

**CANADA AVIATION MUSEUM AIRCRAFT**

**SIKORSKY HO4S-3 (S-55) HORSE  
ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY (RCN)**



Prepared by Robert Murray LCdr RCN (Ret'd)

## Introduction

This is an abbreviated history of the Canada Aviation Museum SIKORSKY helicopter 55877. It briefly outlines the development history of this helicopter, the spectacular rescues it achieved and the background leading up to its being included in the Canada Aviation Collection. The synopsis also includes three separate Annexes as follows:

- Annex A        A listing of Officers Commanding the two RCN helicopter Squadrons while these aircraft were in service with the Royal Canadian Navy between 1955 and 1970.
- Annex B        A listing of all HO4S SIKORSKY aircraft acquired , employed and retired, including their final disposition.
- Annex C        A detailed chronological history of SIKORSKY 55877 from its acquisition in Hartford Connecticut in 1955 until its transfer to the Canada Aviation Museum in 1970. An Appendix to this Annex lists all RCN pilots who flew SIKORSKY 55877.

### Early Helicopters

The predecessor of the S-55 SIKORSKY HO4S-3 helicopter pictured below was the S-51 which was placed in production in 1946 shortly after WW II. This model was initially a civil version but in 1947 was delivered to the United States Army upgraded by incorporating a 600 horsepower 1340 Pratt and Whitney engine and an increased rotor diameter from 48 to 53 feet.

This early helicopter was called the HO3S-1, S-51 or HOVERFLY. WESTLAND, who built the S-51 under license in England, called the S-51 ADRAGONFLY®. When production of the S-51 terminated at SIKORSKY in 1951, some 300 had been assembled. This version set the stage for ongoing development work in 1949 which evolved into the S-55 also affectionately known as the AHORSE®.

### The S-55 or HO4S (HORSE)

The year 1949 was to become a banner year for SIKORSKY helicopters. The Company had developed the follow-on version, the S-55, by rearranging and reconfiguring existing components. This rearrangement included placing of the engine forward of the center section and relocating the cockpit above it. This allowed for a roomy passenger area. The attached photograph reflects these design changes and it can readily be seen how much cabin area exists as a result of the cockpit re location.

A mock-up of this reconfigured model was proposed to the United States Air Force (USAF) in Dayton Ohio and they were most enthusiastic. An arrangement was made to provide, in place of the last model of the S-51 series, half the contracted number of S-55's for the same price. In due course the S-55 model was evaluated as a litter carrier for evacuation of wounded US Army soldiers. These trials were completed in 1949-50 and the helicopters were used extensively during the Korean War. The subsequent impact of the S-55 from both commercial and military perspectives was unforeseen at the time of its initial introduction. This unique design marked the dawn of a new era for a single-main-rotor lifting helicopter.



Here was a helicopter that was reliable, versatile and adaptable to diverse requirements. This resulted in a requirement for a total of 1,700 units of which 1,281 were produced in the United States.

In addition, the British firm, WESTLAND AIRCRAFT/HELICOPTER Ltd, built 364 of these venerable aircraft under license from SIKORSKY and named them the WS-55 WHIRLWIND. Also the Japanese conglomerate, MITSUBISHI INDUSTRIES built 44 and the French firm SNCA du Sud-Est a further quantity. The French called the S-55 the "Joyeux Elephant". At least 40 countries used military variants of the S-55 and it was equally ubiquitous in both military and civil roles.

The last of these helicopters to be retired was a Royal Navy (RN) WHIRLWIND Mk. 7. It was struck off strength on 22 Jul, 1976. It had been based at the Joint Helicopter Tactical Development Unit, Old Sarum, Wiltshire, and named the "Iron Chicken".

#### Aircraft Design Specifications

The S-55 or, as it was known in its RCN configuration, HO4S-3 was a carrier borne or shore based Anti-Submarine or Utility helicopter. It was of all metal construction. The specifications and dimensions are outlined below:

Rotors: Three bladed main rotor (53 ft.) and a single two bladed anti-torque tail rotor (8ft. 9 in.).

Fuselage: Aluminum/Magnesium semi-monocoque construction.

Length: 41 ft. 8 2 in

Height: 13 ft. 2 2 in.

Power Plant: single R1300-3 Pratt and Whitney 800h.p derated to 700 h.p.

Weight Empty: 5,170 lbs.  
Loaded: 7,800 lbs.

Performance: Maximum Speed 112 m.p.h. at sea level.  
Cruising Speed 75 m.p.h. at sea level.  
Maximum Climb 910 ft./min. at sea level.

Service Ceiling: 9,400 ft.

Armament: Provision for Mk. 43 homing torpedo or depth bomb.

#### The RCN SIKORSKY Helicopters

The RCN acquired thirteen HO4S helicopters all built at the SIKORSKY Aircraft Plant, located at Bridgeport, Connecticut, USA. The first RCN variant was the HO4S-2. Three HO4S-2, three of which were initially purchased for the RCN and allocated to No. 1 Naval Helicopter Flight, later to be known as Helicopter Utility Squadron Twenty-One (HU-21). The remainder were HO4S-3 models. Of the thirteen (13) aircraft acquired five (5) were destroyed due to accidents with no loss of life to the aircrew. A listing of all aircraft and their resulting disposition is contained in Appendix B.

The three initial HO4S-2 SIKORSKY aircraft noted above were fitted with an engine of 600 horsepower derated to 550. One of these, SIKORSKY 51444, was lost in an accident and the two remaining, SIKORSKY-s 55305 and 55320, were retrofitted with the larger 800 horsepower

models derated to 700. This, together with other technical improvements, brought them up to the HO4S-3 standard. Derated engines improved reliability and the reduced engine overhaul interval of 500 hours provided an additional margin of safety. This upgrade work was performed by Pratt & Whitney Canada Inc., Longueuil, Quebec. Of the ten additional HO4S-3 helicopters purchased from SIKORSKY in 1955, six were for the newly formed Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Fifty (HS-50) .

The museum exhibit SERNO 55877 was included in the June 1955 delivery. On completion of test and acceptance flights, SIKORSKY 55877 flown by LCdr "Rod" Bays in company with SIKORSKY 55876 flown by LCdr J.H. "Jack" Beeman departed Bridgeport on 7 June, 1955 en route Halifax with fuel stops at Salem, Massachusetts; Brunswick, Maine, where they remained overnight; and Saint John, New Brunswick. They arrived at HMCS SHEARWATER 8 June 1955

All RCN aircraft were equipped with a WRIGHT R-1300-3 seven cylinder nose mounted radial engine. The R-1300-3 drove a fully articulated three bladed, 53-foot diameter, main rotor through an angled drive shaft and reduction gearing and, a torque compensating, two bladed, tail rotor. The main rotor turned at about 220 RPM or roughly one-tenth the engine speed and is constant throughout the zero to 115-knot (132-mph) speed range of the helicopter. The normal cruising speed was 75 knots [82 mph] with a range of 265 nautical miles (305 statute miles).

## **Operational Employment and Configuration**

### Introduction

The RCN HO4S-3 was employed in two roles, each role performed by a different Squadron. Helicopter Utility Squadron TWENTY-ONE (HU-21) formed from the original No. 1 Helicopter Flight was the first squadron commissioned, primarily for rescue duties both at sea, on Canadian aircraft carriers, and ashore. The second, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron equipped the helicopters with an AN/AQS-4 dunking sonar which was used for the underwater detection of submerged submarines.

### Helicopter Utility Squadron TWENTY-ONE Search and Rescue/Utility Configuration

This version of the HO4S-3 was equipped for two pilot operation, although one pilot and one crewman/hoist operator were normally carried on search and rescue (SAR) missions. Depending on fuel load, provision could be made in the main cabin for six seats or five stretchers.

The primary item of airborne rescue equipment was a BREEZE Company hoist with a 600 pound lift capacity. If, for any reason, the rescue crewman was required to assist a victim on the ground or in the water, the pilot in the right hand seat could operate the hoist from the cockpit. In either event the hoist had to be grounded, well clear of the victim, in order to discharge static electricity thus preventing the possible ignition of fuel and oil which could be in the area. An electrically operated guillotine was available to the pilot or crewman to sever the hoist cable should it become fouled. The helicopter could also be fitted with an external sling which permitted the carrying of up to 2000 lbs. of external cargo.

Special equipment carried by the rescue helicopter included a hoisting sling resembling a horse collar after which it was named. The aircraft also carried a rescue seat, double lift harness, Chicago clamp and a monkey tail strap to secure the crewman to the helicopter when standing in the doorway operating the hoist. Ancillary equipment also included: a 4-man dinghy, fire fighting suit, a stretcher and wire basket litter, blankets, first aid kit, rope and a black-board.

When the helicopter was engaged in over water wet hoists a large section of rubber matting was fitted over the cabin floor. This prevented salt water from seeping into the cabin floor and corroding the aircraft structure. In addition, Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus

(SCUBA) gear was available when responding to a crash at sea. Helicopter Rescue Crewmen were normally trained as SCUBA divers.

A "bull horn", with speakers, was mounted on the starboard (right) side, behind the main cabin door, and was used to pass information or instructions to vessels without radio, ground parties, fire fighters, etc, when a landing was not possible. It was operated from the main cabin and had an audible range of several thousand yards. The call sign for the "duty" rescue helicopter based at SHEARWATER was "ANGEL" and, when embarked in the carrier as HU-21 Detachment 1, its call sign was "PEDRO"(The Flying Burro).

The primary role of the Museum exhibit while employed in HU-21 was search and rescue adjacent to the Naval Air Station at HMCS SHEARWATER. However, it was soon recognized that these ubiquitous helicopters could easily be deployed throughout the Maritimes at extremely short notice and they were used extensively in a rescue capacity throughout their operational tenure. Secondary roles included pilot training, calibration of ship's radars, personnel transfers, forest fire fighting and equipment trials and testing. When the helicopter embarked in the aircraft carrier in its utility configuration it acted as rescue helicopter (plane guard) for launches and recoveries of fixed wing aircraft. It was also used for fleet replenishment, and personnel and mail transfers at sea.

#### Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Fifty (HS-50) ASW Configuration

As noted earlier a second Squadron of SIKORSKY helicopters was formed at HMCS SHEARWATER on 4 July 1955, equipped with six HO4S-3 helicopters configured to support ASW operations. The Squadron consisted of 18 pilots and ten sonar operators. The similarity in operation of the helicopters= ASW equipment with that carried in surface ships prompted the decision to employ sonar operators in the helicopters. The HO4S-3 was fitted with an AQS-4 dunking sonar that could be lowered up to 100 feet into the ocean. Active sonar ranging@ similar to the use of radar above the surface allowed the helicopter to detect underwater targets and to direct fixed wing aircraft for attacks. In the absence of fixed wing support the HO4S-3 was capable of carrying a Mk. 43 homing torpedo or a depth charge which could be launched from the single rack on the port (left) side of the helicopter. The role of HS-50 was to develop tactics for the use of helicopters in Anti-Submarine Warfare. A secondary role was the development of mine-clearing procedures.

The era of the HO4S-3, in HS-50, ended in 1963 when HS-50 Squadron was re-equipped with the larger and more capable SIKORSKY CHSS-2 SEA KING helicopter.

#### A Look to the Future

During September-October 1956, HU-21 pilots LCdrs R.V. "Rod" Bays, G.J. "John" Laurie and Lt J.D. "John" Hewer, were seconded to Experimental Squadron Ten (VX-10) to evaluate the concept of operating helicopters from destroyer escorts.

Selected for the initial trials was HMCS BUCKINGHAM, a PRESTONIAN Class frigate. The vessel had been specially configured with a landing platform capable of receiving the HO4S-3 trial aircraft considered at the time, to be a medium sized helicopter. Two photographs of this trial in calm seas are attached.



During the following year the flight deck was removed from the frigate and transferred to the destroyer escort HMCS OTTAWA . A larger helicopter, an H-34 (S-58) SIKORSKY Serno. 9633 was borrowed from the RCAF and flown from the flight deck of HMCS OTTAWA during an Atlantic crossing in company with the aircraft carrier HMCS MAGNIFICENT. This major trial confirmed the feasibility of this unusual union and identified the engineering challenges that required solutions. The successful conclusion of this project to test the feasibility of operating helicopters from destroyers in open ocean areas firmly established the Royal Canadian Navy as an ASW technological leader.



## History of The Museum Exhibit SIKORSKY HO4S-3 55877

### Introduction

The operational or flying history of the HO4S-3 SIKORSKY 55877 Museum Exhibit in the Royal Canadian Navy is reflected in the symbology that adorns the engine cover on the right hand side. The astute observer will notice the eight maple leaves circumscribing the United Nations Emergency Force symbol in blue and white. At the top is the ribbon of the George Medal and the Oak Leaves of the Queens Commendation. Each maple leaf denotes a rescue over the 15 year lifetime of this helicopter.

The following vignettes represent the major, but by no means complete contributions made by this helicopter and the aircrew that flew her. Nevertheless, the story of the Museum exhibit is best served by outlining the circumstances leading to the awards painted on the nose of the helicopter.



### SS KISMET II Rescue 26 November, 1955

Cape St. Lawrence, is probably the most northern point of Cape Breton Island. It was here that the Liberian freighter, the SS KISMET II foundered and ran aground on 26 September, 1955. When the ship drifted out of control onto the jagged rocks at the base of the 1000-foot cliffs of Cape St Lawrence there seemed to be no way the 21 seamen could be rescued except by helicopter.

On arrival at the scene, the pilots, Lieutenant Commanders (LCdr) J.H.Beeman and F.R. Fink made several attempts to rescue the crew but were prevented from doing so by strong winds, rough seas and dangerous proximity to the vertical cliffs. The adverse weather also prevented rescue by small boat or by the use of the lifeline and breeches buoy that had previously been requisitioned and which arrived at the top of the cliff after an arduous trip to the rescue site behind a snowplow. Conditions improved slightly the following morning but were still too hazardous to allow the helicopter to hover adjacent to the 1000 foot cliffs and over the KISMET II on the rocks below.

Over the next few hours the weather and winds moderated and a rescue attempt was made. Flying down the 1000 foot cliff face the helicopter crew instructed the ship's crew, using hand signals to clear an area near the rear (stern) of the ship. Shortly thereafter the deck was cleared and items such as the guard rails and the aft compass binnacle were thrown over the side. The pilot then maneuvered the helicopter over the ship and hovered just inches over the deck while the first of the crew members scrambled aboard. Four trips, two by each pilot, were required to rescue the 21 crew members. Also rescued were the Captain's dog and the ship's cat. All crew members were flown to the village of Bay St. Lawrence, about eight miles from the wreck site where they were given medical checks.

