



News

CANADIAN NAVAL TECHNICAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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RAdm Sam Davis: Remembering a Man who Lived to Serve

In this issue of *CNTHA News* and the *Maritime Engineering Journal* we are paying tribute to the memory of RAdm (Ret'd) "Sam" Davis, who passed away last October. I had the honour of attending his funeral service in Kingston, and during the service a number of people spoke warmly of how Sam had touched their lives. Although I had only worked with Sam for the past few years in connection with the Canadian Naval Technical History Association, I knew that he had done great things both in and out of the navy. I was quite overwhelmed, however, to learn the full measure of the man.

Perhaps the most poignant message came in the homily delivered by the Very Reverend A.V. Bennett, Dean of St. George's Cathedral in Kingston. Of particular note were his thoughts (excerpted below) on the idea of service and a person's sense of duty, virtues that seem to have fallen from favour in these modern times:

We live at the end of a millennium in a society dominated by individual self-actualization. That is, we live at a time in which selfishness is a virtue. Whether big faceless governments have made us insensitive to others, or advertising has focused so much on the self, it is not clear. But we have lost a sense of community. We have lost a sense of responsibility. We have lost a sense of duty beyond ourselves. Where is the passion to serve others?

Sam Davis was not an outwardly passionate man. He was, after all, an Englishman. But beneath his dignified and gracious façade was a burning heart. Sam believed in those things that have gone out of style. He was a patriot in his new home of Canada. He kept a wider vision of the commonwealth of nations. But most importantly, as a sailor, a scholar and a man, Sam had a marvelous sense of duty. He served the common good. He served others.

Sam had a heart that was consumed by the honour of service. His sense of duty flowed from the belief that to whom much is given, much is, indeed, expected. From that belief came his courage, his dignity and his heroic confrontation of a terminal illness. It was an illness he would not allow to debilitate him.

Sam Davis embodied the best in a life of service. In a world without heroes, he was indeed heroic. In a time where self-service is the creed, he served others. In a society in which most struggle for wealth and power, he was a Christian gentleman, a scholar and signpost pointing beyond the self.

This was an admiral who served. A scholar who pursued knowledge. A civic person who served humanity.

Food for thought. RAdm Sam Davis made a significant contribution to the CNTHA, and for that we are grateful. As the Very Reverend Bennett said in his closing, "We will miss you, Sam. You will be remembered."

Mike Saker



Docking with a Difference — or How *Restigouche* Went Underground

Article by Michael Young
(All photos courtesy of the author)

