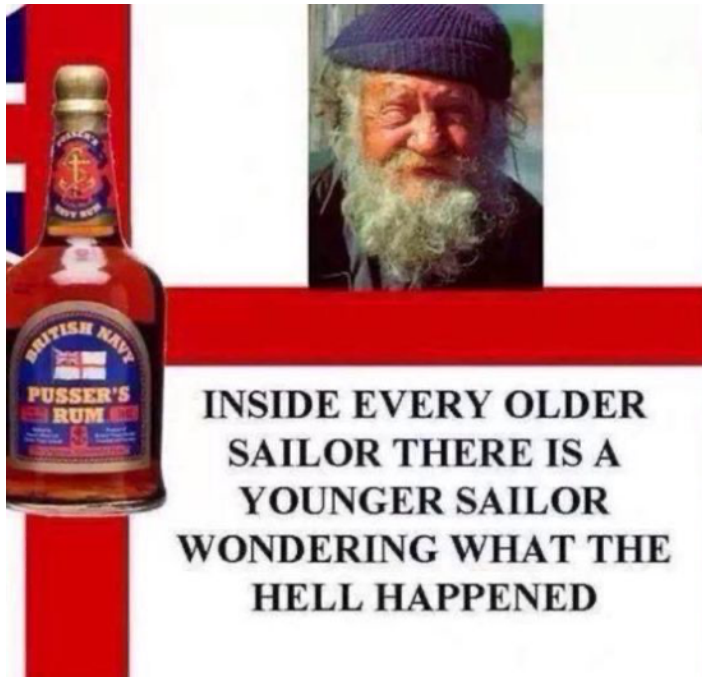
Darryl Harden ('65) - Webmaster: (306) 216-2141; webmaster@hmcsventure.com
 Wilf Lund ('61) - Venture Historian: (250) 598-5894; wilflund@telus.net

Class Representatives*

1956: Bob Lancashire (902) 446-7107; casalanc@eastlink.ca
 1957: Doug Henderson (250) 370-0790; e-mail dahenderson@shaw.ca
 1958: Tony Smith (250) 479-5676; tony.f.smith@shaw.ca
 1959: Tom Essery (250) 477-9321; tessery@shaw.ca
 1960: Pierre Yans (250) 592-5997; pjyans@shaw.ca
 1961: Wilf Lund (250) 598-5894; wilflund@telus.net

f1962: Eric Waal (250) 477-1425; ebwaal@yahoo.com
 1963-I: Russ Rhode (250) 642-0086; russal@shaw.ca
 1963-II: Tim Kemp (250) 494-5043; timkate@shaw.ca
 1964: Gord Oakley (250) 544-1616; gordon_oakley@telus.net
 1965: Graeme Evans (250) 361-2646; gnebevans@shaw.ca
 1966: Ross Beck (902) 403-4131; rossbeck1946@gmail.com
 1967: Errol Collinson (250) 704-0048; erroni@shaw.ca

*NB: Class Reps are members of the Executive



Distribution of *The Signal*

As of this edition, 421 copies distributed: 373 electronically via the website or direct e-mail; 48 by snail mail. To addresses in: Australia, Bahamas, Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Thailand, the UK and the USA.

Naughtical Terms*

Dhobey:

fr hindi -dhobi "washer woman", or "dhob" "wash" Naval slang for laundry, now restricted to activity rather than the person. Royal Naval ships employed dhobies who traditionally washed clothing in a river in Singapore (now the Stamford Canal). The laundry men, both Indian and Chinese, were often brought onboard and provided with food, space and equipment and allowed to pursue a laundry business while the ship was deployed in the far east. The laundry function retained the name after the departure or the temporary employees.

**Courtesy of our late, lamented friend and former President, Joe Cunningham*

Visit Canada's Naval and Military Museums

Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum, CFB Esquimalt (Naden) Victoria, BC V9A 7N2 Telephone: (250) 363-3655 www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org

Vancouver Naval Museum, HMCS Discovery, 1200 Stanley Park Drive, Vancouver, BC V6G 3C7; Telephone (604) 837-6691

The Military Museums, 4520 Crosschild Trail SW, Calgary, AB T2T 5J4 Telephone: (403) 410-2340 <https://themilitarymuseums.ca/>

The Naval Museum of Manitoba, HMCS Chippawa, 1 Navy Way Winnipeg, MB R3C 4J7

HMCS Haida National Historic Site, Pier 9, HMCS Star, 658 Catherine St, Hamilton, ON L8L 8K4 Telephone (905) 526-6742; www.pc.gc.ca/eng/hn-nhs/on/haida/index.aspx

Musée Naval de Québec, 170 rue Dalhousie, Québec, QC G1K 8M7; Telephone: (418) 694-5387 www.musees.qc.ca

Shearwater Aviation Museum, 34 Bonaventure St, Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0; Telephone: (902) 720-1083 www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, NS B3J 1S3; Telephone (902) 424-7490 www.maritimemuseum.novascotia.ca

The Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Place, Ottawa, ON K1A 0M8; Tel: 1-800-555-5621 www.warmuseum.ca

The Canadian Aviation and Space Museum, 11 Aviation Parkway, Ottawa, ON K1K 2X5; Telephone (613) 990-4340 www.ingemiumcanada.org

HMCS Sackville—Canada's Naval Memorial Trust, PO Box 99000, Stn Forces Halifax, NS B3K 5X5; Telephone (902) 444-3773 www.hmcssackville.ca

Naval Museum of Halifax, Admiralty House, 2729 Gottingen St, Halifax, NS B3K 5X5; Telephone (902) 721-8250 www.hmhps.ca