As a result of this rescue the George Medal was awarded to the two pilots, Lieutenant Commanders Fink and Beeman at an investiture on 1 July, 1959 at Government House, Ottawa, by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The two crewmen, Petty Officer Lawrence Vipond and Leading Seaman Paul Smith, were awarded the Queens Commendation at the same investiture.

#### HMCS MAGNIFICENT, At Sea, 3 March 1956.

On the 3 March, 1956 during a break in flying operations, Able Seaman Garret was knocked overboard by the tail of an aircraft being moved on the flight deck. Both helicopter pilots were three decks below the flight deck in the Officers Wardroom having lunch when the "man overboard" alarm sounded. Scrambling to the flight deck they leapt into SIKORSKY 55877 which had been ranged and prepared for flight. Following an immediate take off the crew successfully completed the rescue before the carrier could lower a "sea boat" or the "rescue destroyer" could position itself to make a recovery.

A photograph of SIKORSKY 55877 in its capacity as rescue helicopter on HMCS MAGNIFICENT is attached. The helicopter was normally positioned near the stern of the carrier to allow an immediate takeoff if, for any reason, there should be a requirement. On the flight deck helicopter aircrew were on two minutes standby for take off. When below decks this was raised to 10



minutes. In the distance behind the aircraft carrier can be seen the plane guard destroyer. In the event that the helicopter should be unable to effect a recovery this destroyer could lower a sea boat. Since the helicopter did not fly at night the destroyer was on-call throughout all hours of darkness when fixed wing flying operations were in progress.

#### HMCS Magnificent/ VS 880 Squadron 26 and 28 September, 1956

At sea during carrier qualifications SIKORSKY 55877 had the unusual distinction of rescuing the same AVENGER pilot, on both the 26 and 28 of the month. On 26 September, Lieutenant Commander E.A. Fallen flying with the Captain A.B. Fraser-Harris, the Commanding Officer of HMCS MAGNIFICENT, as co-pilot and Able Seaman R. Shawbridge as crewman, rescued Lieutenant Harry Beutel within

two minutes after he went over the port side of the aircraft carrier in an AVENGER during carrier landing practice.

Two days later, Lieutenant Commander Fallen with Able Seaman Chapman as crewman rescued the same pilot in 55 seconds after he went over the starboard side in a replacement AVENGER. In both cases the pilot was hoisted directly out of the cockpit before the aircraft sunk. Both of these rescues are reflected as maple leaves on the nose painting of HO4S-3 55877.

*Finally, on 3 March 1959, the same pilot was again rescued by helicopter when the CS2F TRACKER 1542 he was flying went over the starboard side of HMCS BONAVENTURE during touch and go landings. The aircraft landed flat on the water where the pilots extricated themselves through the emergency exits.*

#### HMCS Shearwater/ VU-32 Squadron 21 May, 1959

On 21 May a crash alarm was broadcast indicating that an AVENGER aircraft had ditched off the Osborne head radar tracking range located about 8 miles South East of the HMCS SHEARWATER airfield. On arriving in the area the helicopter crew flying SIKORSKY 55877 saw a life raft with three persons in it. The aircrew were hoisted directly from the raft and returned to the airfield for medical check-ups.

#### HMCS Bonaventure/ At Sea 22 March, 1960

A young seaman fell from the flight deck of HMCS BONAVENTURE about 40 feet into the water ending up in the wake of the aircraft carrier. The crew, Lieutenant Robin Watt and Sub. Lieutenant Walter Morris and crewman Able Seaman Malcolm Marshall were able to launch SIKORSKY 55877 and effect a rescue in less than three minutes although they had been below deck at the time

#### HMCS Bonaventure/VS880 Squadron 11 June, 1963

A TRACKER from 880 Squadron, while performing operational training several miles from the aircraft carrier, inadvertently flew too low allowing the port wingtip to strike the ocean below. The aircraft immediately and violently cartwheeled over the surface of the water. The co-pilot managed to escape through the shattered cockpit side window and one of the crewmen exited using his overhead hatch. Although SIKORSKY 55877 quickly recovered the two survivors from the water there was no trace of the remaining two crew members. A search continued throughout the morning but was unsuccessful.

### **The Museum Exhibit SIKORSKY 55877**

With the decommissioning of HMCS BONAVENTURE and re-equipping the fleet with SEA KING helicopters the requirement for the HO4S-3 SIKORSKY helicopters was on the wane. A decision was taken that these worthy helicopters were to be retired. Unlike many aircraft in the Museum which had to be restored prior to display, SIKORSKY 55877 was in pristine condition attributable to the superb maintenance accorded her by the maintenance technicians over the years.

A request by the Museum to have one of these venerable helicopters as an exhibit was met with enthusiasm. Arrangements were quickly made to have the RCN's most famous helicopter, SIKORSKY 55877, transferred to the National Collection Heritage.

On 20/21 May, 1970 SIKORSKY 55877 was flown to Ottawa by Lieutenant Commander G.E. Watson and Lieutenant Chris Daley to her final resting place, the Canada Aviation Museum at Rockcliffe. Arrangements had been made with the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) to photograph this memorable event which was also attended by several military and civilian dignitaries. Photographs, one of which is attached, were duly taken but a second landing was organized so that the Canadian television Network (CTV) network, who were late in arriving could film the event as well.



When the rotors were shut down for the last time and the throttle closed, SIKORSKY 55877 had logged a total of 4760.1 flight hours over a period of 15 years.

During this time more than 140 pilots had flown her during training, utility, anti-submarine and search and rescue operations. The Canada Aviation Museum is the perfect resting place for this trustworthy and amiable dowager.

15 August 2000

**Commanding Officers  
SIKORSKY HO4S 2/3 Squadrons  
Royal Canadian Navy.  
1955 - 1969**

1 Helicopter Flight

LCdr(P)	J.D.Lowe CD,RCN	Sep 1951	May 1953
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VH 21

LCdr(P)	J.D.Lowe CD,RCN	May 1953	Aug 1953
LCdr(P)(O)	J.H.Beeman GM,CD,RCN	Aug 1953	Apr 1955

HU 21

LCdr(P)(O)	J.H.Beeman GM,CD,RCN	Apr 1955	Jan 1956
LCdr(P)	R.V. Bays CD,RCN	Apr 1955	Jan 1956
LCdr(P)	H.R.Welsh CD,RCN		Nov 1956 Jun 1958
LCdr(P)	W.H.Frayn CD,RCN		Jun 1958 Jan 1961
LCdr(P)	W.E.James MBE,CD,RCN	Jan 1961	Aug 1962
LCdr(P)	R.T.Murray CD,RCN		Aug 1962 Jul 1964
LCdr(P)	D.A.Muncaster GM,CD,RCN	Jul 1964	Jul 1966
LCdr(P)	M.S.McCall CD,RCN		Jul 1966 Jul 1968
LCdr(P)	G.E.Watson OMM,CD,RCN	Jul 1968	Aug 1970

HS 50

LCdr(P)	G.H.Marlow CD,RCN	Jul 1955	Sep 1957
LCdr(P)	F.R.Fink GM,CD,RCN	Sep 1957	Jul 1959
LCdr(P)	K.L.Gibbs CD,RCN	Jul 1959	Aug 1961
LCdr(P)	E.A.Fallen CD,RCN	Aug 1961	Sep 1964

**Listing of HO4S-2/3 SIKORSKY Helicopters  
Royal Canadian Navy  
1955 - 1969**

**Introduction**

A brief summary is attached listing the dates on which the SIKORSKY helicopters were acquired, and later, struck off strength. The reader will note that in several cases the Struck Off Strength date is not the same as the disposition date. Often these dates were at variance as decisions concerning the disposition of the helicopters had not been made.

**SIKORSKY 55144 - HO4S-2**

Taken On Strength      29 April 1955  
Struck Off Strength      25 June 1957

This aircraft crashed on McNab's Island, Halifax Harbour when the engine failed following a practice autorotation. One wheel hit soft sand and the helicopter rolled over. The aircraft was badly damaged and was subsequently used for ground instructional purposes at its parent station, HMCS SHEARWATER. Pilot of the aircraft at the time of the accident was Lieutenant Donald Neilly.

**SIKORSKY 55305 - HO4S-2/3**

Taken On Strength      5 December 1952  
Struck Off Strength      8 May 1970

Acquired as an HO4S-2, this early helicopter was upgraded to the HO4S-3 configuration with a larger engine at Pratt and Whitney Canada Inc. between March 1955 and December 1956. Four years after being Struck Off Strength the helicopter was shipped to CFB Borden for disposal purposes.

**SIKORSKY 55320 HO4S-2/3**

Taken On Strength      19 December 1952  
Struck Off Strength      2 August 1961

The last helicopter acquired as an HO4S-2 SIKORSKY 55320 was converted to an HO4S-3 model at Pratt and Whitney Canada Inc. Longueuil, Quebec between March and December 1955. This helicopter ditched in the Atlantic off the South Carolina coast during Exercise ARiptide II on 10 July 1961. The aircrew consisting of pilots Lieutenant Alex Nichols and Sub Lieutenant John Lehmann and sonar operator P2SN Ralph Villeneuve were rescued by the USS VAN VOORIS DE 1028 after only seven minutes of exposure in the water.

**SIKORSKY 55867 HO4S-3**

Taken On strength      16 May 1955  
Struck Off Strength      17 June 1964

The first helicopter acquired as an upgraded HO4S-3 model. Dismantled and scrapped.

**SIKORSKY 55875 HO4S-3**

Taken on strength      16 May 1955  
Struck Off Strength    16 May 1968

On retirement SIKORSKY 55875 was dismantled and shipped to Canadian Forces Base Borden where it was stored. Subsequently it was trans-shipped to Canadian Forces Base Penhold where it was reassembled for display purposes.

### **SIKORSKY 55876 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      10 June 1955  
Struck Off Strength    15 November 1968

Dismantled and scrapped .

### **SIKORSKY 55877 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      10 June 1955  
Struck Off Strength    16 May 1970

This helicopter is the subject of this brief history. The aircraft resides at the Canada Aviation Museum located at Rockcliffe, Ottawa, Ontario

### **SIKORSKY 55878 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      25 August 1955  
Struck Off Strength    15 November 1968

Dismantled and scrapped.

### **SIKORSKY 55885 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      31 August 1955  
Struck Off Strength    15 August 1965

On the 8 May 1970 this helicopter was shipped to Canadian Forces Base Borden to replace SIKORSKY 55875 which had been shipped to Canadian Forces Base Penhold.

### **SIKORSKY 55886 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      25 August 1955  
Struck Off Strength    22 September 1961

SIKORSKY 55886 one of two sent to the Province of Newfoundland to fight forest fires. The Province had, with the Attorney General's approval, previously declared a National emergency when large areas of the East Coast of Newfoundland were burning uncontrolled. The fire line extended almost 100 miles with fires burning coniferous trees to heights of almost 300 feet. SIKORSKY 55886, while ferrying fire fighters, crashed into trees near Aspen Cove. The aircrew included Lt. Gordon Gray and L/S James Law. Both aircrew and passengers escaped uninjured.

### **SIKORSKY 55887 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      26 July 1955  
Struck Off Strength    4 November 1958

Crashed and burned on McNab's island located in Halifax harbour. Pilots were Lts. Gordon Fraser and Jud McSweeney. The crewmember was L/S Blondin. No injuries were sustained in this accident.

### **SIKORSKY 55891 - HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      26 July 1955  
Struck Off Strength     8 August 1964

Following retirement SIKORSKY 55891 remained at CFB SHEARWATER on display inside the entrance to the base. It, along with other Naval aircraft, have now under cover where they are awaiting restoration prior to being placed on permanent display at the Naval Aviation Museum located at CFB SHEARWATER, Nova Scotia.

### **SIKORSKY 55892 HO4S-3**

Taken On Strength      31 August 1955  
Struck Off Strength     3 May 1957

This aircraft ditched at sea during an exercise off the coast of Key West Florida on 14 March 1957 during an exercise. The pilots Lts. Ron McLymont and Harry Dubinsky were rescued by the USS CROMWELL DE 1014. No injuries were sustained.

**A Chronological Summary  
of  
Aviation Activities Performed by SIKORSKY 55877  
Royal Canadian Navy  
1955 - 1969**

**Introduction**

The highlights of the history of the Museum exhibit have been outlined in the first part of this narrative. This was excerpted from a detailed chronological history prepared by Lieutenant Commander Robert Murray (Ret-d) while employed as a volunteer at the Canada Aviation Museum. Bob retired from the Royal Canadian Navy after a distinguished Naval career predominantly oriented at flying helicopters, many of them in SIKORSKY 55877. This history is included in its entirety as it is the only known detailed history of a Museum aircraft. It is important for several reasons. First, crewed by highly trained and capable individuals it demonstrates the wide range of humanitarian activity the RCN became involved in. No less was the professionalism exhibited by the aircrew that flew this helicopter.

Secondly, many of those who flew missions described in this chronology were later to become involved in the Amarrriage@ of the larger SEA KING helicopters to Destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy. This involved surmounting many technical and operational challenges, and when solved provided Canada with an ASW capability deemed second to none in the free world. The professional manner in which these challenges were recognized, managed and overcome deserve recognition. As a tribute to these aviation descendants, the names of each and every member who flew missions in SIKORSKY 55877 is included as an Appendix to this Annex.

In reading this chronology the reader should keep in mind that it pertains to a single aircraft. The remaining HO4S-3 SIKORSKY aircraft were also involved in a myriad of no less dramatic operations while serving with Squadrons of the Royal Canadian Navy between 1955 and 1969.

**SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1955**

Early Days

On completion of the test and acceptance flights, SIKORSKY 55877, flown by LCdr. ARod@Bays in company with a second helicopter SIKORSKY 55876 flown by LCdr. J.H. Beaman departed Bridgeport 7 June, 1955. With fuel stops at Salem Massachusetts and Brunswick, Maine, where they remained overnight, the helicopters arrived at HMCS SHEARWATER in mid afternoon 8 June.

The first SAR mission of 1955 for SIKORSKY 55877 was for the RCAF. RCAF Station CHATHAM, New Brunswick, requested the use of a helicopter to investigate and chart old crash sites. Lt W.E. "Sandy" James spent the 28th to 31st August looking at sites within the base operating area.

