

Old Conways & The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN, RCNR, RCNVR or On Loan)

by Laurie Farrington (February 1998)

Links: The RCN today <http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/>

Links: The RCN of yesteryear <http://www.hazegray.org/navhist/canada/>

Conway training for service at sea, long envied for its high standards, was famed for its high quality graduates. Some of these intrepid young adventurers enjoyed careers in many fields of endeavour, including the Canadian Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard. Their professional achievements were as legendary as their ability to endure hardship as young Conway trainees. The majority of the 71 people identified as former Conways represented invaluable trained assets as war began in 1939, as the RCN expanded to meet the demands of WW II. Some of them remained with the RCN in the postwar period and attained "icon" status.



The 71 Conway Cadets identified represent the result of a two year research project to identify Old Conways who had Canadian naval service in the RCN, RCNR, RCNVR or on loan from the RN.

Fortunately the people who helped to build the Canadian Navy over the years did not come from a world of rigid conformity. Individuals came from a variety of sources and backgrounds. Diversity was the norm and there was certainly richness in diversity. Conway Cadets represented one professional source of commitment and experience which formed part of the Canadian naval mosaic.

A closer examination of the naval careers of the 71 people reveals some interesting facts: Canadian naval service involved people who attended Conway over a span of 48 years, from 1906 to 1954.

The first or senior Conway Cadet in terms of training time was a Lt. A.S. Dean, who joined Conway in 1906 before the birth of the RCN. During World War I he served in the RCN in HMCS Niobe; at one time he served as HM Consul in Valencia. He is listed in John Masefield's book *The Conway* on page 222.

The last and junior Conway graduate was M.J. Duncan, who left Conway in 1954, and commanded HMCS Assiniboine in 1977-79. Allan Easton (1917-1919) was a wartime commanding officer of HMCS Sackville, who in September 1997 was 95 years young and living in Kingston, Ontario.

C.T. Beard, who joined the Conway for training before the RCN was born in 1910, was one of the early RCN pioneers. With such notables as German, Nelles, Bate and Brodeur, Charles Taschereau Beard started his naval career before the Naval Service Act was passed and began training in CGS Canada. In 1920-22 he commanded HMCS Patriot, in 1928 HMCS Champlain, and in 1940 HMCS Prince Robert. In 1939 he was the senior commander in the RCN with seniority of 1 September 1926.

Another pre-WW II pioneer was M.A. Medland who commanded HMCS St. Croix (1940), Athabaskan (1948-49) and Cayuga (1949-50). He retired as a Commodore in 1964.

Prior to their Canadian naval service many of the listed Conways followed merchant navy careers in various lines: J.A. Stokes (Alfred Holt Line); G. H. Hayes, I.B.B. Morrow (*Ed: in the original paper he was erroneously named as Monow*) and S.D. Taylor (Silver Line); J.A. Mitchell and D. F. Olive (Canadian Pacific Steamships); H.R. Beck (Canadian National Steamships in the Lady Boats); D.V. Trevorrow (Union Castle Line); J.F. Aspin , B.J. Murette (Clan Line); and J.D. Taylor (Booth Line).

Some Conways joined the RCN via the Royal Navy Special Entry route. They included M.A. Medland (Entry #29, 1930), R.W. Timbrell and R.T.N. Porter (Entry #43, 1937), R.B. Hayward (Entry #49, 1939), F.E. Wade (Entry #52, 1940), and D.S. Boyle (Entry 53, 1941).

Several Conways were killed in action in WW II:

- R.T. N. Porter (Executive Officer of HMCS St. Croix sunk in 1943).
- D. C. Hazelton (sunk in HMS Encounter in the Battle of the Java Sea in 1942, taken prisoner of war, and died when Japanese transport was sunk by allied submarine.
- T.M.W. Golby (Commanding Officer of HMCS Weyburn sunk off Gibraltar in 1943).

One other Conway on the list was taken prisoner of war but survived to serve many postwar years in the RCN: R.B. Hayward, Navigating Officer of HMCS Athabaskan torpedoed and sunk in 1944 in English Channel. Despite being in the water for some time, thanks to his physical fitness he was able to find his way to his rescuers. He spent a year in a German POW camp.

Recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross included: R.W. Timbrell, G.H. Hayes, W.E.S. Briggs, A.H. Easton and J.S. Hale.

Many on the list served in Canadian ships in Korea: B.A. Ewens (HMCS Sioux/second tour), R.B. Hayward (Executive Officer of HMCS Athabaskan 1951-52), A.H.M. Slater and P.A. Scott (HMCS Nootka), and W.J.H. Stuart (HMCS Crusader).

Two people on the list were Conway King's Gold Medallists: G.H. Hayes in 1938, and J.F. Leseur in 1941. In 1939 R.B. Hayward was awarded the Conway Queen's Silver Medal or Tate Prize. George W.R. Graves was the first Canadian to become a Conway King's Gold Medallist in 1931. His name is not shown on the list of 71 names because his wartime naval service was in the Royal Navy. He served in armed merchant cruisers and was awarded the DSC. After the war he served with distinction in the Canadian Transport Department and Canadian Coast Guard. He now resides in Ottawa.] See also reference to the link between the Conway Medals and the Canadian Coast Guard College later in this site.

- Two Conways became Maritime Commanders: R.W. Timbrell 1971-73 and D.S. Boyle (1973-77).
- One Conway became Commander NATO Standing Force Atlantic: D.S. Boyle (1970).
- Many of the Conways with Canadian naval service pursued second or even third careers in the Canadian Coast Guard Service. These included E.S. Brand, R.B. Hayward, A.A.R. Dykes, W.J.H. Stuart, C.D. Maginley, A.J. Preston, and J.O. Jenkins. Some commanded weather ships (A.A.R. Dykes) and DFO ships (A.J. Preston). Some Conways served Canada in other ways than through naval service. Conways joined government departments such as Transport, Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans and their predecessors. For example, John T. Walbran (1848-1913) trained in the Conway (1862-1864) and later became a leader in the maritime life of British Columbia. Captain Walbran commanded the Quadra, took part in early fisheries protection duties, became a respected Justice of the Peace, and was the author of the book 'British Columbia Place/Coast Names'
- After Canadian naval service, several served with British Columbia Ferries (e.g. A.H.M. Slater and J. Butterfield).

- Four of the Conway trained people on the list were naval aviators: J.A. Stokes (HMS Formidable and Implacable in wartime, CO 825 Squadron in 1948, HMCS Magnificent in 1950), J.A.D. Rowland (Venture graduate, VS 881 and 880, and later Air Canada pilot), K.C. Grieve (was in Swordfish raid on Italian fleet at Taranto in 1940, on loan to RCN from RN, commissioned HMCS Warrior in 1946 as Cdr Ops), and B.J. Marette (HMCS Malahat for VC 922 in 1956, and later pilot with CP Airlines). [Jack Stokes died in Vancouver BC on 24 September 1997.]
- The only submariner on the list is J.F. Aspin. Also an "honorary" Old Worcester, he was seconded to teach in HMS Worcester on the Thames in 1953-54. He sailed to Canada in HMCS Ojibwa, the first 'O' class submarine built to RCN order and commissioned in 1965.
- There are two brothers on the list - S.D. Taylor and J.D. Taylor. A third brother, who did not go to Conway, was the late Commodore Paul D. Taylor, DSC, RCN. The latter's younger brother S.D. Taylor commanded HMCS Chambly in 1944-45. All three brothers shared the same middle name of 'Dalrymple'.
- Conways who served on the staff of the RCN College at Royal Roads, Victoria, British Columbia, immediately after WW II included R.B. Hayward, D.S. Boyle, R.W. Timbrell and I.B.B. Morrow.
- Many Conways have contributed to the Salty Dips volumes published by NOAC Ottawa Branch where their naval experiences are described. The authors are E.S. Brand, G.H. Hayes, R.W. Timbrell, and H.R. Beck.
- It was the ambition of former Conways that some day they would return in command of their own HM Ships to sail past and salute their training ship. In the 1951-52 period the then Lieutenant- Commander G.H. Hayes DSC, RCN, when in command of HMCS Crescent, accomplished this ambition. Crescent steamed into the Menai Straits and was cheered by the Cadets as she passed Conway on her way back to sea.

