

The Picture on the Wall

By Gerry Madigan

Dated: 19 Jul 2016

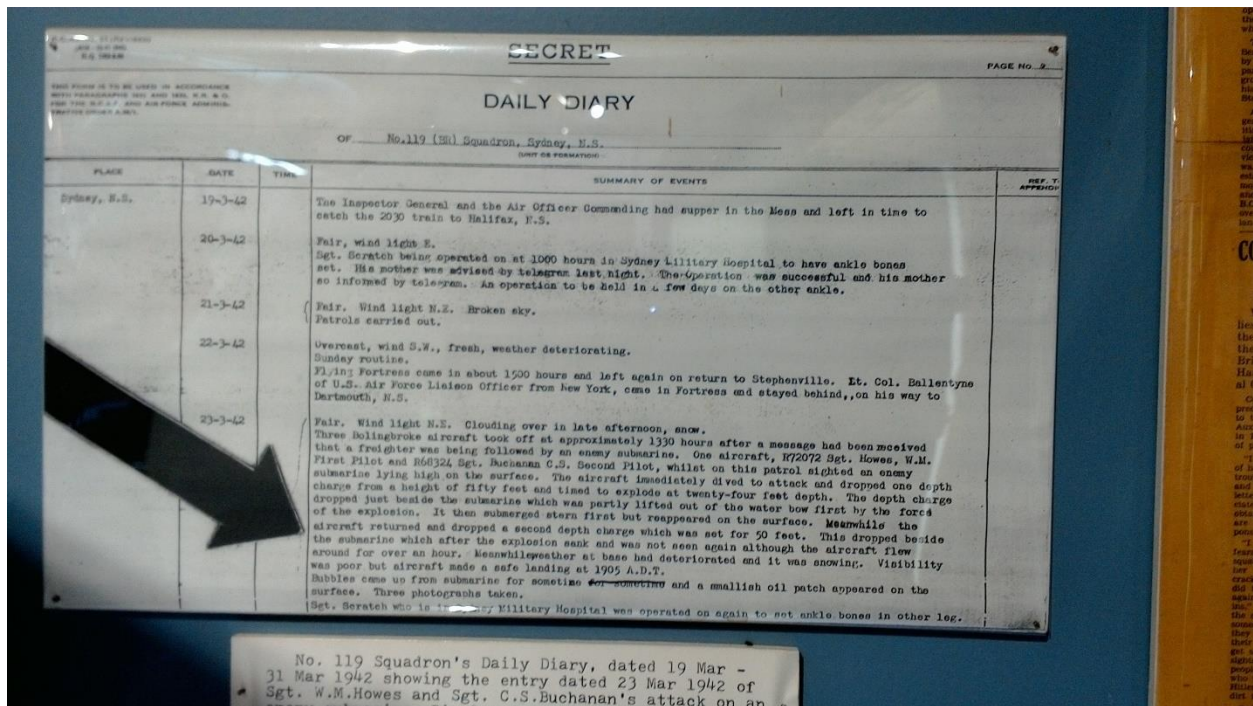
Gerry (GD) Madigan, CD, MA, MSc is a retired logistician, Canadian Armed Forces. Major Madigan's (Retired) career spanned 28 Years as a finance officer whose notable postings included time served at National Defence Headquarters, CFB Europe, Maritime Canada and the First Gulf War. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston Ontario, and War Studies Program.

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Introduction

The doors of the Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum are open to the public, 9 to 5, every day from May to September each year. The museum is found just off Highway 102, exit 6 opposite Halifax's Stanfield International Airport. You can't miss it. It's the one facility with a CF 101 Voodoo jet interceptor just off its front entrance, quite visible by the highway as you drive towards Halifax.

The museum is an overlooked treasure. It contains many exhibits and display aircraft. Its hangars are chock a block full with aircraft highlighting Atlantic Canada's aviation history. Contextually the aircraft are the big draw to many a visitor who make the effort to visit. But there are hidden gems amongst the aircraft displays that are often overlooked too. One such gem is a picture of the war diary of 119 Squadron that served in Nova Scotia at Yarmouth during the Second World War.



Daily Entry 23 March 1942- Picture from Main Hall Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum July 2016

There is a big arrow on the picture that draws the viewer's attention to an entry in the War Diary concerning an attack on a U-Boat on 23 March 1942. This air attack occurred at the height of the "Happy Times" when U-boat operations in North American waters were at its height and its victories most lucrative and successful.