On 23 November, SIKORSKY 55877, piloted by Lieutenants "Sandy" James and R.T. "Bob" Murray and crewman Petty Officer (PO) Allan Reage was dispatched, in adverse weather conditions, to Gaspereau Lake, southwest of Kentville, Nova Scotia, to pick up a hunter said to have a broken leg and unable to walk. The helicopter departed SHEARWATER at 1540 and, after picking up two RCMP Constables at the Kentville Golf Course, arrived at the hunting camp, and located the victim standing near the edge of the lake. In fact the man's leg had been broken

and set in a walking cast prior to going into the bush. He said he felt unable to walk the four miles out of the woods in the snow, which had accumulated during his stay. His request to have us fly-out the three deer the party had shot was, in no uncertain terms, declined.

The man was flown back to the Kentville Golf Course and delivered into the custody of the RCMP. SIKORSKY 55877 returned to the Base at HMCS SHEARWATER at about 1820.

### The KISMET II Rescue

Three days later, on the 26th of November, SIKORSKY 55877 was called upon to render assistance in what was to probably the most difficult rescue to be undertaken by helicopter and which established a baseline for professionalism that would remain in the Royal Canadian Navy for decades. This involved the rescue of the crew of the Liberian registered freighter KISMET II. The freighter had drifted out of control onto the jagged rocks at the base of the 1000-foot cliffs of Cape Saint Lawrence, the northernmost point of Cape Breton Island. On arrival at the scene, the pilots, LCdrs "Jack" Beeman and LCdr. F.R. "Roger" Fink made several attempts to rescue the crew but were prevented from doing so by strong winds and rough seas.

Difficulties were multiplying as the atrocious weather prevented rescue by alternative rescue methods such as the use of a small boat, or a lifeline and Abreeches buoy. The Abreeches buoy rescue method required that one end of a long line be attached to a suitable location on the stricken vessel and the other, about 1,000 feet slant range above, near the top of the cliff. When lowered it was intended that the seamen, one at a time, would climb into a device resembling an oversized pair of pants (hence the term Abreeches) which could be pulled up the cliff face using pulleys attached to long pieces of rope. The attaching of one end of the line to the vessel turned out to be far more difficult than expected as a line could not be propelled sufficiently far out to the reefs to arrive at the KISMET where it could be secured.

Weather conditions slowly improved the following morning permitting the helicopter to hover over the KISMET II which was now well aground on the rocky shoals at the base of the cliff. The helicopter was flown down the side of the cliff to a position where the helicopter crew, using hand signals, instructed the ship's crew to clear a landing area aft. Shortly afterwards the deck was cleared and items such as the guardrail and the aft compass binnacle were thrown over the side. The pilot then moved the helicopter over the cleared area of the ship and hovered just inches over the deck while the first of the crew members scrambled aboard. Four trips, two by each pilot, were required to rescue the 21-man crew, including the Captain's dog and the ships cat. All were flown to the village of Bay St. Lawrence, which had road access to hospitals, accommodation and communication facilities.

For this conspicuous rescue LCdrs. Fink and Beeman were awarded the George Medal and the two crewman, PO Lawrence Vipond and LS Paul Smith the Queen's Commendation at an investiture on 1 July, 1959 at Government House, Ottawa, by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

### The Cape Breton Rescue

Before the end of the year, SIKORSKY 55877 would be called upon to carry out another successful mercy mission. On 22 December, LCdr John Laurie with crewman Chief Petty Officer (CPO) William "Bill" Shorten, LS James C. McNaughton and photographer LS Norman B. Fitzmaurice flew to St. Paul's Island, 14 miles off Cape North, Cape Breton Island to pick up the pregnant widow of the assistant lighthouse keeper George Galza.

Mr. Galza had previously drowned when the cable broke as he was traveling by boatswain chair across 50 feet of open water, between rugged cliffs, separating St Paul Island and a smaller island on the north coast. A companion managed to make it ashore but the surf carried Mr. Galza away. High seas had made it impossible for the widow, suffering from shock, to leave the island

by boat. During the flight to the island the pilot experienced winds of 50 knots and snow showers limiting visibility to a 1/4 mile.

### Sable Island

Six days later, on 28 December LCdr. Roger Fink with co-pilot Cdr F.W.H. "Freddy" Bradley and AB Girardin as crewman flew to Sable Island to evacuate a Department of Transport Radio Operator who had symptoms associated with appendicitis. Since the distance to Sable Island is about 160 nautical miles, close to the range of the HO4S-3, ten, five gallon containers of AVGAS had to be carried to "top up" the fuel tanks for the return flight. An AVENGER AS3W2 "Guppy" from VS 881 was assigned to escort the helicopter and assist with navigation and act as a radio and safety link. However, the AVENGER was late in getting airborne and was unable to contact SIKORSKY 555877.

The pilot's dead reckoning navigation to the island was good and landfall was made at West Point. After landing they refueled the helicopter using the filled gasoline containers. As this was occurring, just at dark, they were surprised to find the "patient" walking out to the helicopter carrying two heavy suitcases. After a 40 minute stopover to refuel they took off and headed back to HMCS SHEARWATER, this time with the Avenger crew holding radar contact all the way.

### **Sikorsky 55877 Operations - 1956**

#### The Liscombe Dam Rescue

Activity started early in 1956 for SIKORSKY 55877. At about 1500, 7 January, a call was received that two Nova Scotia Power Commission employees were trapped in an abandoned cookhouse situated below the Liscombe Dam. The dam was in danger of collapse due to pressure from recent heavy flood waters. When they arrived at the scene, the pilots, LCdr. R.V. "Rod" Bays and Lt J. Bryan Hayter with crewman AB Ronald Volk, concluded that the weather, rain, drizzle and fog combined with the gathering darkness would make further flying operations imprudent.

The pilots elected to remain at Sheet Harbour for the night in case conditions at the site deteriorated. As this was mid-winter the crew removed the oil from the engine to a warm building to facilitate early morning starting. Weather next morning was much the same but with the addition of strong winds. The helicopter arrived on the scene and located the men, without difficulty, 75 yards below the dam. Water was pouring over and around the eastern edge of the dam effectively marooning the men on an island with raging water up to 200 yards wide surrounding them. The two were hoisted from their precarious position and flown to the safety of a nearby highway.

#### Mail Delivery

On 20 January, SIKORSKY 55877 supported Canada Post when it was requested to deliver mail to Pictou Island, located between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The community had been isolated since 3 January due to adverse weather and heavy ice in the Northumberland Strait. LCdr "Rod" Bays with Lt John MacNeil as co-pilot and PO Allan Reage and AB Donald Smith as crew attempted a flight to the Island but were thwarted by the weather and had to land at Trenton, Nova Scotia. A successful flight to the Island was made later that day.

#### HMCS MAGNIFICENT At-Sea - Operations

Near the end of February, SIKORSKY 55877, with pilots LCdr. Roger Fink, Officer-in-Charge(OIC), HU-21 Detachment One(Det 1), and Lt. "Bob" Murray with maintenance crew, P.O. A."Scottie" Grant, L/S Roy Stevens, A..B. Binger, A.B. Thibault and A.B. Gorman embarked in

HMCS MAGNIFICENT as HU-21 A Detachment One, for plane guard and fleet requirements duties.

On 3 March, during a break in flying operations, A.B. Garret was knocked overboard from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier by the tail of an aircraft being moved on the flight deck. At the time of the man-overboard alarm sounded the helicopter pilots were in the officers Wardroom having lunch three decks below the flight deck. In a flurry of motion they scrambled to the flight deck started and launched the helicopter and completed a successful rescue before the carrier could lower a "sea boat" or the "rescue destroyer" could get into position to make a recovery. A picture of the aircrew who effected the rescue including the maintenance team is attached.



#### HMCS MAGNIFICENT - VIP Roles At-Sea

During this deployment SIKORSKY 55877 was pressed into service as an airborne limousine. On 17 March, His Excellency, the Governor of Barbados and, on 14 April, the President of the Republic of Haiti, General Paul E. Magloire were flown to and from HMCS MAGNIFICENT, by LCdr Roger Fink and Lt "Bob" Murray with crewman PO "Scottie" Grant, to make their return calls on Commodore (Cmdre.) E.P. Tisdall, the Senior Canadian Officer Afloat (CANCOMFLT). A mix-up in timing, during the visit of General Magloire, almost caused the inadvertent ditching of the helicopter. On take-off, the carrier was to fire a gun salute to the President of Haiti when the helicopter was clear of the ship. However, as soon as the helicopter commenced forward flight and, was over the saluting guns, the first round of the salute was fired. The loud bang and the accompanying smoke, which enveloped the helicopter, nearly caused emergency procedures for ditching to be taken. However, the smell of cordite, a second bang and a quick check of the instruments confirmed that all was well and the flight continued as planned.

The helicopter was also used on 16 April to transport a number of Senior Officers to visit and inspect the Haitian Military Academy, east of Port-au-Prince and, on 21 April, SIKORSKY 55877 flew Captain A.H.G. Storrs, DSC and Bar, the Commanding Officer of MAGNIFICENT, Cdr F.C. "Freddie" Frewer, the Executive Officer, and two Squadron Commanding Officers, LCdr N.J. "Monk" Geary (VS 880) and LCdr. George Marlow (HS-50) to Mariel, west of Havana, to inspect the Cuban Naval Academy. Both of these flights were flown by Lt. "Bob" Murray with crewman P.O. "Scottie" Grant.

#### Emergency Standby HMCS MAGNIFICENT At-Sea

On 20 March, SIKORSKY 55877 flown by Lt. "Bob" Murray with L/S Roy "Kipper" Stevens as crewman was scrambled to the last known position of an AVENGER "MAY DAY" broadcast. AVENGER AS-3M, serno 86281/335, flown by the CO of VS 881 squadron, LCdr. N.J. "Monk" Geary with LCdr H.L. "Hal" Pickering and PO Bullock as crew, had an engine failure and was forced to ditch. All ships were alerted and converged on the search area. Shortly thereafter,

HMCS MICMAC radioed that she had located and picked-up the crew, unhurt. PEDRO subsequently returned LCdr Geary and crew to MAGNIFICENT.

For the remainder of the cruise the helicopter was employed in with plane guard duties interspersed with medical evacuations.(Medevacs), mail runs and miscellaneous fleet requirements.

### HMCS SHEARWATER Operations

On returning to HMCS SHEARWATER in mid June, SIKORSKY 55877 was employed in pilot training, routine squadron operations and "Operation Fish Drop". This latter involved stocking lakes that were inaccessible by road, for the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forest. As some of the fish drops took place in November occasionally a thin coating of ice had to be broke, using a hand line and weight, sometimes using a bucket of trout, before the fish could be lowered into the open water.

### Ill Crewmember

The next mercy mission was on 15 July, when SIKORSKY 55877, flown by LCdr. "Rod" Bays and SLt. D.J. "Don" Neilly, with P.O. W."Bill" Sopko and A.B. Walker as crewmen hoisted a seaman suffering from acute appendicitis, from the United States Navy Survey Vessel USS MAURY, AGS 16, located south of Nova Scotia. The pickup was normal and he was flown to a hospital in Halifax.

### Public Relations

The next day, Lt. "Bob" Murray with co-pilot LCdr. H."Hy" Shenker and crewman P.O. Jamieson flew SIKORSKY 55877 to RCAF Station SUMMERSIDE to participate in the Summerside Lobster Festival. Hoisting demonstrations were carried out including the rescue of a very large live lobster. They returned to HMCS SHEARWATER that evening.

### HMCS MAGNIFICENT - Embarked Operations

From 6 August until 12 October, SIKORSKY 55877 was again embarked in HMCS MAGNIFICENT for plane guard duties. HU-21 Det 1 consisted of LCdr. E.A."Ted" Fallen as OIC, SLt D.A. "Danny" Munro, and maintenance crew PO "Bill" Sopko, L/S Bradford, A.B. Shawbridge, AB Chapman, A.B. Cuffe and A.B. Pickrell. It was during this deployment that SIKORSKY 55877 had the unusual distinction of having to rescue an AVENGER pilot, SLt. Harry Beutel, twice in three days.

On 26 September, LCdr. "Ted" Fallen with Captain A.B. Fraser-Harris, the Commanding Officer of HMCS MAGNIFICENT, as co-pilot and A.B. R. Shawbridge as crewman, rescued SLt. Beutel within two minutes after he went over the port side in AVENGER 86182/389 during carrier landing practice.

Two days later, LCdr. Fallen with A.B. Chapman as crewman rescued SLt. Beutel in 55 seconds after he went over the starboard side in AVENGER 53322. In both cases the pilot was hoisted directly out of the cockpit before the aircraft sunk and didn't even get his feet wet. As an aside, on 3 March 1959, SLt Beutel was again rescued by helicopter when CS2F TRACKER 1542 he was flying with Lt. Ian Bouch went over the starboard side, forward of the island, of HMCS BONAVENTURE during touch and go landings. The aircraft landed flat on the water where the pilots extricated themselves through the emergency exits. Again they were rescued without difficulty.

### Small Ship Development Operations

On 8 October, Cdr. R.W. Timbrell DSC, Commanding Officer of HMCS ST. LAURENT, DDE 205 (Later DDH 205), invited LCdr. "Ted" Fallen to try landing helicopter SIKORSKY 55877 on the ships mortar hatches, located near the stern of the destroyer. After a discussion in which the ship was asked to "shore up"(support) these large hatches, lower the ensign staff, provide a firefighting capability and place the wind on the port bow, SIKORSKY 55877, with P.O. Sopko and A.B. Chapman as crewman, was flown to the destroyer for the trial.

P.O. Sopko was lowered to the deck of HMCS ST. LAURENT to act as "Helo Director" and instruct the ship's company on helicopter handling procedures. Several landings and take-offs were made while the ships Executive Officer, LCdr. D.P. "Pat" Ryan, an experienced pilot, photographed the proceedings. Results and recommendations from this exercise were sent to National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) for review. The knowledge gained from this experiment contributed greatly to the development of Standard Operating Procedures(SOPs) for future helicopter operations from non-flightdeck fitted Canadian Destroyer Escorts (DDE). Coincident with this exercise were flightdeck trials using the frigate HMCS BUCKINGHAM, off Halifax.

