



NEWS (WINTER 2023-2024)

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Happy 100th birthday, Rolfe Monteith!

By Tony Thatcher, Executive Director, CNTHA



Photo courtesy Captain(N) Chris Peschke, CDLS London

Rolfe Monteith out for “Century Birthday” luncheon in London, England, with CAF Naval Adviser Capt(N) Chris Peschke and his spouse Vivienne.

It is Happy Birthday, and congratulations all around, from the Royal Canadian Navy’s technical community to one of our dearest members — **Captain Rolfe Monteith, RCN (Ret’d)** — who chalked up his “century” milestone on Oct. 30, 2023.

As an active founding member of both the Canadian Naval Technical History Association, and a subcommittee to investigate the defence industrial base’s involvement in post-Second World War Canadian naval projects, Rolfe has brought much to the table over the years. Through his extensive work career, first with the Royal Canadian Navy, and later with industry, he has enjoyed the “best of both worlds” as both a certified Marine Engineer and an Air Engineer. He was the driving force behind, “*Certified Serviceable*,” a comprehensive history of naval air engineering. In recent years, he has travelled the world to advance the interests of Canadian-related maritime affairs (see the Commodore’s Corner on page 2 of this edition of the *Maritime Engineering Journal*).

Following his war service (see MEJ 93), Rolfe served in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and influenced such important undertakings as the establishment of the HMS *Sultan* training project for British and international marine systems engineering officers in the UK; the insertion of shock testing into the DDE-205 *St. Laurent*-class build program; and gas-turbine propulsion for the DDH-280 Tribal-class destroyers. As a naval

captain, he was appointed Project Manager of Canada’s joint project office for the Canadian Hydrofoil Project, which resulted in the construction and trials of HMCS *Bras d’Or* (FHE-400) — at the time, the world’s fastest unarmed warship (63 knots top speed). Rolfe once said he felt he had reached a pinnacle when he was Director of Air Engineering one day, and Director of Marine Engineering the next.

With such broad experience, Rolfe was just the right person to help define and assemble the CNTHA, and to focus its efforts. He brought together people from all parts of the naval-industrial spectrum to produce a historical timeline, and generate new material for the “CNTHA Collection” of documents and interview transcripts, sourced or generated, in support of DND’s Directorate of History and Heritage. His own primary focus remains with his investigations in support of the CNTHA’s Canadian Naval Defence Industrial Base (CANDIB) subcommittee project covering the “marvelous story” of the development of Canada’s post-war navy.

Rolfe Monteith continues to mentor and inspire the people who have taken it upon themselves to “preserve Canada’s naval technical heritage” through the CNTHA and other initiatives, and until 2018 made it his habit to visit us from his home in the UK to discuss our progress, and offer his encouragement to the members of the team.

Happy Birthday, Rolfe. And thank you.