Much transpired in and around the eastern Atlantic coast of Canada, the United States, and the Gulf of St Lawrence that spring, summer, and fall of 1942. Twenty-three ships were torpedoed with 22 lost in the Gulf of St Lawrence. ⁱ Canadian littoral waters had quite suddenly, and somewhat surprisingly to some, a battleground.

It was a visceral shock to many Canadians that German U-boats actually entered our waters and pointed a dagger at the very heart of Canada. U-boats operated from Newfoundland in the north, up the St Lawrence estuary, and over far south below Halifax in 1942. In fact, if you look with a discerning eye at any map, it was a significant area of operation.

But the events of 23 March 1942 happened well before what became the intense Battle of the Gulf of St Lawrence. A U-boat was reported shadowing a freighter in Canadian waters. Aircraft from 119 Squadron were called upon for assistance that day. 119 Squadron dispatched three Bolingbroke aircraft to pursue the U-boat contact at 1330 hours ADT.

One Bolingbroke piloted by R72072 Sgt WM Howes and co-piloted by R68324 Sgt CS Buchanan made contact with a target of opportunity and attacked a surfaced U-boat. They eventually made two attacks on the same U-boat that day which was quite unusual for a single aircraft.

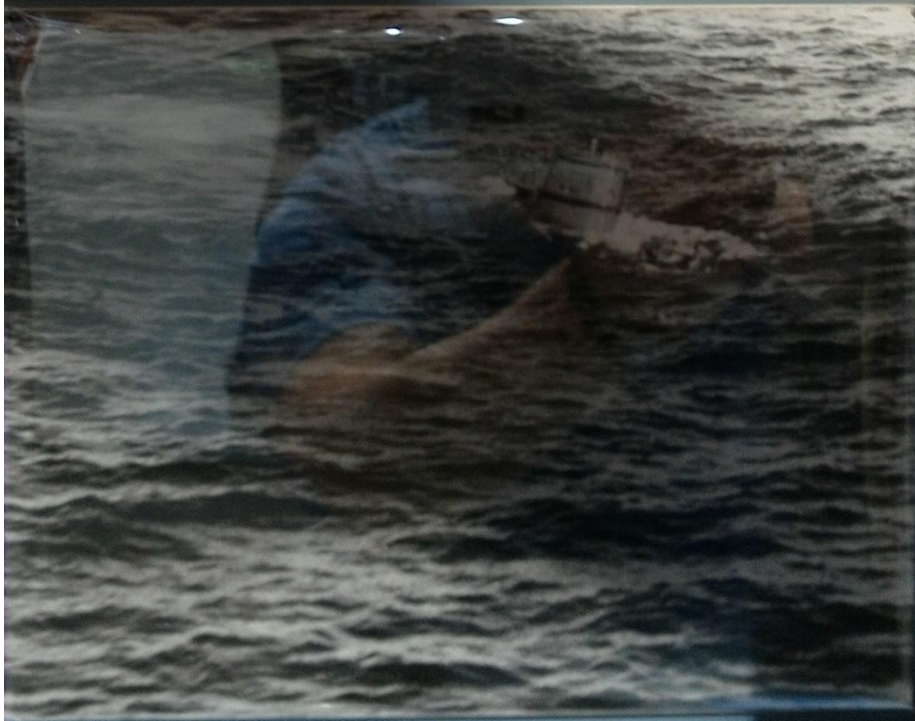
Sgt Howes seeing the target, immediately engaged it by descending to discharge one of his four depth charges rather than all four in salvo. He released his depth charge at a height of 50 feet set to explode at a depth setting of 24 feet.

This initial attack had little effect on the surfaced U-boat. Howes returned once again to re-engage the target with another round. This too was launched from a height of 50 feet and was observed to land astride the U-boat's conning tower. This time the attack had a visible impact. The U-boat's bow lifted out of the water. The U-boat immediately submerged then re-appeared before sinking from sight again.

Sgt Howes and his crew then observed an oil slick and bubbles on the surface where the U-boat had once been. The Bolingbroke circled the location for an hour in the hope that if the U-boat re-surfaced, they would re-engage and attack it once again. That was not to be though. The weather had deteriorated. It started to snow. And then they were running low on fuel too!

[The "Picture on the Wall" - The U-Boat and its Crew](#)

Sgt Howes and his crew landed safely back at Yarmouth in falling snow at 1905 hours ADT. Their patrol lasted approximately five hours and thirty-five minutes. They did not have definite proof that they had conclusively destroyed a U-boat. But they did have proof in hand of their attack! Sgt Howes managed to get three photographs of the surfaced U-boat that proved the freighter was under great duress!