### SIKORSKY 55877 Overhaul

The helicopter was taken out of squadron service on 19 October and flown to Canadian Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company, Limited, Longueuil, Quebec, by Lt. "Bob" Murray and Cdr "Darky" Lowe with crewman P.O. Patterson and A.B. MacArthur for a two month major overhaul. On completion of the overhaul, SIKORSKY 55877 was flown back to HMCS SHEARWATER, on 5 December, by LCdr. "Ken" Gibbs with Lt "Bud" Service and PO "Ed" Whyte as crew and returned to squadron service with HU-21.

### Santa

Shortly following overhaul SIKORSKY 55877 was employed as Santa's sleigh. On 20 December, Lts. "Bob" Murray and "Larry" Zbitnew acted as sleigh drivers and A.B. Budd as "Santa's" helper. "Ole Saint Nick" winged his way between children's Christmas parties in the Halifax/Dartmouth area.

### HMCS MAGNIFICENT - United Nations Emergency/Operation Middle East

On 7 November, while waiting to enter the port of Glasgow, Scotland to load 50 RCAF F-86 SABRE jets for transport to Canada, MAGNIFICENT was ordered to return to Halifax, at best speed, to act as headquarters and embark Canadian troops and equipment for duty with the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Middle East. Israel had invaded Egypt on 29 October and was rapidly advancing through the Sinai Desert. Britain and France, worried about the safety of the Suez Canal, ordered both belligerents to withdraw their troops to a distance of ten miles from the Canal. Egypt rejected the ultimatum so Britain and France bombed Egyptian airfields and occupied Port Said and Port Fuad. On 4 November the General Assembly of the United Nations approved a Canadian resolution forming an international UN force to "secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities".

HMCS MAGNIFICENT arrived in Halifax 13 November and began loading equipment and converting the ship to carry close to 1000 troops. By 18 November Operation "RAPID STEP" preparations were completed and LCdr. "Bill" Frayn and Lt "Bob" Murray with HO4S-3, 55876/227 embarked in the carrier and prepared to set sail for the Middle East. However, reported objections by the Egyptian Government to the use of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada caused a 30 day delay in departure and a reassessment of Canada's contribution to the UNEF.

Canadian Major-General E.L.M. Burns DSO, OBE, MC, CD, was named Commander of the UN Force and asked Canada to provide communications, engineer, and service corps troops and, a headquarters detachment. The original cargo was off-loaded and personnel and equipment

required for Canada's new housekeeping role was loaded aboard. SLt "Don" Neilly replaced Lt Murray and 55876/227 was flown back to SHEARWATER.

On 28 December, SIKORSKY 55877 with pilots LCdr. "Bill" Frayn and SLt. "Don" Neilly with maintenance crew P.O. "Bill" Sopko, L/S J. Poirier, A.B. R.G. Barry, A.B. Beamish and A.B. Beard embarked in MAGNIFICENT for Operation "RAPID STEP II" as part of the Canadian contribution to UNEF. MAGNIFICENT sailed 29 December with 406 Army personnel, 100 tons of supplies, 233 vehicles and four RCAF OTTER aircraft bound for Port Said, Egypt. En route, the mail was flown ashore by SIKORSKY 55877 to Lajes, in the Azores, Gibraltar and Malta. HMCS MAGNIFICENT arrived in Port Said 11 January 1957.

### **Sikorsky 55877 Operations - 1957**

During its stay, SIKORSKY 55877, with the UN emblem painted on its nose and sides, flew numerous flights in the Port Said area and as far south as Abu Suhwar. Major-General Burns in his role as UN Commander made extensive use of the helicopter in support of UN operations. One memorable flight took place 15 January when SIKORSKY 55877 was flown to El Ballah to pick up General Burns and his aide. The pilot, LCdr. "Bill" Frayn, recalls:

*"At 0900, we departed El Ballah for El Arish via the main trunk road and rail line to Misquaf. General Burns rode up front observing and taking pictures. As we approached El Arish, the town was about to be occupied by the Yugoslavian contingent of the UN forces. Also, Major Morgan a Canadian member of the UN truce team was waiting inside the town to meet the General. As we landed, thousands of Arabs descended upon us; AB Beard and Captain A.B. Fraser-Harris, Commanding Officer of MAGNIFICENT, jumped from the helicopter to try and hold back the crowd; we were the first of the liberating forces that the local Arabs had seen and they had been living in fear of their lives for nearly two months.*

*The crowd was in a complete frenzy, waving palm fronds and carrying paper flowers. They grabbed the Captain and Beard and bore them to the ground with kisses, hand shakes and back-slapping. The locals started to climb on and into the helicopter so I hovered at about three feet, kicking up a sand storm, and literally shook them off. After a few seconds, both the Captain and Beard got back to the helicopter and were helped inside by the General's aide, only to be dragged back for more kisses and congratulations. This was repeated three times until only two unwanted passengers [Arabs] were aboard. These two were thrown out from the hover and the helicopter was then flown about 500 yards down the road to a less crowded spot."*

Captain Fraser-Harris recalls:

*"The Arabs may actually have thought that I was Marshal Tito because of my UN blue cap and the large number of medal ribbons and the gold braid on my uniform".*

Bill Frayn continues:

*"A second landing was made after several minutes hovering while the cheering crowd swelled and pressed in upon us. It was a miracle that no one was hurt; many could have been decapitated as the rotor blades were just clearing their heads as they carried one another about on their shoulders. After about 20 minutes the crowd was cleared away from the helicopter allowing General Burns to disembark and proceed into town to discuss operations. The Yugoslavian Commander arrived and very kindly put an armoured vehicle alongside our aircraft and provided us with about 15 guards who moved the crowd away from the helicopter and about 50 yards across the road. On inspection we were pleased to find that our only damage was a jettisoned main cabin door and a lot of sand inside the helicopter."*

*"While we awaited General Burns return, the crowd, led by the helicopter crew, chanted by the hour "Aye-Aye Nasser-Nasser", "Aye-Aye Tito-Tito". After explaining who our passenger was, we had "Aye-Aye Burns-Nasser" added to the chant. General Burns with a terrified husband and wife photographic team from the Fawcett publication "LOOK" that wished to be taken out of town. They were in the Jewish Headquarters when Major Morgan rescued them from being hanged. The Arabs thought they were Israelis as they looked Jewish and had been in the Israeli headquarters.*

*Their story and pictures taken of the crowd around the helicopter was published by LOOK magazine on their return to the United States. The General, Captain Fraser-Harris, the Yugoslav Commander and their staffs then used the cabin of the helicopter to hold a conference and have some refreshments."*

*At about noon, amidst the deafening cheers of the town folk, General Burns was flown back to El Ballah. We returned to MAGNIFICENT later that afternoon after a round trip of 230 nautical miles [NM]. This would seem to be the first time that a Canadian Naval helicopter ever liberated a town and may we never have that pleasure again."*

The helicopter made two other interesting flights while in Port Said with LCdr "Rod" Bays as pilot. The first, with Captain Fraser-Harris as co-pilot, was to Cairo so the Captain could pay an official call on the Canadian Ambassador. The other, with SLt "Don" Neilly as co-pilot was to the Canadian Army Headquarters outside Ismailia.

Included in the first flight was Cdr "Freddie" Frewer, the ship's Executive Officer, and Jack Bradley from the CBC. "Rod" Bays recalls:

*"The Egyptians were feeling pretty upset, understandably enough, and did their level best to make things difficult for any helicopter or other aircraft which "invaded their airspace". So we were routed via a very circuitous route, east to the Sinai, then south for about 60 miles, then more or less directly to Cairo. We were not told just where we were to land and radios seemed to have been unknown, so we went first to Heliopolis', which turned out to be a military airfield. I landed in front of the tower and there wasn't a person to be seen, only about six batteries of 20 mm cannon and 50 cal. machine guns all aimed directly at our helicopter.*

*I shut down and the co-pilot suggested that I go into the tower and find out where they all are. We were not going anywhere as two or three MIG-15s had shown up and effectively pinned us to the ground by buzzing about 50 feet above our heads. So donning my little blue beret and feeling anything but brave, I unstrapped and climbed out, turning my back, as one must do, to all that firepower. I started to wonder when some nut might get a little itchy on the trigger finger! Then I walked, all by myself, across those 60 or 70 yards to the tower, the MIG's tracking my progress. That was a bit twitch-making! Clearly everything came out OK as, after a bit of "argy-bargy", we were directed to the Cairo International Airport where we took off for shortly thereafter. We remained in Cairo overnight and had an uneventful return to Port Said the following day".*

The second flight was to transport the Roman Catholic Padre, Father L.A. Dougal, to Abu Suweir, near Ismailia, where the Canadian Army Contingent was headquartered. To continue "Rod" Bays story:

*"I met that wonderful old man on the flight deck at about 0830, the temperature already about 95 degrees, dressed in his great coat, as a hedge against the deserts cold night air. He said he had nowhere else to stow it. We got the same flight routing as before, east into the Sinai, south after about forty miles, then west to Ismailia and Abu Suweir. We saw only one object during that flight, a man on a camel leading another camel, both heavily laden. We went down to have a look and the man raised one of those great long rifles and took a shot at us. We left the area smartly@*

*AO n arrival at Abu Suweir there was no obvious helicopter-landing pad as the army had only been there about a week, so I elected to land in an area which seemed to be cordoned-off with yellow stripes of ribbon. It turned out to be a minefield and there was much prancing about by various army blokes just outside the yellow ribbons indicating that we should get out of that area smartly. We did just that and dropped off Father Dougal into the care of one of his parishioners. I fueled and returned to the ship where I reported the guy who took a shot at us. The Egyptians were unconcerned, "probably a drug trafficker"! The strange thing was that the guy had been well out of sight of any landmark, which we could see, for some 40-50 miles. His tracks in the sand were as straight as a die, and he was marching off into more hundreds of miles of featureless sand. Amazing."*

The four RCAF OTTER aircraft were flown off the carrier on 19 January, after the flight deck was cleared of Army vehicles and other stores. The OTTERs were lined up one behind the other just

aft of the carrier's island. The RCAF pilots were rather apprehensive at the prospect of launching over such a short run. The leader had his port wing lifted a bit by a gust from the port side; his starboard wing almost, but not quite, touched the deck. There was probably four feet of air under his wheels by the time he was over the forward end of the flight deck. "Pedro", flown by LCdr Frayn and SLt Neilly, stood by as plane guard and, to the RCAF goes the honour of making the last fixed-wing flights from the deck of HMCS MAGNIFICENT.

Having fulfilled all her obligations to the UN, HMCS MAGNIFICENT sailed for the United Kingdom, via Naples, on 20 January. As soon as the ship was within range of that Italian port, an American Suez Canal Pilot, with a suspected case of appendicitis, was flown ashore in SIKORSKY 55877 to Capodichino Airport, Naples, for medical treatment at the US Naval Hospital. The pilots, LCdrs "Bill" Frayn and "Rod" Bays, returned to HMCS MAGNIFICENT the following morning when the ship entered harbour.

On the 27th, the day HMCS MAGNIFICENT departed Naples, SLt "Don" Neilly and Captain Fraser-Harris gave helicopter familiarization flights to 30 members of the crew as the ship sailed through the Mediterranean. Prior to the ship reaching the Strait of Gibraltar on the 29th, SLt. Neilly and Captain Fraser-Harris flew SIKORSKY 55877 to Gibraltar with the mail.

HMCS MAGNIFICENT arrived in Glasgow, Scotland 2 Feb, to load the 50 RCAF F-86 SABRE jets previously scheduled for transport to Canada. On departure from Glasgow, 6 Feb, "Pedro" and crew gave HMCS MAGNIFICENT as they departed to join Canada's newest aircraft carrier, HMCS BONAVENTURE, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In addition to its primary duty of plane guard for the carriers forthcoming deck landing trials in the English Channel, SIKORSKY 55877 spent many hours carrying out VHF/UHF radio trials, radar and gunnery calibrations, and personnel transfers between the ship and the supporting Royal Naval Air Stations [RNAS].

#### An IRA Connection

On 21 February, during a visit to RNAS EGLINTON, north of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, LCdr. "Bill" Frayn, flying SIKORSKY 55877, was asked to search for a person seen near the airfield. When it became known that the person was a suspected IRA Terrorist "Bill" immediately canceled the search and returned to base. However, the local press got wind of the flight and published a report that a Canadian helicopter was being used in support of British anti-terrorist operations. Word soon filtered back to Ottawa and an inquiry was initiated.

Another incident involving the media occurred 29 March, when SIKORSKY 55877, again flown by LCdr."Bill" Frayn with co-pilot, SLt. "Don" Neilly, was transporting a group of officers to see the Farnborough Air Show. The helicopter was forced to land due to weather, near Thrustor, a few miles short of their destination. Fortunately the landing spot was close to Farnborough road and bus transportation so the passengers were able to carry on to the air show. Across the road was a pub, which the crew used as a telephone communications link with the ship and for meals while awaiting the return of their passengers. A reporter seeing the helicopter in the adjacent field sensed a story so searched out the crew. The reporter's story, which was broadcast on the BBC and appeared in the daily press, stated that the crew was in the pub drinking while waiting for the weather to clear. This story also was reported back to Ottawa and in the previous incident an inquiry was initiated. Nothing came of either investigation.

#### HMCS BONAVENTURE Deck Trials

Two F2H-3 BANSHEE and two CS2F TRACKER aircraft from VX-10, based at HMCS SHEARWATER, and operating from RNAS FORD, near Portsmouth, England, were used for HMCS BONAVENTURE's deck landing trials. The BANSHEEs and TRACKERs had joined an RCAF Overseas Ferry Unit movement of SABREs from St. Hubert, Quebec to Europe via Goose Bay, Labrador; Narsarsuak, Greenland; Keflavik, Iceland and RAF Station KINLOSS. The BANSHEEs flying with the SABREs became the first RCN aircraft to undertake a trans Atlantic

crossing. On completion of the deck landing trials and a further work period in Belfast, HMCS BONAVENTURE sailed for Halifax where she arrived at the end of June and SIKORSKY 55877 again took up residence at HMCS SHEARWATER.

### Same Squadron Rescue

On 11 July, SIKORSKY 55877 was used to rescue two members of its own squadron. Bad weather forced a BELL HTL-4 Serno 200, en route to Ottawa for overhaul, to land at Wellington Station, near Waverly, Nova Scotia. After an hour or so the pilot, SLt. John Clarkson, decided to fly to nearby RCAF Radar Station BEAVERBANK and remain overnight. Shortly after take-off the helicopter experienced a power failure and crashed into the trees. Poor weather prevented an air search from getting underway until the following morning. At first light, all available squadron helicopters, including SIKORSKY 55877 flown by the Squadron Commanding Officer, LCdr. H.R. "Hal" Welsh, with co-pilot Lt. L.H. "Les" Caslake, crewman L/S Thomas and Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander E.R. Kierstead on board proceeded directly to the search area.