Captain Hayes was also present to say farewell to his first ship in 1974. His final task prior to retirement was to represent the Canadian Forces at the Conway Paying Off Ceremony in Liverpool Cathedral.

These Old Conways trained in a ship which was one of the last 'wooden walls' of the Royal Navy. In their subsequent naval careers these 71 people served over the years in far different ships, including some of the following HMC Ships: Niobe, St. Croix, Athabaskan, Cayuga, Trillium, CFAV Endeavour, Acadia, Red Deer, Quinte, Kenogami, Guelph, Warrior, St. Stephen, Crescent, Drumheller, Algonquin, Chaleur, Meander, ML 069, Drummondville, Lauzon, Provider, Discovery, Orkney, Cowichan, Margaree, Orillia, New Waterford, Border Cities, Fundy, Chignecto, Assiniboine, Wallaceburg, Fortune, Bonaventure, Haida, Donnacona, Cornwallis, Carleton, Venture, Discovery, Cape Breton, Nene, Nootka, Iroquois, Labrador, Sackville, Ojibwa, Sioux, Stettler, Patriot, Agassiz, Chambly, Prince Robert, Weyburn, Cedarwood, Ste. Th?se, Queen, Snowberry, Festubert, Scotian, ML 106, Swift Current, Preserver, Hochelaga, Skeena, Micmac, Cap de Madeleine, Antigonish, Prince Henry, Edmonston, ML 070 and 066, Prince David, Chaudi?re, Ontario, Saguenay, Ottawa. Qu'Appelle, Swansea, and St. Laurent, to name but a few.

The Navigator of the first Canadian-manned escort carrier HMS Nabob was a former Conway Cadet.

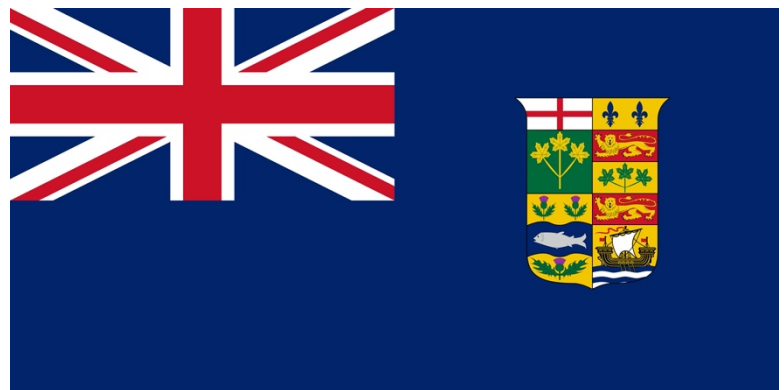
- Many survivors of the 71 Old Conways now reside in retired or semi-retired status on the West and East Coasts of Canada.
- Even as late as 1975 a Conway, M.J. Duncan, was CO of HMCS Chignecto and senior officer of the 2nd Training Division in Maritime Command Pacific. Another Conway, C.D. Maginley, was on the staff of the Maritime Commander, Pacific.

Conway trained people were very versatile. A few examples of their achievements include:

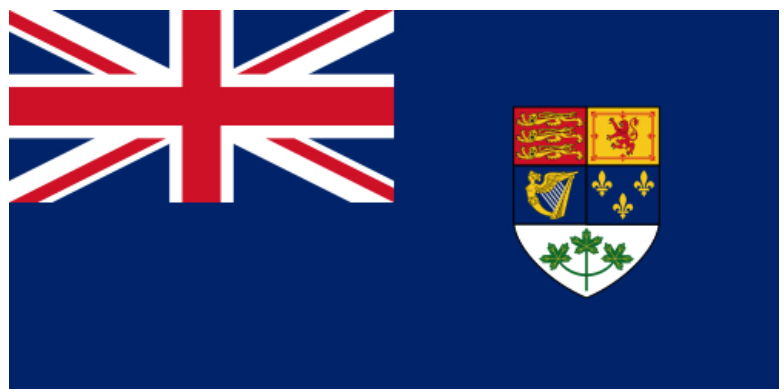
- R.B. Hayward became the third Canadian to qualify as a member of the Cruising Club of America.
- G.H. Hayes is a former President of the Naval Officers Association of Canada.
- W.E.S. Briggs was a noted CBC announcer and special events expert.
- A.H. Easton, CO of HMCS Sackville 1942-43, is an author of note and supporter of Sackville as Canada's Naval Memorial.
- J.F. Aspin joined Northumberland Ferries (to PEI) in 1974, served 20 years and became President and CEO, and owned marine agencies in Belle River PEI providing services to the marine industry.
- B.A. Ewens on retirement from the Navy in mid 1960's joined the Biology Department of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.
- S.D. Taylor served in the RCMP Marine Section and later was connected to West Coast commercial salmon trollers.
- J.A. Brown was the official Hydrographer Pacific Coast in the post WW II period.
- J.A. Stokes became a financial analyst in a large Vancouver investment company.
- D.F. Olive worked in one of Canada's major insurance companies.
- C.M. Fry was Director of Merchant Seamen Manning Pool in Montreal in WW II.
- M.J. Duncan, the last Conway Cadet to join the RCN, on retirement from the Navy in 1988 became the Trials Master for all new Canadian patrol frigates built by Saint John Shipbuilding since that time.

The relationship between the Conway and the Canadian Navy is now a matter of history. Research confirms that the Conway connection has had a positive and profound effect on the naval and maritime scene in Canada.

- 1906-1907 A.S. Dean
- 1906-1907 C.M. Fry
- 1906-1908 C.T. Beard
- 1906-1908 W.G. Lalor
- 1908-1910 W.G. Wright
- 1909-1910 E.S. Brand
- 1909-1911 V.H. Antle
- 1911-1914 J.W. Shaw
- 1915-1917 J.A. Brown
- 1915-1918 D.H. McKay
- 1916 R.F.A. Redman
- 1917-1919 A.H. Easton
- 1918-1920 F.B. Hutchings
- 1917-1920 F.W.M. Drew
- 1920-1922 T.G.S. Cairns
- 1920-1922 A. Moorhouse
- 1920-1922 J.D. Taylor
- 1921-1923 W.E.S. Briggs
- 1922-1924 T.M.W. Golby
- 1925-1928 K.C. Grieve
- 1926-1927 R. deC. Knight
- 1927-1928 F. Jones
- 1927-1929 D.R. Watson
- 1927-1929 C.F.W. Cooper
- 1927-1929 S.D. Taylor
- 1928-1930 M.A. Medland
- 1929-1932 S.W. Buxton
- 1930-1932 G.E. Murrell
- 1930-1932 D.F. Olive
- 1931-1933 A.A.R. Dykes



RCN Ensign 1906 to 1921



RCN Jack 1921 to 1957

1933-1935 H.R. Beck
1933-1935 J.C. Smith
1934-1936 F.J. Boyer
1934-1936 J.A. Mitchell
1934-1936 R.T.N. Porter
1934-1936 J.A. Stokes
1934-1937 J.C.W. Nottbeck
1935-1937 R.W. Timbrell
1936-1937 K.D. Isted
1936-1938 G.H. Hayes
1936-1938 D.C. Hazelton
1936-1939 J. Butterfield
1936-1939 F.E. Wade
1937-1939 R.B. Hayward
1937-1939 I.B.B. Morrow
1937-1939 A.G. Murray
1938-1940 P. Henry
1938-1940 R.J. Mann
1938-1940 W.W. Robinson
1939-1940 D.S. Boyle
1939-1941 J.F. Leseur
1939-1941 B.A. Mitchell
1939-1941 A.J. Preston
1939-1941 A.H.M. Slater
1939-1941 W.J.H. Stuart
1940 W.G. Hunt
1940-1942 B.A. Ewens
1940-1942 J.S. Hale
1940-1942 G.G. Smith
1941-1943 P.A. Scott
1942-1944 G.H. Hill
1944-1945 J.P. Jones
1945-1947 C.D. Maginley
1945-1947 B.J. Marette
1948-1949 J.F. Aspin
1948-1949 D.V. Trevorrow
1949-1951 G.C. Dale
1949-1951 J.O. Jenkins
1949-1951 W. McMunagle
1952-1954 J.A.D. Rowland
1953-1954 M.J. Duncan