About the CNTHA

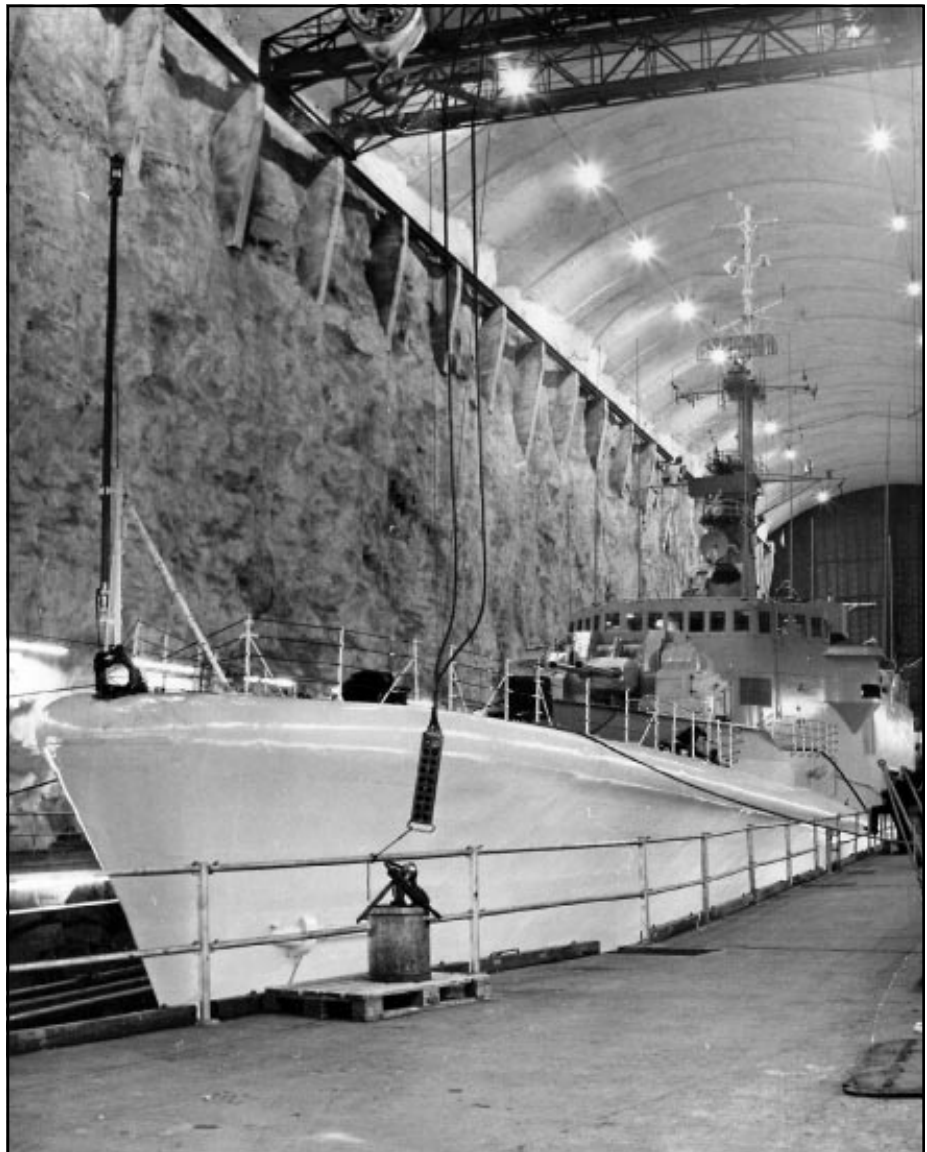
The Canadian Naval Technical History Association is a volunteer organization working in support of the Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) effort to preserve our country's naval technical history. Interested persons may become members of the CNTHA by contacting DHH.

A prime purpose of the CNTHA is to make its information available to researchers and casual readers alike. So how can you get to read some of it? For the moment there is only one copy of the Collection, situated at the Directorate of History and Heritage located at 2429 Holly Lane (near the intersection of Heron and Walkley Roads) in Ottawa. DHH is open to the public every Tuesday and Wednesday 8:30-4:30. Staff is on hand to retrieve the information you request and to help in any way. Photocopy facilities are available on a self-serve basis. Access to the building requires a visitor's pass, easily obtained from the commissionaire at the front door. Copies of the index to the Collection may be obtained by writing to DHH.

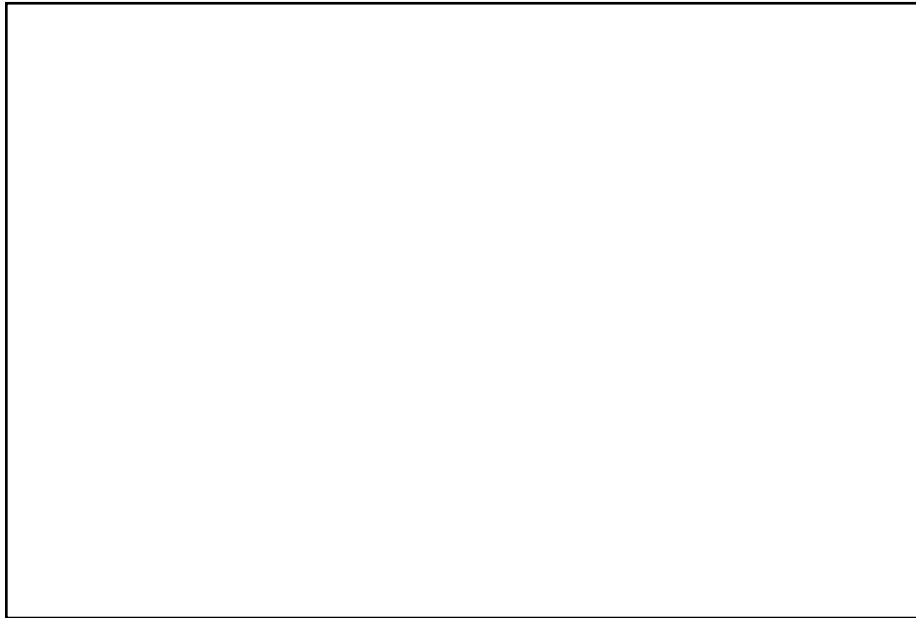


A drydock is a drydock, right? Perhaps, unless that dock happens to be surrounded on three sides by solid Norwegian rock! This is the story of how a Canadian destroyer ended up in that very different dock.