Picture of submerging and surfaced U-Boat 23 March 1942- Picture from Main Hall Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum July 2016

It is all an interesting tale. The story can easily end there if you want it too! But there is much more to learn if you know where to look. The “Picture on the Wall” only tells a part of the story.

The first issue which can be investigated is the to determination of the who and what of Howes and Buchanan’s attack. We were fortunate to have the German U-boat Records publicly available on U-Boat.net. It is a website devoted to the fallen, their memory and activities during the Second World War that sheds light on who was in Canadian waters 23 March 1942.

The operations for 23 March 1942 were reviewed in U-Boat net records. There were 67 U-boats at sea and on Patrol on this day.ⁱⁱ Allied naval resources were stretched thin on that day. It would strain resources given to protection of merchant and other shipping against U-Boat operations that ranged far and wide from Canadian shores, the mid and north Atlantic, the Arctic, to the Mediterranean. Aircraft were employed as well as naval shipping.

At the time, there was little visible evidence of the efficacy of land based aircraft in the Maritime surveillance or the anti-submarine role. This discrepancy served to muddy the waters on airpower’s effectiveness in the arguments that prevailed on its use in the maritime patrol role and where Allied scarce resources would be devoted.

The weight of evidence between 1939 and 1941, in the inter-service rivalry for the control of air power, lent to a conclusion that the preponderance of resources should be directed toward strategic bombing rather than optimizing efficiency amongst all the competing resources for air assets. All other requirements became secondary to the strategic bombing role. The coming Battle of the Gulf of St Lawrence was such an example. It would be fought with meagre resources, sometimes with obsolete equipment and what was immediately at hand.

119 Squadron’s attack on 23 March was a prelude to the events to come when U-553 finally laid the gauntlet down marking the official start of the campaign. The Battle of the Gulf of St Lawrence is marked as officially commencing 12 May 1942 when U-553 made an incursion into the heart of the Gulf of St Lawrence. Its torpedoes sunk the British freighter [Nicoya](#) just a few kilometres off Anticosti Island. Less than two hours later U-553 once again destroyed a ship, the Dutch freighter, [Leto](#).ⁱⁱⁱ

Little did 119 Squadron and others know how the situation on 23 March 1942 would develop or how it would soon intensify! The question all would be asking in the aftermath of 23 March was what U-Boat had Sgt Howes and crew attacked and, where they successful?

There were 67 German records available for review for 23 March 1942 on the day. Each record was manually reviewed. A number of possible position reports were found that hinted of the U-boat in position for such an air attack. The first record was that of U-202. It was just off the south east coast of Nova Scotia on the day at 38.51, -54.06. It was off the continental shelf. But nothing was mentioned in its daily reports and it safely returned to port 26 Apr 1942.

The second U-boat was U-404. It too was off the east Coast of Nova Scotia lying off the continental shelf at 40.38, -50.30. There were no recorded observations of air attack in its daily

logs or position reports. Interestingly U-404 had a successful patrol. It sunk four allied ships or 22653 tons of shipping and returned safely to port 4 Apr 1942.

The third record was U-552. It too was off the Canada's east Coast on 23 March 1942. It had sunk seven ships on its patrol. U-552 on 25 March 1942 attacked and sunk a Dutch Tanker conveying precious oil to England. U-552 sunk a total of 45,731 tonnes of shipping on its patrol and safely returned to home port 27 Apr 1942. There were no recorded reports of air attack in its logs or daily position reports too.

Other records included U-587 and its sister ship U-588. Both were sunk coincidentally on 23 March 1942. But these ships were both lost in the mid-Atlantic at 46.57, -25, 45 and 46.57, -25.45 respectively, too far away for an attack within 119 Squadron's reach.

Another U-boat, U-653 again was too far off the eastern seaboard on the day. It was in the mid-Atlantic at 44.15, -21.15.

The hunt for the U-boat record in question amongst the 67 data points proved arduous. Record after record after the U-653 intervening sequence found false leads until the second to last record on the day, U-754!

U-754 was off Canadian waters in a position south of Newfoundland and east of Nova Scotia at 45.28, -56.13 on 23 March 1942. It was *inside* the continental shelf. U-754 sunk one ship, the British Freighter Prudence, on 23 March 1942 out of Halifax from convoy HX-181.

The Prudence was 8620 tons. Its demise was recorded in U-754's logs. But there were no recorded air attacks noted in U-754's logs or other daily position reports concerning air attacks though. U-754 commenced its patrol at Brest France on 7 March 1942 and safely returned to home port 25 Apr 1942 that lends an air of an "uneventful-routine" voyage beyond its recorded shipping victories.