The crash was quickly located and a rescue team was lowered to a clear area near the site. The crewman, P.O. A.J. "Poncho" Pryne, who suffered a broken ankle, had to be carried over a beaver dam in a Stokes litter before being air-lifted to RCN Hospital in Halifax. The pilot who sustained facial lacerations and a sprained ankle was flown to the HMCS SHEARWATER Infirmary. Two additional flights were flown to the site with a salvage crew and crash investigators.

### Runway Collision

On 27 August, a VF 870 Sqdn, F2H3 BANSHEE 126307 practicing mirror landings on runway 16 at HMCS SHEARWATER collided with a VC 921 Sqdn (HMCS CATARQUI, Kingston, Ont) AVENGER which was number two in a stream take-off from an intersecting runway 20. Although the AVENGER tried to abort its take-off, both aircraft arrived at the intersection of the two runways simultaneously. The impact and ensuing fire demolished both aircraft and the pilots, Lt. E.K."Ed" Trzcinski, USN and SLt. Julian C. Freeman RCNR died in the crash. Later SIKORSKY 55877 sadly carried the ashes of Lieutenant Trzcinski, United States Navy from HMCS SHEARWATER for burial at sea.

### The Lieutenant Howard Cooper Search

Lt H.G. Cooper, a BANSHEE pilot, had been carrying out carrier qualifications (CARQUALS) on HMCS BONAVENTURE when he was ordered to return to HMCS SHEARWATER, about 30 miles to the North. For some unknown reason he flew South from the ship and away from the Nova Scotia coast. A massive search was initiated using ships, a submarine, RCAF and Naval aircraft but no trace of the pilot or aircraft was found. SIKORSKY 55877 flew two sorties on the search both piloted by LCdr. "Hal" Welsh with PO "Bunky" Strickland as crewman on the first launch and Lt. George Clarke as co-pilot on the second.

Seven years later a trawler fishing 130 miles South East of Halifax, snagged its net on an aircraft and pulled it components to the surface. Only the tail section was recovered and when brought ashore it was identified as BANSHEE Serno, 126403, the aircraft flown by Lieutenant Howard Cooper years before.

### The Army Training Period

It was during this time period that a 14-man detachment from the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC) joined HU-21 for a year's on-the-job training. The detachment consisted of three army pilots: Captain Harold E. "Hal" Wirth, Senior Pilot, Lts. Robert "Bob" Barkley and William "Bill" Charland. The maintenance personnel were Sergeants (Sgt.) Ralph Middleton, Earl H. Martin, John Martin, P.W. Phillips, Douglas Germain, William Clark and Earl Hebner, and

Corporals William G. Archer, James Dowell, Vernon A. Lane and John MacFarlane. These personnel fitted very well into squadron routine and made a genuine contribution to the maintenance organization. On November 1st, 1957, flown by LCdr. John Laurie and Lt. "Bob" Barkley, RCASC, were launched to search for a reported unidentified submarine in the Halifax Harbour approaches. Nothing was found and the search was called-off.

### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1958**

The first two and a half months of 1958 were quiet times spent at SHEARWATER doing routine training and fleet requirement duties. From the mid March to mid May SIKORSKY 55877 was back at sea as a plane guard to HMCS BONAVENTURE. On return it was flown to Pratt & Whitney Canada Inc., Longueuil, Quebec by LCdr D.A. "Duke" Muncaster for a major overhaul. It returned to squadron service, in HU-21, on 17 July.

#### Sea Cadet Emergency

Its first search, on returning to duty, was for a group of 30 Sea Cadets reported overdue on a trip to the outer reaches of Halifax harbour. Lt "Larry" Zbitnew did a quick search of the harbour approaches, found the Cadets, who were well out of danger further indicating that they were on their way up the harbour.

#### Missing Person

On 21 August, at the request of the RCMP, SIKORSKY 55877 flown by LCdr. "Bill" Frayn with CPO W. "Bill" Shorten as crew was flown to Hammonds Plains, west of Halifax, to aid in the search for a missing person. Although a complete hunting kit was found neatly folded in the center of a field, the owner was not located and the case was closed.

#### HS-50 Accident

On 26 August, an HS-50 Squadron SIKORSKY 55887 flown by Lts. Gordon Fraser and Judson "Jud" McSweeney with crewman LSSN R. Blondin crashed and burned on McNab Island, in Halifax Harbour.

SIKORSKY 55877 piloted by LCdr "Bill" Frayn and Lt "Bob" Murray with LS Thomas as rescue crewman ferried personnel and equipment to the scene in order to fight the fire and to transport an uninjured crew member back to base. Although the "official" cause of the accident was "undetermined" similar accidents in the Royal Navy had been attributed to the failure of a tail rotor pitch change link.

#### Springhill Mine October 1958

In late October, SIKORSKY 55877 was once again involved in the biggest news story of the year. At 8:00 PM, 23 October, the No 2 shaft of the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company, Springhill, Nova Scotia imploded trapping 175 miners. Seventy-Five men died after the collapse of a tunnel in the deepest mine in North America. Eighteen miners were rescued from levels as deep as 12,992 feet, the deepest rescues conducted in Canada.

HU-21 was alerted and both aircrew and maintenance personnel were recalled. Two SIKORSKY helicopters, 55877 and 55885, had their rescue gear removed, stretchers and emergency equipment fitted and brought to immediate notice to fly. The following morning, SIKORSKY 55877 was flown to Springhill with Sir Guy Dobson, Chairman of the Board, A.V. Roe Canada Ltd., and members of the Dominion Coal and Steel Company.

From 23 October until 1 November, when the last seven miners were found alive, numerous flights were carried out between HMCS SHEARWATER and Springhill ferrying large quantities of medical supplies, blood, oxygen, draegermen and mine rescue hardware to the mine site.

Rescued men were immediately airlifted by the helicopters to hospital facilities in Halifax for specialist care. During this operation, 925 miles were flown and 5,600 pounds of equipment were transported.

### The Death of Winston Churchill

The Funeral of Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England during World War II, occurred on 30 January 1956. To ensure Canadians could witness this ceremony, television tapes were flown by RAF Vulcan bomber from England to HMCS SHEARWATER, Nova Scotia immediately following. Lt. Frank Delisle in SIKORSKY 55875 flew the television canisters across Halifax harbour to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Studios for telecasts across Canada.

### Survival School Evacuation

During the afternoon of 24 November, SIKORSKY 55877 was used to air-lift a seaman, with a severely lacerated foot, from the Whitney Lake Survival School, 30 miles east of HMCS SHEARWATER, to the RCN Hospital in Halifax.

### Missing Hunter

On the 1st of December a search by Lt Glenn Cook and SLt "Nick" Crawford, flying SIKORSKY 55877, was carried out near Stanley Airport, 40 miles north of HMCS SHEARWATER, for a missing hunter. No contact could be made in the course of this search. The following day two helicopters were used, including SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lt "Dave" Oliphant and SLt George Plater. To allow more time for searching the helicopters were operated out of the Naval Radio Facility, Newport Corners. The search was made difficult as overnight the ground was covered with snow. On the second day Lieutenant Glenn Cook, flying the second helicopter, found and recovered the body of the missing hunter. The decomposition of the body was acute and the cabin crew members were quite ill as a result. The body was returned to HMCS SHEARWATER.

## **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1959**

### Aircraft Salvage

The first call on SIKORSKY 55877, for 1959, was to remove, for investigation, the engine from a crashed Piper Apache, near Cheticamp, on the northwest coast of Cape Breton Island. Lt. Glenn Cook and Lt W. "Bill" Charland RCASC departed HMCS SHEARWATER just after sunrise on 9 January, en route Baddeck to pick up two individuals who knew the location of the crash. They then flew to Sydney to refuel, hence to Cheticamp to move the engine back to Sydney. However, a special tool was required to remove some fittings which necessitated that SIKORSKY 55877 return to Sydney. They flew back to the crash site, retrieved the engine and only then returned to Sydney. The two individuals they had picked up earlier in the day were taken to Baddeck. It was then back to Sydney for fuel and a long night flight to HMCS SHEARWATER. The helicopter and crew had flown 10.5 hours of which 4.4 were at night.

### Flat Lake, Nova Scotia Rescue

The next emergency was on the night of 24 January when the RCMP requested a helicopter to airlift the body of a hunter, who had accidentally shot himself, from the woods near Flat Lake, South of Halifax. SIKORSKY 55877, flown by LCdr "Bill" Frayn and Lt "Bill" Charland RCASC flew to the area and retrieved the body of the hunter and the local coroner who, because of his advanced age and the depth of snow, was unable to walk out of the woods. Blowing snow reduced ceiling and visibility at the time.

### Participation in Canada's Flying Heritage

Three HO4S-3's, SIKORSKY 55877, 55305 and 55320 flown by LCdr D.A. "Duke" Muncaster, Lts. Glenn Cook, "Don" Crowe, John McDermott and Lt "Bob" Barkley RCASC were used in support of the 50th Anniversary of Powered Flight in Canada and the "re-enactment" of the flight of the Silver Dart on 23 February. The helicopters were flown to Sydney, Nova Scotia on the 22 February where they remained overnight. The following day, in a bitter cold, the helicopters were used to transport dignitaries to and from the ceremonial area, on the frozen surface of Bras D'Or Lake, at Baddeck. The helicopters returned to HMCS SHEARWATER that night.

#### Animal Rescue

To add to her rescued animal total, SIKORSKY 55877, flown by SLt John Clarkson and Lt Robin Watt with crewmen LS Harold Thomas and AB Pete Staley was dispatched on 31 March to rescue two large dogs, a Boxer and a German Shepherd, clinging to thin ice on Lake Micmac near Dartmouth, Nova Scotia for over an hour. The dogs were lifted from the icy water by AB Staley clad in a waterproof suit and lowered by hoist from the hovering helicopter. For his efforts, one of the dogs grabbed AB Staley's leg tearing a hole in his waterproof suit allowing the icy water to fill the lower half. Then on Saturday, 18 April, LCdr John Laurie with co-pilot SLt John Clarkson carried out an emergency flight to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia with blood plasma for a critically ill woman.

During 11 May LCdr "Bill" Frayn carried out a search around Porter's Lake, 15 miles east of SHEARWATER for three missing fishermen. No sign of the men was found and the air search was terminated. However, on 5 June, one body was located and a ground search for the other two was resumed by local authorities.

#### AVENGER Ditching

On 21 May, an AVENGER ditched off Osborne Head, south of HMCS SHEARWATER. SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lts "Bob" Barkley, RCASC, and Ross Hunter was immediately launched and proceeded directly to the scene of the ditching. On arrival in the area a liferaft was observed with three persons in it. The aircrew were hoisted directly from their raft by the rescue crewman, LS Quirmback, and flown to HMCS SHEARWATER for medical check-ups.

#### Medical Evacuation - Sheet Rock Lighthouse, Nova Scotia

Lt. Ross Hunter with crewmen A.B. Schultz and A.B. LeBlanc airlifted a seriously ill woman, requiring immediate medical assistance, from the Sheet Rock Lighthouse on 26 July. The pick-up was accomplished by hovering with two wheels on a rock close to the lighthouse. This method of recovery was considered to be the safest and least painful for the patient. The patient, the wife of the lighthouse keeper, was transported without difficulty to hospital in Halifax 43 minutes after SIKORSKY 55877 departed HMCS SHEARWATER.

#### Miscellaneous Search

On 2 August, the RCMP requested assistance in a search for a male said to have been molesting children in the Shannon Park Married Quarters in North Dartmouth. SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lt Robin Watt and Captain "Hal" Wirth, RCASC, were sent to the scene and the area overflown for an hour and a half but there was no sign of the individual.

#### Missing Hunter

From 27 October to 2 November, a search for a missing hunter in Hubbards area, west of Halifax, involved several helicopters, including SIKORSKY 55877 flown by LCdr "Bill" Frayn with crewman LS Harold Thomas. Although the search went on for six days, the only clue found was a dead bear cub believed to have been shot by the missing man.

## Airlift

On 12 December, SIKORSKY 55877 was required to airlift the body of a man who had been shot, while hunting, near Tuft's Cove on the outskirts of Dartmouth. Then, on Christmas Eve, LCdr. "Bill" Frayn with co-pilot SLt. George Plater flew to Shelburne, on the south coast of Nova Scotia, to search for a probable drowning victim. The victim was the 6' 8" Captain of a long liner who had been washed overboard while the ship was entering harbour. By the time his body was found, at base of a 100' cliff, he was frozen stiff with his arms and legs straight down in the water. A RCMP Officer was lowered to the site and managed to put the Captain in the wire basket, this time with his arms and legs pointing up. Several attempts were made to hoist the Captain into the cabin but his legs repeatedly got wedged in the main wheel struts. Eventually the RCMP Officer was recovered and the victim, still wedged in the wheel struts, was flown to Shelburne.

As 1959 came to a close, SIKORSKY 55877 was searching for a missing man in the Springhill area.

## **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1960**

### AMissing@Banshee

The first scramble of 1960 for SIKORSKY 55877 was for a missing F2H-3 BANSHEE. On 5 January a pair of F2H-3 BANSHEES were launched on a night intercept exercise. Approximately one hour later the aircraft were recalled and advised to do a two plane formation letdown as weather conditions at HMCS SHEARWATER were deteriorating quickly in blowing snow. On letdown, radio contact with Ground Control Approach (GCA) was established and then was lost. GCA had turned the BANSHEE's downwind (North) just prior to the loss of radio contact.

The flight leader elected to continue the two aircraft formation approach using GCA instructions transmitted from the ADF beacon which was a standard squadron operating procedure. At touchdown the leader created an enormous cloud of snow obscuring the wingman's view of the runway. Almost simultaneously the number two aircraft sighted the approach lighting through the blowing snow and attempted a landing. Unfortunately his line up was off the runway center line and the BANSHEE clipped several runway lights with his landing gear severing the hydraulic lines to his left brake.

Afraid of running into the leader, the wingman braked and went off the runway into the scrub bush. Nothing was heard from the pilot on radio or the sound of an overshoot nor was he picked-up on radar. The crash alarm was sounded and the SIKORSKY 55877 flown by Lt "Gerry" McMillen with crewman LS Quirnbach was launched. Snow showers with limited visibility made flying extremely difficult. The approach light area was searched but no trace of the aircraft could be found so the helicopter was recalled to await more favourable weather conditions. In fact rescue vehicles did not locate the BANSHEE until the pilot, Lt S.E. "Sam" Murray, walked into the hangar, about 1/4-mile from the accident scene, and reported its location. There were no injuries.

