



# NEWS

Canadian Naval Technical History Association

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**CNTHA Chairman**  
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Michael Whitby

**Maritime Engineering Journal Liaison**  
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Please address all correspondence to the publisher, attention Michael Whitby, Chief of the Naval Team, Directorate of History and Heritage, NDHQ 101 Colonel By Dr Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2  
Tel. (613) 998-7045  
Fax (613) 990-8579

Views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect official DND opinion or policy. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject any editorial material.

[www.cntha.ca](http://www.cntha.ca)



## *CNTHA website upgrade*

We have upgraded our website to a newer version of Joomla content management software. The upgrade offers improved security and better features. The most obvious change is the new "look and feel" of the site, which we hope you will find pleasing. While we have discontinued the underused forum, we look forward to receiving your comments, suggestions and photos via our Contact Us links. Special thanks go to Jeff Wilson for his work on the upgrade.

– *Don Wilson, webmaster*

## To fit or not to fit: Making the Case for a Command & Control System in the DDH-280

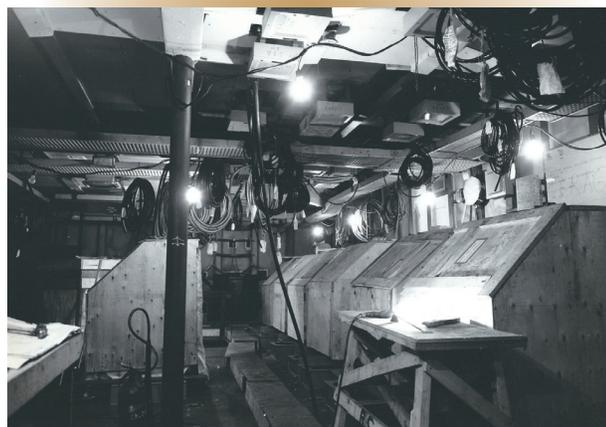
By Cdr Pat Barnhouse, RCN (Ret.)

The period 1964-1965 was a great time to be a staff officer in the Directorate of Systems Engineering (DSEng). Major shipbuilding programs were being initiated for the DDH-280 and AOR, and fundamental organizational changes were taking place in headquarters due to the early effects of integration and unification plans. DSEng, as the "link" between Director General Fighting Equipment and the rest of Chief Naval Technical Services (DG Ships, Directorate of Marine and Electrical Engineering, etc.), as well as the operational staff, gave one an unsurpassed window on all the goings-on. What follows is a description from my fading memory of one rather interesting occurrence.

Starting with the likes of LCdr Brian Judd, LCdr Wally Lockwood and the triumverate of LCdr John Belcher, LCdr Mac Whitman and LCdr Doch MacGillivray (not to forget the pioneering work of Stan Knights with Digital Automated Tracking and Resolving – DATAR), the RCN had invested considerable effort in the development of various aspects of command and control systems (CCS). By the fall of 1964 it was already a given that the hydrofoil would have a command and control system fitted, so it seemed obvious that the recently approved "repeat *Nipigon*" – aka the DDH-280 – should be similarly equipped. Therein lay the problem.

RAdm Bob Welland was reputed to have expressed his opposition to fitting a command and control system in the 280 class, apparently stating that it was operationally unnecessary because the ASW battle was still capable of being waged successfully from the front of the bridge. I say reputed, as I have on occasion heard RAdm Welland referred to as a progressive type rather than one who dwelt in the past. In any event, it was the consensus that it would be very difficult to convince the admiral of the necessity of a CCS.

The breakthrough occurred by chance. One day in DSEng, during a visit by one of the operational staff (it might have been LCdr Dan Mainguy, or possibly LCdr Peter Traves), conversation turned to the work that was going on in NATO to adopt common message format standards for Link 11, the HF data link proposed for tactical communication between ships. Cdr Carl Ross reacted as if a light bulb had come on. He asked LCdr Jock Allan if this mode of communication for passing tactical data was proposed for NATO navies while operating together. Both Jock and the operational staff officer confirmed this was the intention. Carl then asked if a CCS would be needed to generate the required tactical data in the right format. When assured that this was the case, he said that a command and control system for the DDH-280 should be justified on this basis: simply, our ships would not be able to operate with our allies if we were not equipped to send and receive tactical data in a compatible format, and to do that a CCS was essential. Apparently, this argument won the day.



Command & control equipment is still under cover in the operations room of HMCS *Athabaskan* (DDH-282) during construction in June 1971.

DND photo by Davie Shipbuilding Limited, Lauzon, Quebec