There was one other unassigned number that followed the U-754 record. An identified record "UA", was in a position east of Newfoundland off the continental shelf at 44.15, -37.45. "UA" was located mid-ocean and in deep waters. The nature of the boat and its mission are unknown at this time. What we do know, it returned safely to home port at Kiel on 24 Apr 1942. Once again its records reflect no hint of trouble, air attack or other in its reports in its daily log and position reports.

Hunting for Clues

The violence of Howes and Buchanan's attack suggested that the attack should have been recorded in German records, somewhere. The paucity of data and the inconclusiveness of the U-boat records on this event lead to the necessity of further investigation and web searches.

An investigation of the individual possible U-boat records found on the day that were in or near Canadian waters was considered. But the further search for more insights on the knowns and the careers of Sgt Howe and Sgt Buchanan proved to be more fruitful. It happened that this

investigation led to the most plausible contact that confirmed the record of U-754, the very last record investigated in the initial review to be the contact. It proved to be a bonanza!

The clue to the identity of the attacked U-boat came in an award of **Mention in Despatches (MiD) to F/O Charles Stewart** of No.10 Squadron (Canada) - Award effective 1 January 1944 as per **London Gazette** of that date and AFRO 113/44 dated 21 January 1944. The citation reads in part “As pilot of Bolingbroke 9066 of No.119 Squadron, he attacked U-754 east of Sydney, Nova Scotia on 23 March 1942”.

How the identity of the U-boat was determined in the MiD citation of 1944 is unknown. But this citation record in which U-754 is identified is useful as it leads to other interesting points beyond the identity of the U-Boat including:

1. the serial number of the Bolingbroke employed on the attack;
2. honours acknowledging this attack were issued that may possibly include an award to Sgt Howe; and
3. the specific details of U-754 revealing its type, captain, crew, missions, and fate; and most importantly, the co-confirmation location of the attack in sundry records.

Buchanan’s MiD citation thus gave us further insights into the events of the day! A review of these insights begins with the construction and details of U-754.

U-754^{iv}

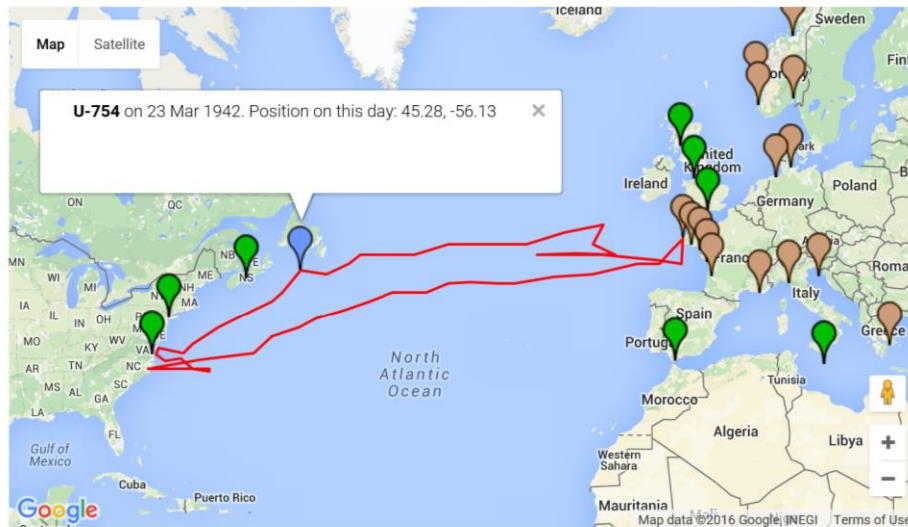
U-754 was a type VII(c) boat ordered 9 Oct 1939 shortly after the declaration of the Second World War. Its keel was laid 8 Jan 1940. U-754 was launched 5 Jul 1941 and finally commissioned for service 28 Aug 1941. Kptlt. Hans Oestermann was its first captain who had recently completed training in the 5th Flotilla training fleet. U-754’s home port was Brest. U-754 was part of Wolfpack [Ziethen](#) (6 Jan 1942 - 22 Jan 1942).

U-754 was built by Kriegsmarinewerft (KMW) at Wilhelmshaven. The Type VII U-boat was the mainstay and most ubiquitous U-boat of the German fleet. U-754 had three war patrols. All three patrols were conducted under the commanded of Kptlt. Hans Oestermann. The first patrol was 30 Dec 1941 that ended 9 Feb 1942. Its second patrol commenced one month later 7 March and concluded 29 April 1942.