### Injury Evacuation - White Lake Survival School

On 1 March, SIKORSKY 55877 was required twice. Lt W.L. "Bill" Monkhouse with co-pilot SLt Wallace "Walt" Morris and rescue crewman AB Malcolm Marshall flew to the Whitney Lake Survival School to evacuate SLt Maurice Robida, who had badly injured his foot, to HMCS SHEARWATER for medical treatment. The helicopter was then directed to Hartland's Point to pick-up a student pilot who had crashed his BELL HTL-6 helicopter. The student, LCdr R.A. "Bob" Laidler, had lost rudder control and was only able to climb and slow fly. He elected to autorotate and all was going well until the final seconds when his skid caught the top strand of a wire fence and the helicopter flipped over. Fortunately the student was unhurt; however, the

same could not be said for the helicopter. Both the pilot and the HTL-6 were returned to HMCS SHEARWATER by SIKORSKY 55877.

### HMCS BONAVENTURE - At Sea

HMCS BONAVENTURE sailed from Halifax on 22 March for spring work-ups in the Halifax-Bermuda Exercise Area and off the U.S. East Coast. The detachment consisted of two pilots, Lt Robin Watt, OIC, and SLt Wallace "Walt" Morris, two Aircrewman AB Malcolm Marshall and AB Edward Olliffe and five maintenance personnel PO Joseph Carver, LS David Harding, AB William McMullan, AB Sherman McQueen and AB Noel Black. Except for a few replenishment breaks, the ship remained at sea until early July.

For most of the embarked period the detachment SIKORSKY 55877 was employed on plane guard duties and fleet support. On 26 March, The helicopter rescued a young seaman who had fallen overboard from HMCS BONAVENTURE. Although unmanned at the time, the crew, Lt Robin Watt, SLt "Walt" Morris and crewman AB Malcolm Marshall and LS Edward Olliffe were able to launch the helicopter and make the pick-up within three minutes. During the same period torpedo recovery trials did not go very well. Seven practice torpedoes were dropped alongside the ship; one to be picked up by the ship's sea boat the remainder by SIKORSKY 55877. However, the helicopter crew experienced trouble with the new recovery gear and, much to their chagrin, the torpedoes had to be picked-up by the sea boat.

On one of the utility runs involving the transfer of a movie from HMCS BONAVENTURE to a destroyer escort the very popular movie "Hound Dog" ended up in the drink. Captain J.C. O'Brien, Commanding Officer of HMCS BONAVENTURE, decreed that a film canister, embellished with a hound dog, be painted on the side of the helicopter opposite the "Rescue Maple Leafs". Against the protests of the crew, the deed was done. In August SIKORSKY 55877 went to the Air Maintenance Depot at HMCS SHEARWATER for a major overhaul and remained there until returned to service in HU-21 in September.

### At Sea Search

On 19 November, SIKORSKY 55877 flown by Lt W.A. "Bill" Jones and LCdr R.C. "Bob" Brown and later by, Lt "Gerry" McMillen with co-pilot SLt "Walt" Morris and PO McQueen as crew conducted a search for a seaman who had fallen overboard from the destroyer HMCS MICMAC. Although ships and aircraft carried out an intensive search for a full day, the seaman was not found.

### At Sea Pickup

To round out 1960 there were two medical evacuations carried out by SIKORSKY 55877. On 19 December Lt Ross Hunter and SLt @Walt@Morris airlifted a seaman from HMCS KOOTENAY, located 10 miles south of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, to hospital in Halifax. Then on the night of the 28th, Lts Hunter and McMillen flew a WREN from the ship's company of HMCS SHELBURNE to the RCN Hospital in Halifax for medical treatment. The landing was made on the old parade square at HMCS SHELBURNE using two vehicles on either side of the square for illumination. This system was used on many night missions where a landing had to be made in an area not equipped for helicopter operations. In addition to vehicles around the perimeter, a police car with a flashing red light, to mark the area, was usually requested.

### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1961**

A new year, 1961, was just underway when SIKORSKY 55877 was again embarked in HMCS BONAVENTURE as plane guard. This detachment lasted until the first of April when the aircraft

was flown ashore because of the lack of flying hours before it was due for its next major inspection.

### Air Sea Rescue

Early on the morning of 12 April, Lt Robin Watt flying SIKORSKY 55877 rescued three crew members from the dragger OCEAN WAVE which had run aground during the night on Thumcap Shoal, off the southern tip of McNab Island, in Halifax Harbour. Three members of the crew, Thomas Murray, John Cunningham, and Joseph Muise were hoisted from the dragger by the crewman, L/S Joseph Nash, and flown to HMCS SHEARWATER. The Captain, Richard Tucker, and his brother James Jr. who were attempting to row ashore in the ship's dory, to get assistance, were picked-up by "Robbie" Watt off Maugher's Beach in the approaches to Halifax Harbour. Later in the day, LCdr "Sandy" James and Lt "Doug" Frampton flew two of the crewmen back to the ship to retrieve some of their personal effects. The OCEAN WAVE was later refloated with the aid of a tractor.

### Crash Rescue

SIKORSKY 55877 was required to investigate the crash of a light aircraft on Bear Lake, approximately 30 miles east of Halifax. The helicopter with pilots Lt "Doug" Frampton and SLt Ian Powick together with a Medical Officer and a Medical Assistant proceeded to the crash area. Shortly after arrival the wreckage of the light green aircraft was sighted in the water on the north shore of the lake. There was no sign of life at the crash site so a quick search of the area was carried out. On an island in the southern portion of the lake an individual was sighted lying down and covered with what appeared to be a sleeping bag.

As there was no place to land, Lt Frampton hovered as close to the victim as possible and lowered the Medical Officer onto the island. Upon examination, the man was found to be seriously injured. He was hoisted aboard the helicopter by wire basket and flown directly to the Victoria General Hospital, in Halifax. However, this was not to be the end of the incident. During the night it was reported that the pilot was still in the wreckage and had been alive at four o'clock in the afternoon.

The following morning SIKORSKY 55885 flown by LCdr "Sandy" James with co-pilot SLt Ian Powick returned to the crash site where a Medical Officer was lowered to the wrecked aircraft. Unfortunately the pilot who was still strapped in his seat had died. The pilot's body was removed from the wreckage and airlifted to Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia. The incident was finally closed.

### Overhaul

Having run out of flying hours, SIKORSKY 55877 was flown to Pratt & Whitney Canada Inc., Longueuil, Quebec on 4 July for a major overhaul.

### Toronto Exhibition Display

On completion of the overhaul, the aircraft was flown by LCdr. "Sandy" James to the Toronto CNE grounds to take part in the Armed Forces display, which, at that time, was largely under canvas. During its two week stay, LCdr James, Lts M.S. "Mike" McCall, George E. Nickson and L/S Granger acted as hosts to CNE visitors who were most impressed with the newly painted helicopter, complete with new decals and "Rescue" maple leaves on the nose.

On 5 September, when the area was cleared of tents and it was possible to take-off without blowing tables and brochures into Toronto Harbour, Lt. McCall flew SIKORSKY 55877 out of its display location to the Toronto Island Airport for fuel. He then returned the aircraft to Pratt and Whitney Canada, Longueuil, Quebec, to complete some minor items for overhaul.

### Service with HS-50 Squadron

On 16 September, SIKORSKY 55877 was flown back to SHEARWATER by SLt "Don" Bauder and Lt R.L. "Buck" Rogers and allocated to HS-50, as a replacement for SIKORSKY 55320 which had ditched in the Atlantic on the 10th July. A large "day-glow red" number 4 was painted on its nose and sides, aft of the main cabin door. The helicopter was also fitted with AQS-5 sonar and a mine/torpedo rack. During her stay in HS-50, from 20 September 1961 until 18 January, 1963, SIKORSKY 55877 was flown by all squadron pilots including the two Exchange Officers, LCdr D.P."Don" Bartz, United States Navy (USN), and Lt. Noel Unsworth, Royal Navy (RN). SIKORSKY 55877 participated in many National, International and NATO naval exercises from the Labrador Sea to the Caribbean Sea and east to European waters.

On 22 September SIKORSKY 55877 now part of HS-50 again, sailed for JASWEX 3/61 off the Labrador coast and, Exercise TRAPLINE, an anti-submarine launched ballistic missile exercise, carried out in the northern Labrador Sea, Ungava and Hudson Bay. The exercises terminated 8 October and the ship returned to Halifax 13 October where the squadron helicopters disembarked.

After HMCS BONAVENTURE replenished and had completed a carrier qualification (CARQUAL) session with TRACKERS and BANSHEEs off the Nova Scotia coast, HS-50 flew back onboard. On 6 November the carrier sailed for FALLEX 61 and anti-submarine exercises in the Bermuda Operating Area and off Charleston, South Carolina. On 14 November, Lt. A.W."Alex" Nichols and SLt. N.H."Nick" Browne, flying SIKORSKY 55877, completed their "small deck landing qualification" with six landings aboard HMCS COLUMBIA. HMCS BONAVENTURE returned to Halifax 13 December and off-loaded her aircraft for the Christmas leave period.

### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1962**

#### HMCS BONAVENTURE - At Sea

On 22 January, HMCS BONAVENTURE with VS 880 (TRACKERS), HS-50 (HO4S-3) and HU-21, Det 1 (HO4S-3) "PEDRO" embarked and departed Halifax for the Caribbean and exercise MAPLE SPRING 62, an annual spring event. Helicopter anti-submarine exercises were conducted with Canadian and American Naval Forces in the Bermuda and Puerto Rican exercise areas. In mid February, when HMCS BONAVENTURE was alongside in San Juan, Puerto Rico, her embarked aircraft, including SIKORSKY 55877, utilized Isla Grande airport as a base for local flying operations. The ship departed San Juan 28 February for exercises en route Halifax where, on arrival, 16 March, her aircraft flew ashore to HMCS SHEARWATER.

#### Miscellaneous Operation

For the next two months HS-50 Squadron carried out day and night crew training, navigation, National Research Establishment projects at RCAF Station SUMMERSIDE, and aircraft maintenance in preparation for the next deployment.

From 12 May, until mid June, HMCS BONAVENTURE with HS-50 and SIKORSKY 55877 embarked, operated in the local Halifax area with side excursions to Bermuda and Norfolk, Virginia. On 16 June, the carrier sailed south for exercise JASWEX 62 in the Bermuda Operating Area returning to Halifax 29 June.

#### Mid Atlantic Rescue

SIKORSKY 55877 participated in a large search and rescue operation while embarked in HMCS BONAVENTURE. On 23 September, 1962 an American Flying Tiger Airline, Super Constellation with 76 persons on board, was forced to ditch, at night, in the stormy North Atlantic after losing three of its four engines. The passengers were United States Service personnel and dependants including 13 women and children. The aircraft was flying from New Jersey to Frankfurt, Germany

via fuel stops in Gander, Newfoundland and Prestwick, Scotland when it was forced into the sea. HMCS BONAVENTURE, en route to Europe, was diverted to the area.

Four CS2F TRACKERS were fitted with 20 man life rafts and launched by catapult early the following morning in order to be in the search area at first light. The flight leader was LCdr. P.F. APeter@ Rygh. On arrival at the ditching site the aircraft were directed by the Airborne Search Commander to cover a rectangular search area downwind from the estimated crash area. Nothing was sighted and the four aircraft were recovered on board HMCS BONAVENTURE five hours later.

The carrier arrived at the ditching site around noon on 24 September and assumed the role of on scene Acoordinator@. In the meantime 48 persons had been rescued by the Swiss freighter CELERINA and some required medical attention which could be provided by HMCS BONAVENTURE. Transfers were conducted by the ships search and rescue helicopter PEDRO flown by Lt. Frank Delisle and SLt. Don Bauder with crewmen LS Edward Oliffe and AB Malcolm Marshall. Thirteen flights were conducted in the afternoon under difficult sea conditions which had forced cancellation of fixed wing flying.

The following morning HS-50 helicopters including the SIKORSKY 55877 carried out a systematic search of the crash area flying a total of 51 hours. No survivors were found. Nine bodies picked up by the weather ship WEATHER LEA were transferred to HMCS BONAVENTURE by PEDRO. On the morning of the 27 September the survivors requiring medical attention and the bodies were flown ashore to Shannon Airport by APEDRO@ and other HS-50 helicopters which had been stripped of their sonar equipment.

On the return flight to HMCS BONAVENTURE, APEDRO@ flown by Commander ABob@ Falls and Lt. Don Bauder carried the Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, the Honorable George Drew, who subsequently thanked the ships company on behalf of Canada. At the same time he conveyed a personal telegram of thanks from the Right Honorable John Diefenbaker P.C. Prime Minister of Canada.

HMCS BONAVENTURE, its rescue role completed, sailed for her original destination, Rotterdam, via a fuel stop at Portsmouth, England. The carrier arrived in Rotterdam, 30 September, for a four day visit in conjunction with a Canadian War Graves Ceremony. The aircraft carrier then joined British, Danish and Norwegian warships in Plymouth, England for exercise "SHARP SQUALL VI" held in the western approaches to the UK. HS 50, including SIKORSKY 55877, flew a total of 93 hrs, from dawn to dusk, on harbour departure, screenex, and datum co-op exercises. This was probably a record for the SIKORSKY helicopters over a four day exercise period. On completion of the exercise, HMCS BONAVENTURE entered Portsmouth for a few days of shore leave.

### The Cuban Missile Crisis

At this time tension was rising between the United States and the Soviet Union over the threat of Soviet missiles being installed in Cuba. All exercises were canceled and HMCS BONAVENTURE including escorting destroyers were ordered to return to Canadian waters. The ships sailed from Portsmouth on the afternoon of 25 October and arrived in Halifax 2 November where the aircraft disembarked. The ships were refueled, provisioned and made ready for sea again.

On 5 November, HMCS BONAVENTURE embarked her air groups (VS880 TRACKERS and HS 50 SIKORSKY-s) and sailed, in company with the Fifth Escort Squadron, to take-up a surveillance station about 300 nautical miles south of Halifax. The HS 50s helicopters, including SIKORSKY 55877, were employed in patrolling, screening the fleet and ASW searches for Soviet submarines known to be in the area. The Soviet Union withdrew its missiles from Cuba, the threat subsided and the RCN returned to normal peacetime operations. The HMCS BONAVENTURE returned to

port 12 November, and the aircraft were flown ashore to HMCS SHEARWATER where they carried out local training exercises for the rest of the year.

