



# NEWS

Canadian Naval Technical History Association

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## HMCS *Bras d'Or* at 50

By Cdr (ret.) Pat Barnhouse and Brian McCullough

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commissioning of the RCN hydrofoil HMCS *Bras d'Or* (FHE-400) passed without fanfare in July, in stark contrast to the press frenzy associated with her heyday as the fastest warship in the world when she clocked an astounding foible speed of 63 knots during trials. Decommissioned in 1971 after a service career that many claimed was unnecessarily cut short, the vessel demonstrated the very best of forward-looking Canadian naval technology that would forever change the face of warship design, construction and capability.

The CNTHA has been fortunate over the years to receive the recollections of a number of people who had first-hand experience on the FHE-400 Hydrofoil Project, among them Rolfe Monteith, Tom Bennett, Brian McNally, Pat Barnhouse and others. While we have published some of this material here in our newsletter and the *Maritime Engineering Journal*, other papers pertaining to the *Bras d'Or* project can be found archived on our website. If you can find a copy, author Thomas G. Lynch's 1983 book, *The Flying 400*, is both a definitive reference and an enjoyable read.

Since 1983 the ship has been maintained as an exhibit at the **Musée Maritime du Québec** (the Bernier Museum) at L'Islet-sur-mer on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, one hour east of Quebec City. This

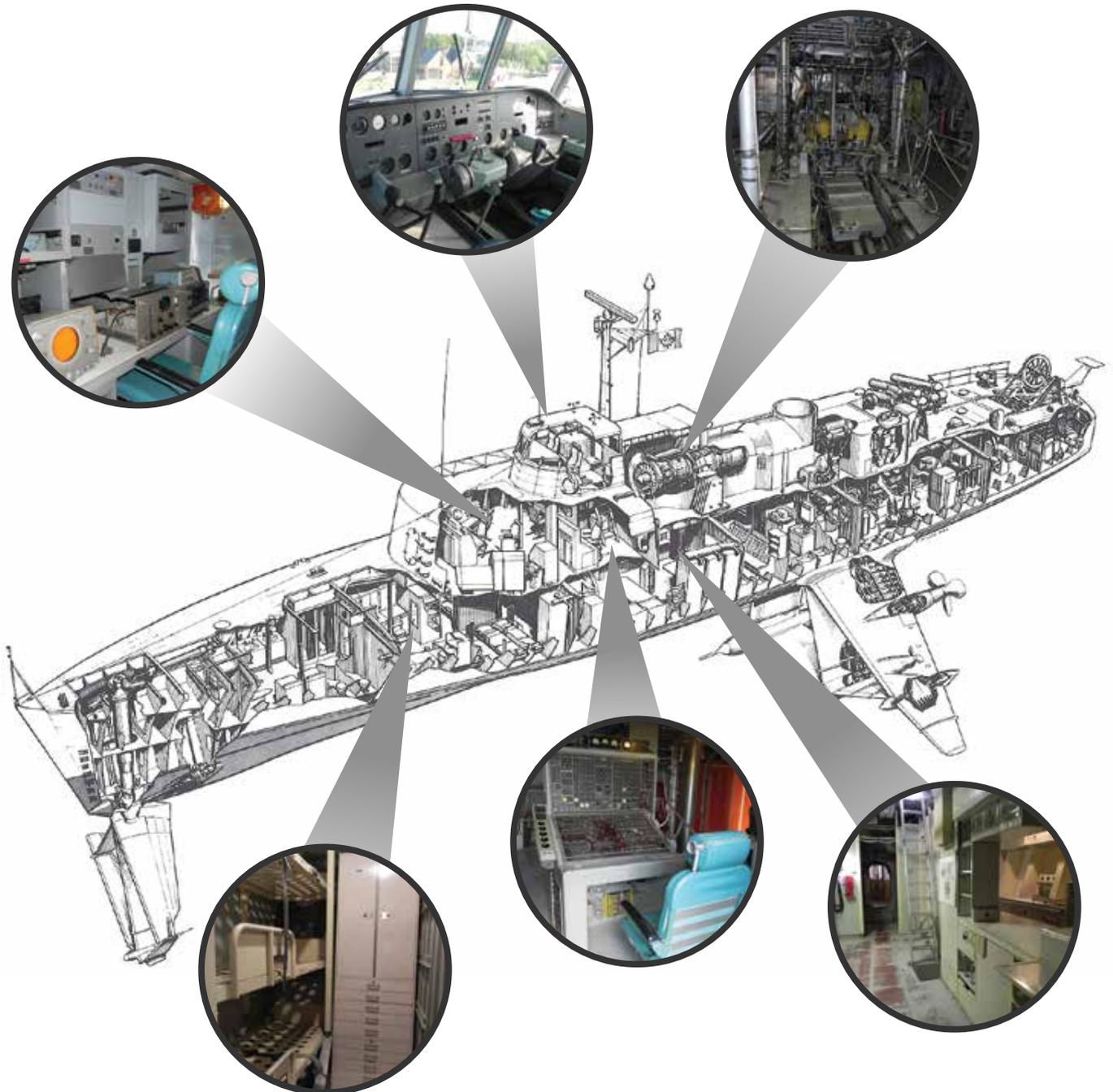
progressive museum is an outstanding destination for anyone interested in the maritime heritage of Eastern Canada, and guided tours of the hydrofoil are offered during the regular tourist season. *CNTHA News* gratefully acknowledges the extraordinary access granted us to photograph the ship inside and out. We also thank Ian Mack (no relation to the retired rear-admiral of the same name), representing the family of FHE-400 project design engineer Thomas Drummond, for scouting out copies of the historical photos used with this article.



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## HMCS *Bras d'Or* (FHE-400)



(Cutaway diagram courtesy DeHavilland Canada)  
Photos by Brian McCullough