U-754 recorded 135 days at sea on these three war patrols. But on 23 March 1942, U-754 was off the east coast of Canada. U-754 had departed from Brest on 7 March 1942 and was ordered to conduct an eastern patrol off North American waters. It returned to port unscathed 25 April 1942.

On 23 March 1942, U-754’s daily position recorded its position as 45.28, -56.13. The boat was in a position inside the continental shelf south of Newfoundland and east of Nova Scotia.

U-754's position on 23 Mar 1942



Source: U.boat Net – Daily Position Reports^v

During this patrol, U-754 sunk one ship that was out of convoy Hx-181. British Ship Prudence (8620 tons) was lost and sent to the bottom.

Strangely despite a heavy aerial presence over Canadian waters at this time, U-754 noted no record of aerial attacks in its logs. Despite the strong photographic evidence of a surfaced U-boat from Buchanan's aircraft to the contrary, it left room for doubt that U-754 was not the U-boat in question.

And yet, if U-754 was the object of Buchanan's attack, why wasn't the attack recorded in U-754's logs? The reasons for this oversight in failing to record this attack in the daily log or position report are unknown. Such information was vital intelligence for survival of other U-boats who may have been in the area.

British Motor tanker, British Prudence

U-754's object on 23 March 1942 was clear though. U-754 attacked the British Motor tanker, British Prudence at 45° 28'N, -56° 13'W (German Naval grid reference- Grid BB 8631) at 1531hrs. Its master was George Albert Dickson. The Prudence was a straggler in Hx-181 when it was sunk.

The Prudence had crew compliment of 50. The master, George Albert Dickson, along with 41 crew members and five gunners were picked up by HMS Witherington (D 76). HMS Witherington was commanded by Lt R. Horncastle, RN. The Witherington landed all of Prudence's survivors the next day at Halifax on 24 March.

The position of the Prudence and U-754 were compared for 23 March 1942. On 23 March 1942 U-754's daily position was recorded as 45.28, -56.13. the same as the recorded

position of Prudence's loss at 45° 28'N, -56° 13'W. We can now safely say therefore that the pictures taken by Buchanan in Bolingbroke 9066 of No.119 Squadron on 23 March 1942 were that of the surfaced U-754. The recorded positions are indisputable as specifically recorded as such by both opposing sides!

We do not know why U-754 surfaced in such a dangerous area where its position was relatively known and greatly exposed. But we can safely offer the following explanations. U-754 may have reached the limits of its endurance and had to surface to recharge its batteries.^{vi} Secondly it may have been reporting its daily position that was a mandatory requirement of its Commander Admiral Dönitz for daily U-boat operations.

Admiral Dönitz was fastidious in the requirement for daily position reports that were necessary for his management and control of the Battle. It was this daily positioning reporting and use of the box square system that was of value to fixing U-boat positions and concentrating Allied air and naval resources to great effect. This was probably the key to Dönitz's conviction of the dangers inherent in the Gulf of St Lawrence.^{vii}

[Kapitänleutnant Hans Oestermann](#)

This confirmed record leads us to an examination of the life and career of Kapitänleutnant Hans Oestermann who was born at Bremervörde on 19 May 1913. He joined the German Navy in 1933. He spent his early career as first watch officer on destroyers. Oestermann then transferred to U-boats in 1940 and began his training in July 1940.

Oestermann completed his U-boat training in December 1940. His first command was U-151, which he assumed 15 Jan 1941. Oestermann relinquished command of U-151 21 Jul 1941. U-151 had no combat patrols. Oestermann was subsequently given command of U-754, a newer type VII six months later.

Oestermann assumed command of U-754 on 28 Aug 1941. U-754 made three combat patrols that totalled 135 days at sea. During that time, U-754 sunk a total of 13 ships amounting to 55,659 tons of shipping losses with one ship reported damaged amounting to 490 tons.

Kapitänleutnant Hans Oestermann was on his second combat patrol at the time of Howes's attack on 23 March 1942. He successfully attacked and sunk eight ships including the Prudence before returning to homeport at Brest on 25 April 1942 after 50 days at sea. U-754 replenished and returned to sea towards North American waters departing Brest 19 Jun 1942.

This was to be Kapitänleutnant Hans Oestermann and U754's last trip at sea. He and U-754 were ordered back to North American waters on 19 Jun 1942. Oestermann lay off our shores and sank two more ships before U-754 was found, attacked and lost. This was U-754's third and final patrol that ended on 31 Jul 1942.