### Overhaul

By mid January 1963, SIKORSKY 55877 required a major overhaul. This time it was sent to the Air Maintenance Depot at HMCS SHEARWATER and, at the end of a three month overhaul, was test flown April by Lt "Bill" Jones under VX 10 Project Directive (PD) 42, Aircraft Acceptance. On 8 April, SIKORSKY 55877 was returned to HU-21, still with its HS-50 paint scheme.

### HMCS BONAVENTURE - At Sea

Having just completed the overhaul SIKORSKY 55877 was flown aboard HMCS BONAVENTURE, on 29 April, by Lt. Glen Potter and SLt. "Don" Bauder for plane guard duties. On 11 June, Lt Glen Potter, flying SIKORSKY 55877 rescued the co-pilot, SLt Donald Monk and the junior crewman, A.B. Bastian, from CS2F TRACKER 1584 that had crashed about 16 miles from the carrier. The TRACKER had been carrying out Magnetic Anomaly Detector [MAD] trapping exercises, with a submarine, when it caught its port wing tip in the water and cartwheeled into the sea. The co-pilot escaped through his shattered cockpit side window and the crewman escaped through his overhead hatch. Although PEDRO quickly recovered the two men from the water, there was no trace of the pilot, Lt. David Matheson, or the senior crewman P.O. Robert A.. Hammer. A search for the two remaining aircrew was carried out but only bits of debris were found.

### SIKORSKY 55877 Accident

HMCS BONAVENTURE returned to home port on 22 June. SIKORSKY 55877 was flown ashore to be employed in the pilot training and fleet requirements roles until 22 September when it was again flown aboard BONAVENTURE, to act as plane guard, for ASW exercises in the eastern Atlantic/European waters. It was during this deployment that the helicopter suffered its only major damage. While shutting the rotor head down on 7 November, wind gusts caused one of the main rotor blades to flap up allowing its Adroop stops@ to pop out and the blade to droop sufficiently to strike and sever the tail cone. The damage required the changing of the main rotor blades, tail rotor drive shaft, tail cone, main rotor head, intermediate gear box and main transmission. HMCS BONAVENTURE entered harbour in Portsmouth, England, the following morning for a two week break. Since spares for SIKORSKY 55877 were not available in HMCS BONAVENTURE the parts had to be requisitioned from the Main Supply Depot, Montreal. Before the ship's visit ended, the detachment crew repaired the damage and the rotor head was first run 21 November, the day the ship sailed. The blades were tracked on the 22nd, the transmission was run-in for the required two hours on 23rd and 55877 was test flown by Lt Glen Potter on the 26th. The Detachment Maintenance Crew under P1AT4 E.Kurmey had worked long hours while in Portsmouth in order to have it available for flight operations. HMCS BONAVENTURE returned to Halifax during the first week of December and SIKORSKY 55877 was flown ashore to HMCS SHEARWATER.

From then until 16 March 1964, SIKORSKY 55877 was employed on normal HU-21 squadron activities and Search and Rescue standby.

### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations - 1964**

Early in 1964, when the unification controversy was in full swing SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lt "Mike" McCall, was assigned to fly the then Minister of National Defence, The Honorable Paul Hellyer, around the local Halifax/Dartmouth area. On 22 January, "Mike" flew the Minister to the east of HMCS SHEARWATER to demonstrate the performance of the SIKORSKY and to explain an Opposition Question brought up in the house a few days earlier. RCN aircrew, particularly helicopter pilots, had been accused of chasing migrating birds in the Chezzetcook area, and cited

reports from a resident that a Bell HTL-6 had been the Acuprit@. The Acuprit@ turned out to be Lt McCall and the exercise in question was little more than carrying out Lesson Plan (LP) #3 with student Lt G. Barry Montgomery, a few days before. LP#3 is conducted at about 1000 feet and is a series of turns; climbs and descents aimed at assisting the student to learn control and co-ordination. The Minister was given a demonstration of the lesson plan when he inquired about the incident. He seemed to understand.

#### VIP Visits and Transfers

The next two days, 23rd and 24th, Lt McCall and SLt E.F. "Bud" Abbott flew Mr. Hellyer and Vice Admiral H.S. Rayner, Chief of Naval Staff, in SIKORSKY 55877, to the naval oceanographic facility HMCS SHELburne, near Shelburne, NS then to the naval training base, HMCS CORNWALLIS, near Deep Brook, NS where they remained overnight and, the following morning, to RCAF Station GREENWOOD.

#### United Nations Support

On 17 March, SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lt D.A. "Dave" Oliphant, embarked in HMCS BONAVENTURE for United Nations Operation "Snow Goose". The ship sailed the following afternoon with a Canadian Army contingent slated for duty in Cyprus. In addition to the 240 tons of replenishment stores, 160 tons of Army stores and ammunition, 54 vehicles and about a hundred Army passengers, HMCS BONAVENTURE carried 12 TRACKERs, out of sight, in the hangar, and crews just in case things turned sour. The remainder of the Canadian Army 1,150 man UN contingent, the 1st Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment, was flown to Cyprus by RCAF aircraft. HMCS BONAVENTURE arrived in Famagusta harbour 30 March, off-loaded the Army personnel, vehicles and stores and sailed on the morning of 1 April. Once clear of the island, the CS2Fs were ranged on deck and flying operations commenced.

#### A4E Trials with the USN

Day and night flying continued until the ship arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, 22 April for Douglas A-4E SKYHAWK flight deck compatibility trials. The A-4E was one of two Jets being looked at as a replacement for the F2H-3 BANSHEE, the other being the A-7 CORSAIR II. The highly successful deck trials proved that the A-4E could be handled, launched and recovered from a Light Fleet carrier. On completion the ship returned to Halifax 14 May and 55 877 was flown ashore to HU-21.

On the evening of 5 June, SIKORSKY 55877, piloted by LCdr. "Bob" Murray and Cdr. Roger Fink was flown to the parking lot of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in the shadow of Citadel Hill, Halifax where Cdr. Fink participated in a live television program on the story of the "Angel/Pedro", the crews who flew her and the technical personnel who maintained her.

In mid November, the helicopter was flown to Pratt & Whitney Canada, Longueuil, Quebec for a major overhaul.

#### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations 1965 -1966**

On 2 June, the aircraft was flown from Pratt & Whitney Canada, Longueuil, to HMCS SHEARWATER by Lts. Bruce McKay and John McDermott. It was allocated to HU-21 on 17 July and, for the remainder of 1965 and the first month of 1966, SIKORSKY 55877 was used for pilot training and fleet requirement operations.

#### Utility Missions

On 7 February, 1966 Lt P.A. "Phil" Blanchard flew SIKORSKY 55877 on its 4,000th flight hour and, upon landing, was met with an "Honour Guard" composed of maintenance personnel presenting arms with brooms and mops signifying a "clean sweep".

On 18 May Lts "Bill" Monkhouse and Ross Hunter with AB Bowen and AB Skelton as crewman plus two mine disposal personnel flew to Louisburg, Nova Scotia, to dispose of a reported beached mine. This flight, via Sydney, took 6.8 hours.

Lt "Nick" Browne flew 55877 to Canadian Forces Base GAGETOWN, in Central New Brunswick, on 16 August in support of army requirements. On the 18th he transported a number of scientists around Gagetown to view the results of experiments being carried out in the remote areas of the camp. The following day, he was requested to fly a Doctor to Perth/Andover, in Northern New Brunswick, in connection with an automobile accident. He made his landing in a local school yard. SIKORSKY 55877 was then flown back to HMCS SHEARWATER via a fueling stop in Moncton.

### The Prime Minister and the President

SIKORSKY 55877 had the distinction of flying the Prime Minister of Canada, The Right Honorable Lester B. Pearson, P.C., M.P. and Mrs Pearson from Saint John, New Brunswick to a meeting with United States President, Lyndon B. Johnson, on Campobello Island in the Bay of Fundy on 20 August. Logistically the flight was very awkward. On 19 August, Lts "Mike" McCall and Lorne McDonald flew CHSS-2 4010 from HMCS SHEARWATER to Campobello Island with 45-gallon drums of AVGAS to fuel 55877. This was due to the large number of passengers which required a reduced load of fuel. To quote Lt McCall:

*"We had to land in a clearing on Campobello Island and, when Prime Minister and Mrs Pearson disembarked, SIKORSKY 55877 had to be pushed into a smaller clearing in a grove of trees where United States Secret Service Agents examined the helicopter with their metal or sniffing detectors. President Johnson arrived in a beautifully appointed Marine SIKORSKY S-61. When the President's helicopter departed and the leaders were chatting and lunching in Roosevelt's summer home, SIKORSKY 55877 flew back to Saint John, returning to Campobello the following morning to pick-up the Prime Minister and party. Prime Minister Pearson sat up front, in the left seat, for the return flight and I mentioned to him that this was the same helicopter that was used to transport Major-General E.L.M. Burns when he was Commander of the UNEF in the Middle East during the "Suez Crisis". Lt McCall also sympathized with the Prime Minister for having to fly in a vintage helicopter rather than in one of the calf-skin upholstered SEA KING-s like President Johnson".*

The response goes unrecorded.

### Miscellaneous Support

SIKORSKY 55877's next mercy flight was on 27 October when Lt "Gerry" McMillen flew from Halifax to Amherst, Nova Scotia, to deliver medicine for a sick child.

At first light on 30 October, LCdr "Duke" Muncaster and Captain "Pat" Ryan, RCN, flew 877 to Ecum Secum, about 65 miles east of Halifax, to search for a missing fishing party. The , which included the niece of H.P.MacKeen, the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, failed to return home, as expected, the previous evening. The fisherman were located, in the bush, by the helicopter crew and a RCMP organized ground party shortly after they commenced the search.

An ex liberty ship the SS TEGEAN ran aground, 28 November, on Sisters Shoal, 16 miles south of Halifax, N.S. Salvage crews were unable to free the ship and, on 21 December, gale force winds caused the ship to break-up leaving only the center section containing the majority of heavy oil above water. RCN helicopters were made available to help combat the spreading oil slick. Lt "Bill" Monkhouse flying 55877 transported explosives and personnel to the ship to dynamite the fuel tanks and release the remaining oil so the cleanup could be completed.

## **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations 1968**

### Utility Missions

On 6 April, Lt John McDermott with Co-pilot SLt "Chip" Milsom flew from CFB SHEARWATER (since the introduction of AlIntegration@HMCS SHEARWATER had been renamed to CANADIAN FORCES BASE SHEARWATER) to CFB SUMMERSIDE to act as the rescue helicopter for the Centennial Ice Boat Races. The races held on the ice flows in Northumberland Strait between Borden, Prince Edward Island and Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick took place on 7 April. Prior to the completion of the races, SIKORSKY 55877 suffered a generator failure requiring the helicopter to land in the parking lot at the Borden Ferry Terminal. A maintenance crew was flown in from CFB SHEARWATER, the generator changed, tested and the helicopter returned to base.

### Moncton Search

The next SAR mission was to search for a Flying Club aircraft, that went missing after take-off from the Moncton Airport. SIKORSKY 55877 flown by Lts A.E. "Arnie" Lewis and "Jud" McSweeney flew to Moncton on 9 May and commenced a search. Although they scoured the area for two days no sign of the aircraft was found. Weeks later the wreckage was located in the woods not far from the end of the runway.

Having once again run out of flying hours, SIKORSKY 55877 was removed from service on 5 June to undergo a six-month major overhaul. On completion, 2 January 1968, the aircraft was placed in storage.

### Support to The Governor General of Canada

On 5 July 1968, SIKORSKY 55877, flown by Lt. "Don" Neilly, embarked in the helicopter destroyer HMCS ASSINIBOINE, dubbed "Government House Afloat", for Governor General and Mrs. Roland Michener's tour of Newfoundland, Labrador and the Quebec north shore. Three methods were used for moving the Vice Regal party ashore. First, would be the ship, if it could get alongside a jetty. If this was not possible then the ship would anchor and either the helicopter or the ship's motor boat would be used. The ASSINIBOINE's first port of call was St. John's, Newfoundland to embark Their Excellencies and their party following an official reception hosted by Premier Joey Smallwood.

The tour got underway on 10 July, with a visit to Harbour Grace, where the aircraft flying the Governor General's personal flag, disembarked their Excellencies at St Francis Field. This was the spot from which Alcock and Brown took-off, in June 1919, for their historic first, non-stop, crossing of the Atlantic in a Vickers Vimy aircraft carrying a sack of mail, a dog, and a cat. It was also a jumping off point in 1931 for Wiley Post on the Atlantic leg of his round the world flight in a Lockheed VEGA the "Winnie Mae". Amelia Earhart also used this field on 20 May 1932 when she became the first woman to fly non-stop across the Atlantic to a landing in Northern Ireland. That flight took 14 hours and 54 minutes in a Lockheed VEGA 5B. Their Excellencies were flown back to the ship after a four hour visit.

The Vice Regal Party were flown from St. Anthony, on the northern tip of Newfoundland, to L'Anse aux Meadows, on 16 July, to view the first authentic Viking site found in North America. Between 17 and 23 July, numerous transfers were made from the ship to Eagle River, Labrador, in and around Cornerbrook, Newfoundland and Harrington Harbour, Quebec. On 25 July, His Excellency flew as co-pilot to Jupiter River, on Anticosti Island, to enjoy a couple of hours of his favorite pastime, fishing; he caught three large salmon in less than two hours. The 27th was a busy day transporting the Vice Regal Party to the communities of Port Cartier, Pentecote, Godbout and Franquelin, Quebec, while HMCS ASSINIBOINE cruised off shore. The Tour ended on 29 July when Their Excellencies flew back to Ottawa from Baie Comeau, Quebec.

### Familiarization Flights

On 30 July, while steaming through the Gulf of St. Lawrence en route Halifax, 51 members of the ship's company were given helicopter familiarization flights in 877. The Detachment returned to CFB SHEARWATER 31 July. As a memento of his part in the tour, Lt Neilly's flying log was annotated and personally autographed by Governor General Michener.

In mid August, SIKORSKY 55877 was used as a photographic platform by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in support of the Canadian Summer Games held on Lake Banook, Dartmouth and, on The Commons in Halifax.