In January, 1970, HMCS *Restigouche* (DDE-257) sailed from Halifax to join the Standing Naval Force Atlantic — STANAVFORLANT — in Lisbon. This was the first time the squadron would be commanded by a Canadian, Commodore



Restigouche in the "barn" on completion of paint ship, March 18, 1970. This is the largest dock of its type. The Germans built smaller ones for submarines and E-boats throughout the fjords during their wartime occupation of Norway. The overhead hoist was invaluable as was the high level of lighting. The bullring at the bow was painted blue to recognize the ship's crossing of the Arctic Circle earlier in the deployment. (SNFL photo)



With the entrance to the enclosed dock lying ahead, *Restigouche* is manoeuvred into position by tug. Note the uniforms! Although this was 1970, the then-new green uniform was not yet widely available. (Photo by the author.)

D.S. Boyle, and the first time that Canadian ships would participate for the full year. *Restigouche* was the lead flagship.

The tempo of operations in the first two months was very high and the weather generally poor. The effect of all this on the external appearance of the flagship was such that *Restigouche* began to resemble her nickname of “*Rustyguts*.” But what to some was a look of hard work, to the commodore was plain scruffiness!

In mid-March the squadron arrived at the Norwegian naval base at Haakonsværn, near Bergen, for a two-week maintenance period. One of the tasks was to paint ship, which had not been possible since well before departing Halifax. But even if clear weather prevailed, the idea of painting ship in near-freezing temperatures did not seem to be very bright. The Norwegian navy solved the problem by making available their relatively new drydock for a short period. What few in the ship realized, was that this “drydock” was carved into the side of a small mountain!

Norway had several such caverns in various parts of the country. Although this particular one was built on a NATO/Norwegian cost-sharing basis, the Germans during their wartime occupation had built smaller ones for their submarines and E-boats throughout the fjords of Norway.

Checks revealed that the mast was three feet too high to clear the roof, but we resolved that problem by removing the DAU direction-finding antenna at the

masthead. On March 16, 1970 *Restigouche* was cold-shifted into the dock and the outer doors were closed (the dock was not drained). The ship’s company was organized into painting parties and the round-the-clock work began. In the “barn,” as it came to be called, the temperature was controlled and night turned into day. Under such conditions, painting ship was relatively easy.

Forty-eight hours later the job was complete and the ship was shifted back to a regular berth. The ship’s company earned their Easter break and, eventually, the compliments of the commodore.

Restigouche steamed for six months in European waters without major defect and did not miss any operational commitment due to equipment problems. (Even the 3”/70 gun performed magnificently and, once, the airborne early warning radar display came *tantalizingly* close to displaying the full picture being transmitted from the airborne Gannet AEW aircraft!) The ship paid off into IRE conversion refit after her return to Halifax.



Michael Young was Weapons Officer in Restigouche in 1970 (pre-Combat Systems Engineer days) when she served in STANAVFORLANT.

The Collection

A recent submission by Cdr Ralph Fisher, RCN (Ret’d) has provided a unique insight into the personnel relationships of the late 1940s as they led up to the Mainguay Report. Using HMCS *Magnificent* as the vehicle, Ralph has laid out the facts and problems for posterity.

Following on this theme, it should be noted that the “Technical” in CNTHA is not an inhibiting factor. Articles concerning personnel and organization are welcome as they round out the picture of what was done, and why we did it. We even have a personal history category (PRS) in which resides the memoirs of several retired naval officers.