[U-754](#) was destroyed by a Canadian Hudson bomber out of RCAF 113 Squadron. U-754 was lost north of Boston, USA. The boat was lost and there were no survivors amongst the 43 listed crew members.

Oestermann was very successful U-boat captain. Kapitänleutnant Hans Oestermann while in command of [U-754](#) sank 13 ships amounting to over 55,000 tons of Allied shipping losses over his three patrols in the North Atlantic.

[Details of Destruction U-754 - 113 Sqn RCAF Squadron Leader N.E. Small](#)

Oestermann and U-754's story would not be complete without the detail of No. 113 (BR) Squadron's involvement. No. 113 (BR) Squadron RCAF was an east coast unit based at Yarmouth along with 119 Squadron during the Second World War.

No. 113 (BR) Squadron was originally an army cooperation squadron before the war. It was subsequently re-designated as a fighter squadron but it was disbanded in 1939. No.113 Squadrons was resurrected and given a new life in 1942 as Bomber Reconnaissance Squadron operating principally an anti-submarine role.

No. 113 (BR) Squadron, a very distinguished squadron, fought bravely and most diligently during the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Its distinguished members included Pilot Officer R.S. Keetley and his crew who on 9 Sep 1942 dove in on *U-165*. On September 16, Keetley launched an attack on *U-517*. Both vessels escaped destruction but they both noted the intensity of Keetley's attacks.

Between September 24–25 No. 113 (BR) Squadron registered three more attacks on seven sightings on *U-517*. *U-517* eluded them but it was spotted once again and engaged and attacked on September 29. Flying Officer M.J. Bélanger conducted three of the last four attacks on *U-517*. Belanger was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for that effort.^{viii}

But No. 113 (BR) Squadron's most notable achievement occurred 31 July 1942. Squadron Leader N.E. Small of No. 113 (BR) Squadron in Hudson 625 was conducting a patrol in the vicinity of Sable Island. Small sighted the surfaced *U-754*. Small made three passes at *U-754*. His first pass dropped depth charges just as the submarine began to dive.

Small's second pass found *U-754* just under the water in some apparent difficulty. It would seem that Small's depth charges damaged the boat. On his third pass, Hudson 625 fired its front guns at the boat's conning tower. The plane then observed the damaged boat for 55 minutes. To Small's surprise *U-517* exploded before him that seemed to finally settle the matter.^{ix}

U-754 was sunk with all hands lost.^x

Sadly, Squadron Leader Small was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross later in January, 1943.^{xi} Squadron Leader N.E. "Molly" Small was killed on 7 January 1943 when his Canso crashed shortly after taking off from Gander, Newfoundland.^{xii}

No. 113 (BR) Sqn's primary role was in the anti-submarine role. The squadron was widely based on Canada's East coast. It operated first out of Yarmouth, NS, then was transferred to Chatham NB, and finally ended up at Torbay, NL.^{xiii} The squadron flew the Lockheed Hudson and Lockheed Ventura before it was disbanded on 10 August 1944.^{xiv}

Bolingbroke 9066 23 March 1943 – Sgt Howes

We now return to the story of aircraft employed and the men who attacked U-754 on 23 March 1942. Bolingbroke 9066 was an obsolete aircraft piloted by Sgt WM Howes (R72072) of 119 Sqn RCAF out of Yarmouth. His co-pilot was Sgt CS Buchanan (R68324). Each man led exemplary and distinguished careers during the Second World War.

Sgt Howes' story is a rather interesting one. Bill Howes received his initial training at No.1 Service Flying Training School at Camp Borden. He graduated there and received his wings on 28 April 1941. It was to be No.1 Service Flying Training School's first outdoor graduation parade since the previous fall.

The Globe and Mail made special mention of that fact. Also noted prominent amongst the seventeen Torontonians who graduated that day was a certain Bill Howes, age 21, of 395 Lauder Avenue. The Globe and Mail ran at length the attendance of Bill's family at his graduation. Present were his brother Stoker Henry Howes, 20 RCNVR and his father Captain H.A. Howes, M.M. formerly of the Leinster Regiment of the Imperial Army in the Great War.

Also attending the ceremony were his mother (unnamed) and sister Maureen along with two younger brothers, Terry (12) and Brian (4) in tow. Bill's graduation must have been a very special occasion and a proud moment for his family, especially as words of praise were soon heaped upon the graduating class by Group Captain R.S. Granby (OBE).^{xv}

Sgt Howes then proceeded to Operational Training Unit at Pennfield NB for advance training before he was finally posted to 119 (BR) Sqn.^{xvi}

Upon completion of a tour with 119 Sqn (BR) RCAF Bill Howes was transferred overseas. In fact, he made history in doing so. Now a Flying Officer (F/O), The Globe and Mail once again made mention of F/O Howes' "historic flight" from Canada to the United Kingdom.