### Photographing Russian Space Research Ship

On 2 November, SIKORSKY 55877 flown by Capt (CF) Ivan David "Dave" Walker was used to photograph the Soviet Space Event Support Ship [SSESS], KOSMONAUT VLADIMIR KOMAROV as she entered Halifax for R&R and provisions. Unlike the United States which had access to tracking stations around the world the Soviet Union has to rely on this type of research ship to give them a world wide, spacecraft and satellite tracking and recovery capability. The ship was named after Vladimir M. Komarov, the pilot of SOYUZ 1, who was killed on 23 April 1967 when his space craft crashed following re-entry.

### Government Support

One of the last flights of 1968 took place between 7th and 10th of December. Lt "Don" Neilly, with PO Cooper as crewman, flew SIKORSKY 55877 to Sydney 7 December and, on the following morning, carried the Honourable Jean Chretien, P.C. M.P., the Minister of Northern Affairs, for a visit to Cheticamp on the west coast of Cape Breton Island hence to Louisburg, on the east coast, to see the progress in the restoration of Fortress Louisburg. The return flight to CFB SHEARWATER was delayed one day as the helicopter had to land at Mulgrave, where it remained overnight, due to inclement weather.

### **SIKORSKY 55877 Operations 1969-1970**

#### A Fond Goodbye

On 16 May 1969, Lt Neilly flew the then Speaker of the House, The Honorable Lucien Lamoureux, P.C., M.P. and Mrs. Lamoureux, from CFB SHEARWATER to a playing field on the campus of Dalhousie University, Halifax for a convocation address.

The fate of HMCS BONAVENTURE and that of fixed wing Naval Aviation was decided on 19 September when The Honorable Leo Cadieux, P.C. M.P., the Minister of National Defence, announced that the carrier would be sold, scrapped or mothballed and her CS2F TRACKER aircraft would be flown from shore bases on coastal surveillance. Three years previously National Defence Headquarters had decided that SIKORSKY 55877's final resting place would be the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa.

HMCS BONAVENTURE sailed from Boston, Massachusetts in early December on her last operational trip, void of aircraft. On 12 December, a dozen or so TRACKERS from VS-880 and VU-32 Squadrons flew out to meet the carrier as she approached Halifax and, SIKORSKY 55877, again flown by Lt "Don" Neilly, joined her for plane guard duties. The idea was to give as many pilots as possible a final crack at landing on a carrier, before it went to the scrap yard. On completion of the deck-landing session the HMCS BONAVENTURE sailed up Halifax Harbour with "PEDRO 55877" parked on the forward end of the flight deck, in front of two SEA KINGS and four TRACKERS, as part of a salute to Vice-Admiral J.C.O'Brien, the Commander, Maritime Command.

It was planned that as the ship sailed by the saluting base, streaming her paying-off pennant, the right wing of the TRACKERs would rise in salute followed by the spreading of the wings and the catapulting the four aircraft. However, the catapult went unserviceable and the TRACKERs had to be free-deck launched in the confines of Bedford Basin. After becoming airborne the four TRACKERs joined-up with another fifteen TRACKERs for a final flypast as a tribute to the carrier. SIKORSKY 55877 in company with four other helicopters also took part in the flypast. Canadian Naval Carrier Borne Aviation came to an end at 1045 AM 12 December 1969. This was also the last flight of SIKORSKY 55877 from the flight deck of HMCS BONAVENTURE.

SIKORSKY 55877 flew a large proportion of her 4760.1 hours from helicopter Utility Squadron Twenty-One (HU-21). The motto of that Squadron was "OMNIBUS PARATUS" - Aready for Anything. Its unofficial motto "FIRST OFF, LAST ON, ALWAYS READY" was coined by Lieutenants "Ken" Gibbs and W.E. "Sandy" James in 1953-54 while embarked in HMCS MAGNIFICENT on plane guard duties. This motto was most applicable to SIKORSKY 55877 as a great many aircrew, seaman, ordinary citizens and even pets owe their lives to this helicopter and the professional competence of her young crews.

## Appendix A to Annex C

### Pilots of HO4S-3 SIKORSKY Helicopter 55877 Royal Canadian Navy 1955 - 1969

SLt Edward Francis "Bud" ABBOTT, RCN  
SLt Allen Leonard ALTREE, RCN  
SLt Laurence Dowler APPELFORD, RCN\*  
LCdr John "Jack" ARNOTT, RCN  
Lt Larry Albert ASHLEY, RCN  
Lt Robert Davis "Bob" BAIRD, RCN  
Lt Henry Lyle "Hank" BANNISTER, RCN  
Lt Robert "Bob" BARKLEY, RCASC  
LCdr Richard Edward "Dick" BARTLETT, RCN  
LCdr Donald Paul "Don" BARTZ, United States Navy  
Lt Donald Gordon "Don" BAUDER, RCN  
LCdr Robert Victor "Rod" BAYS, RCN  
LCdr Robert Aloysius "Bob" BEACH, RCN  
LCdr John Henault "Jack" BEEMAN, GM, RCN  
LCdr Peter Cushing BERRY, RCN  
Lt Phillippe Arsene Joseph "Phil" BLANCHARD, RCN  
Cdr Frederick Wilcox Hebert "Freddy" BRADLEY, RCN  
LCdr Robert Campbell "Bob" BROWN, RCN  
Lt Nicholas Herman "Nick" BROWNE, RCN  
Lt Harry Walter BUETEL, RCN  
LCdr James Richard "Jim" BURNS, RCN  
Lt Leslie Harold "Les" CASLAKE, RCN  
Lt William "Bill" CHARLAND, RCASC  
Lt George William CLARK, RCN  
SLt John David CLARKSON, RCN  
LCdr Bryan David "Dave" COBLEY, RCN  
SLt John Millar CODY, RCN  
Lt Donald Glenn COOK, RCN  
SLt Whitney Arthur "Cookie" COOK, RCN  
Lt Nicol Charles "Nick" CRAWFORD, RCN  
Lt Donald William "Don" CROWE, RCN  
Lt Colin Macdonald CURLEIGH, RCN  
Lt Christopher Robert "Chris" DALLEY RCN  
SLt Alfred John "Fred" D'AMICO, RCN  
Lt Francois Alfred "Frank" DELISLE, RCN  
LCdr Roy Olaf DeNEVERS, RCN  
SLt John Robert DODD, RCN  
SLt Real DUBOIS, RCN  
Lt Leslie Thomas "Les" EAST, RCN  
LCdr Edward Albert "Ted" FALLEN, RCN  
Cdr Robert Hilborn "Bob" FALLS, RCN  
Cdr William Henry "Hal" FEARON, RCN  
Cdr Francis Roger FINK, GM, RCN  
SLt Glen FITZGERALD, RCN  
LCdr Douglas James "Doug" FISHER, RCN  
SLt Nils Olaf FLOREN, RCN  
Cdr James Brant "Pop" FOTHERINGHAM, RCN  
Lt John Douglas "Doug" FRAMPTON, RCN

Lt Donald Gordon "Gord" FRASER, RCN  
 Capt Alexander Beaufort Fraser FRASER-HARRIS, DSC&Bar, RCN  
 LCdr William Hebert "Bill" FRAYN, RCN  
 LCdr Kenneth Lyle "Ken" GIBBS, RCN  
 Capt Colin GILLIS, RCASC  
 Lt Gordon Campbell "Gord" GRAY, RCN  
 LCdr Seth Walter GROSSMITH, RCN  
 Capt David "Dave" GUY, RCASC  
 SLt Dermott Charles "Hal" HALLARAN, RCN  
 SLt Robert Kennedy HAMILTON, RCN  
 LCdr Jeffrey James "Jeff" HARVIE, RCN  
 Lt John Bryan HAYTER, RCN  
 LCdr John Downie HEWER, RCN  
 Lt Howard Harold HENN, RCN  
 Lt Edgar Ross HUNTER, RCN  
 LCdr Wallace Elmer "Sandy" JAMES, MBE, RCN  
 Lt Paul Eugene Gilles Claude JOLIN, RCN  
 Lt William Alfred "Bill" JONES, RCN  
 SLt Joseph Bernard KLASSEN, RCN  
 Lt George Richard LAFORME, RCN  
 LCdr Greenwood John LAURIE, RCN  
 SLt Raynald Joseph LeBLANC, RCN  
 SLt Mart LEETSI, RCN  
 Lt John James "JJ" LEHMANN, RCN  
 Lt Arnold Edward "Arnie" LEWIS, RCN  
 Lt Ralph Archibald LOGAN, RCN  
 Lt Ernest Patrick "Ernie" LOURME, RCN  
 Cdr John Douglas "Darkie" LOWE, RCN  
 Lt John Randall LUSHER, RCN  
 Lt John Angus MacNEIL, RCN  
 SLt William J. MADDER, RCN  
 LCdr George Hebert MARLOW, RCN  
 LCdr Michael Scott "Mike" McCALL, RCN  
 Lt Ronald "Ron" McCLYMONT, RCN  
 LCdr John William "Toad" McDERMOTT, RCN  
 Lt Lorne Stuart McDONALD, RCN  
 Lt Bruce Errol McKAY, RCN  
 Lt Gerald Joseph "Gerry" McMILLEN, RCN  
 SLt Larry Gardner McQUARRIE, RCN  
 Lt Judson Edward "Jud" McSWEENEY, RCN  
 SLt Laurence Albert McWHA, RCN  
 SLt Howard Allison MENELEY, RCN  
 SLt "Chip" MILSOM, RCN  
 Lt William Leslie "Bill" MONKHOUSE, OMM, RCN  
 Lt Gerald Barry "Gerry" MORE, RCN  
 Lt Wallace "Walt" MORRIS, RCN  
 SLt Herman Paul "Herm" MUENZER, RCN  
 LCdr Douglas Albert "Duke" MUNCASTER, GM, RCN  
 Lt Daniel Edward "Dan" MUNRO, RCN  
 LCdr Robert Thomas "Bob" MURRAY, RCN  
 SLt Colin Montgomery NEIL, RCN  
 Lt Donald James "Don" NEILLY, RCN  
 Lt Alexander William "Alex" "Little Nick" NICHOLS, RCN  
 LCdr Kenneth Samuel "Ken" "Big Nick" NICHOLSON, RCN  
 Lt George Errington NICKSON, RCN  
 Lt David Alexander "Dave" OLIPHANT, RCN

SLt John Victor OUELLETTE, RCN  
SLt George C. PLATER, RCN  
SLt James Roger PLAXTON, RCN  
LCdr Glen Arthur "Sid" POTTER, RCN  
SLt Ian Airth POWICK, RCN  
SLt Robert Edward "Pee Wee" REES, RCN  
Lt Lorne Henry REYNOLDS, RCN  
LCdr John Martin RILEY, RCN  
SLt Brian Edward ROBERTS, RCN  
Lt Robert Lionel "Buck" ROGERS, RCN  
LCdr Sheldon MacDonald "Shel" ROWELL, RCN  
LCdr John Chipman RUNCIMAN, RCN  
SLt Stewart Donald "Stu" RUSSELL RCN  
Capt David Patrick "Pat" RYAN, RCN  
Lt John Victor SEARLE, RCN  
Lt Allan Thomas "Bud" SERVICE, RCN  
LCdr Hyman Alex "Hy" SHENKER, RCN  
F/Lt Stuart "Stu" SMITH, RCAF  
Lt James Grant SOUTAR, RCN  
Lt George Francklin STEVENSON, RCN  
SLt Anthony Terry TUCKER, RCN  
Lt Noel UNSWORTH, RN  
SLt Glen Cameron URQUHART, RCN  
LCdr Bruce Fraser VIBERT, DSC, RCN  
Lt Larry Adam VICZKO, RCN  
SLt John David WALL, RCN  
Lt Kenneth Douglas "Ken" WATERMAN, RCN  
LCdr Gerald Edward "Jerry" WATSON, OMM, RCN  
Lt Robin Anthony WATT, RCN  
Capt Ivan David "Dave" WALKER, RCAF  
LCdr Harold Raymond "Hal" WALSH, RCN  
Lt Victor Arthur "Vic" WILLIAMS, RCN  
LCdr Robert Hindley "Bob" Williamson, RCN  
LCdr Frank Cecil WILLIS, RCN  
Lt Norman Edwin WINCHESTER, RCN  
Capt(A) Harold "Hal" WIRTH, RCASC  
Lt Terrance Layard "Terry" WOLFE-MILNER, RCN  
LCdr Leonard Thomas "Larry" ZBITNEW, RCN  
SLt Ronald Martin "Ron" ZBORIL, RCN

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Most importantly from interviews, correspondence and the Flying Log Books of following friends and fellow Naval Aviators for which I extend my sincere appreciation.

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BGen Colin M. CURLEIGH  
BGen Daniel E. MUNRO  
Cmdr A.B. FRASER-HARRIS  
Col Nicholas H. BROWNE  
Capt(N) David P. RYAN  
Col David H. TATE  
Col Frank C. WILLIS  
Cdr Robert C. BROWN  
Cdr F. Roger FINK  
Cdr William H. FEARON  
Cdr Edward A. FALLEN  
Cdr Hyman A. SHENKER  
Cdr Noel UNSWORTH (RN)  
LCol D. Glenn COOK  
LCol Michael S. McCALL  
LCol John W. McDERMOTT  
LCdr John ARNOTT  
LCdr Donald P. BARTZ (USN)  
LCdr Rodney V. BAYS  
LCdr John H. BEEMAN GM  
LCdr Bran David COBLEY  
LCdr Francois A. DELISLE  
LCdr William H. FRAYN  
LCdr Kenneth L. GIBBS  
LCdr Gordon Campbell GRAY  
LCdr Francis A.H. HARTLEY  
LCdr Wallace E. JAMES  
LCdr William A. JONES  
LCdr John G. LAURIE  
LCdr Lorne S. McDONALD  
LCdr Gerald J. McMILLEN  
LCdr William B. MONKHOUSE OMM  
LCdr John C. RUNCIMAN  
LCdr Peter F. RYGH  
LCdr Gerald E. WATSON  
LCdr Harold R. WELSH  
LCdr Leonard T. ZBITNEW  
Lt Donald G. BAUDER  
Lt Christopher R. DALLEY

Lt J. Bryan HAYTER  
Lt Arnold E. LEWIS  
Lt John A. Mac NEIL  
Lt JudsonE. McSWEENEY  
Lt Donald J. NEILLEY  
Lt Alexander W. NICHOLS  
Lt Ian POWICK  
Capt. Ivan D. WALKER  
Lt Robin A. WATT