If any readers have a yen to scribble a few words for the collection, don’t hesitate; we welcome all and sundry inputs. Send to:

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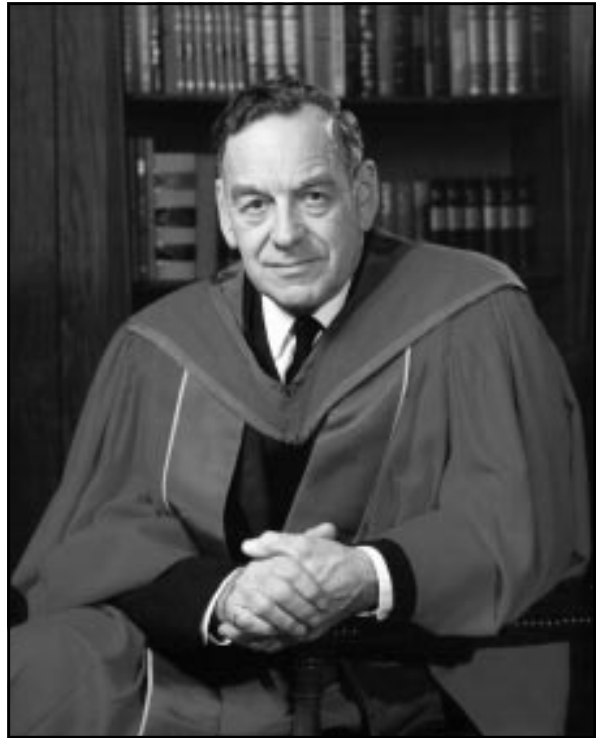
Phil Munro

Sam Davis — Historian

One aspect of Rear Admiral Sam Davis' life and work that seems to deserve comment here, is his great service to naval history in this country, and to the Canadian Naval Technical History Association (CNTHA) in particular.

Sam was among the first to realize (nudged a bit by Dr. Alec Douglas, then Director General of History in DND) the importance of technical matters to the history of the navy of the 50s and 60s, and his formal publications are an important part of the record. When the gathering of personal recollections was first suggested in 1992, he was a strong supporter of the scheme, and served as a member of the CNTHA committee until just before his death. His sage counsel, often pungently expressed, will be greatly missed.

Perhaps his most engaging historical work remains unpublished. In 1985, while holding a postdoctoral fellowship at Queen's, he prepared an account of his experiences in the navy between 1953 and 1965. [This paper, "Technological decision-making in the RCN, 1953-1965," is held by DHH. The rest of Sam's unpublished work is in the CNTHA collection.] Sam held some of the most important posts of the time; he knew the events and the senior people (naval officers, civil servants and politicians) who were the players. This mammoth work (500 pages, or so) is recommended reading for anyone who wants to get the true flavour of how the technical side of the navy worked back then. His anecdotes are frequent and inimitable. It's serious history, but written with Sam's keen eye for the ridiculous. No one escapes his gentle irony — including



Sam himself in this anecdote from the 1950s:

A destroyer escort is commissioning on the St. Lawrence on a sunny summer day. The "quality" is in attendance — senior officers in whites with swords and medals, elegantly dressed ladies — and the band is playing. The ship's company, also in whites, is about to be marched on board when the ceremonies are rudely disrupted by the piercing shriek of a boiler safety valve which has lifted. As stokers scramble to shut off sprayers, billowing geysers of steam and soot are ejected into the air, all to fall back on the assembly as hot black rain. Definitely not the best of days for the principal naval overseer!

Sam lives on in the work he has left behind — a fitting reminder of a very remarkable man, and an example to us all.

Hal Smith



Crusader and VDS

A short comment on VDS in our last issue that mentioned *Crescent* as a trials ship has brought some comments on the lines of "I thought it was *Crusader*." Both are right. In 1955, when a high-speed ship was needed to complete VDS development, *Crusader* was assigned the role of a trials and experimental ship for many new developments in naval technology besides towed sonar, although that was the most visible. The RCN evaluation of Naval Research Establishment's experimental CAST-1X sonar in *Crusader* in 1958 was critical in gaining navy acceptance of what many thought to be a harebrained scheme. The service equipment evaluated in *Crescent* two years later was the engineered result.



Thank you...

To Charles Gunning, DGMEPM, and Brian Redding, formerly of Fleet Manufacturing Ltd., for their response to a request for help with variable depth sonar. They both have given us valuable leads to information on VDS handling gear used with the SQS-504 and SQS-505.



We'd love to hear from you...

If you have information, documents or questions you'd like to pass along to the Canadian Naval Technical History Association, please contact the Directorate of History and Heritage, NDHQ, MGen George R. Pearkes Bldg., Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2 Tel.: (613) 998-7045/Fax: (613) 990-8579