Howes' flight was a unique odyssey that began 2 August 1943. It was the first non-stop operational B-24 Liberator sortie from North America across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom. F/O Bill Howes was in Command. His B-24 Liberator was responsible for provision of convoy air support and escort along the way.^{xvii} It most likely was the very first flight that was made to close what is now known as the "Mid-Atlantic Gap".

F/O Howes had been ordered to fly, protect, and provide escort for a convoy then headed to Iceland. The weather deteriorated over the convoy and was so bad, that Howes had to break off the escort and make for England. He was later instructed by radio to make for Northern Ireland. His journey lasted some 15 hours and 26 minutes. It ended when he landed in Northern Ireland. His flight was characterized as "uneventful".

But his flight marked a passing. His effort was far from uneventful for it garnered the praise of no less a personage than Air Marshal John Slessor, Commander of Coastal Command. Air Marshal Slessor sent a personal message to Air Vice Marshal G.O. Johnson air officer command

eastern Air Command stating, “History has been made by Liberator “Y”. It is the first R.C.A.F aircraft to take off from America on an operational sortie and land in the United Kingdom. The commanding officer of this squadron attended our weekly anti-submarine staff meeting. I hope there will be many similar instances.”^{xviii}

Although Howes may have characterized his flight as “uneventful”, it was not unnoticed. It was a significant milestone that was marked by no less a personage than the chief of Coastal Command himself! To Slessor this flight probably marked the first step as a key turning point in the conduct of U-boat war then raging. The Battle of the Atlantic was in the balance in the Battle of the Atlantic. It could have gone either way. Howes’ flight marked the start of a change to come.

Bolingbroke 9066 23 March 1943 – Sgt Buchanan^{xix}

The other character in this story was Charles Stewart Buchanan. Buchanan was born in Montreal 31 May 1921. Buchanan’s home town at the time of his enlistment was Ottawa, On. Buchanan enlisted in the RCAF on 20 August 1940 at London Ontario and proceed to No.1 ITS. He graduated 9 December 1940. Buchanan was only 19 years old at the time. Buchanan then went on to No 10 EFTS and graduated 7 February 1941.

Buchanan then trained at No.2 Service Flying School from 28 January to 10 April 1941. He was a member of Course 19 and was one of about 60 candidates who graduated on this serial.^{xx} No.2 Service Flying School was his final destination in the training system before his first posting. Buchanan graduated from No.2 SFTS on 15 April 1941 as a newly minted pilot. He was posted to 119 Squadron. He was to be Sgt Howes co-pilot on the day they attacked U-754, 23 March 1942.

But two years after the fact, now a Flying Officer, Charles Stewart Buchanan was gazetted and Mentioned in Despatches for this action. The gazetted citation for his service on 1 January 1944 read:

“This officer has taken part in a large number of operational sorties on anti-submarine patrols over the North Atlantic. The enthusiasm, coolness and courage with which he has completed his tasks under adverse conditions has set a high standard which is proving to be an example and inspiration to others.”

No such honours or awards were found for Flying Officer Howes.

Charles Stewart Buchanan went on to serve through out the remainder of the war with a distinguished record. Most notably, he survived!

Charles Stewart Buchanan loved flying and remained in the RCAF after the war. But sadly, Flight Lieutenant Buchanan, Charles Stewart flying DH 100 Vampire 17024 from 401 Squadron (Aux) was killed and died in a crash on 22 July 1952 at Bagotville, Qc.^{xxi}

Concluding Remarks

The story of maritime airpower and the anti-submarine role played out on Canada's east coast during the Second World War is an interesting and lesser known one. The application of airpower in the Gulf of St Lawrence and elsewhere in 1942 made a significant impression on Admiral [Dönitz](#). First, Admiral [Dönitz](#) was impressed by the number of their attacks, by both the RCN and RCAF despite the fact that not one of his submarines was sunk by Canadian pilots or the RCN. ^{xxii}

The presence of air cover greatly deterred him from pursuing a campaign in the Gulf in 1943 because of this fear. It was indeed a dangerous place!^{xxiii}

Second despite this impression, Admiral Dönitz also "concluded that the Canadian defences proved to be comparatively weak. As a consequence, the German Navy had planned to send further U-boats to the area."^{xxiv} But his U-boats only returned to Canadian water in quantity in 1944 through the introduction of the 'snorkel'. The snorkel was a technical advantage that protected U-Boats because of the ability to recharge their batteries while remaining and running submerged.^{xxv} It hid them from prying eyes of surface ships and loitering aircraft.

The employment of land based aircraft against submarines was not a new concept during the Second World War. Land based air assets were employed in the maritime patrol role as early as World War I. The basic lessons learned there was, aircraft proved effective against German U-boats forcing them to remain submerged and exhausting their batteries either while en-route to or in operational areas. U-boats were found to be very vulnerable to air attack when convoys were supported by air support.^{xxvi}

This was the role and purpose that Howes, Buchanan, and others played in Eastern Air and Coastal Commands as they served during the Second World War. It wasn't seen as a glamorous role but it was a vital one. It was a role that gave the allies time to survive and to build their forces to achieve victory. It all took time. It all could have easily fallen apart at any time if the U-boats had succeeded in the Battle of the Atlantic. The U-boat was Winston Churchill's solitary fear during the war.^{xxvii}

Men and material was lost on both sides in the great battle, which became known as the Battle of the Atlantic. It was the longest running battle whose course ran the whole length of the war. There were many losses. The material losses of life in U-boat service was akin to RCAF air forces losses in kind and number.

A number can be placed on it. During the Second World War 28,000 of 40900 German U-boat crew recruited into that service lost their lives. Five thousand were taken prisoners of war. On the other side of the ledger 30,000 men of the allied merchant service died, not including the untold number of Allied naval personnel."^{xxviii}

The loss of Canadian life in the air war alone amongst RCAF aircrew amounted to 17000 dead out of the 55000 allied air crew were lost during the war. These losses are included in the number of the RAF, RAAF, RNAZ air crews lost in the running battles of the air war.^{xxix}

How do you translate all that suffering and sacrifice into real terms then? A picture on the wall only paints a part of the story. Yet it is but one measurable yardstick to that loss, which is largely a hidden story.

That indescribable loss was the pain and suffering endured by both sides of the conflict. It was the loss that was greatly felt through the grief of family, friends, and loved ones.

It is a loss felt in the many remembrances held each year that honor those who died, just doing their duty oh so many years ago (Lest we forget). It is the story worth learning from any "Picture on the Wall." All it takes is a little time to do so, but the dividends in the doing are so worthy.

ⁱ Colonel C.P. Stacey, O.B.E., C.D., A.M., Ph.D., F.R.S.C., Director, Historical Section, General Staff, **Official History of the Canadian Army - In the Second World War**

Volume I, SIX YEARS OF WAR, The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, published by Authority of the Minister of National Defence, First Published 1948, pg. 175

Source <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/SixYears/SixYears-5.html>

Accessed: 13 August 2010

Transcribed and formatted by Patrick Clancey, HyperWar Foundation

For access to full publication see:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/SixYears/index.html>

ⁱⁱ uboatnet.com, U-boats on Patrol this date, 23 March, 1942

Source: <http://www.uboaat.net/boats/patrols/search.php>

Accessed: 22 Jul 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ Fabrice Mosseray, **The Battle of the St. Lawrence -A Little-Known Episode in the Battle of the Atlantic**, UBoat.Net 1995-2010, 29 Mar 2002.

Source: <http://uboat.net/articles/?article=29>

Accessed: 30 November 2010

^{iv} U.boat Net, Daily Position Report U-754, 23 March 1942

Source:<http://www.uboat.net/boats/patrols/search.php>

Accessed: 22 Jul 2016 (unless specifically cited – the section reference for all citations here)

^v Ibid U.boat Net, U-754, 22 Jul 2016

^{vi} Roger Sarty, **The “Battle We Lost at Home” Revisited Official Military Histories and the Battle of the St. Lawrence**, Canadian Military History, Volume 12, Numbers 1& 2, Winter/Spring 2003, pg. 43

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^{viii} Gray, Larry (2007). *Canadians in the Battle of the Atlantic*. Edmonton, AB: Folklore Publishing. pp. 306–7. [ISBN 1-894864-66-2](https://www.folklorepublishing.com/ISBN-1-894864-66-2)

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Only one record for Howes (little detail)

^{xvii} Globe and Mail, **Liberator Makes History Crosses Ocean in Sortie**, 3 August 1943

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Note: There was a typo in the article. FO Howe is mis-identified as FO W.H. Howe of Toronto. We know his initials to be W.M. from his graduation article. Conclude him to be the same person.

^{xviii} Ibid Globe and Mail, 3 August 1943

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