Rotary Wings over the Arctic

Diaries of HMCS Labrador's Flight Operations, 1955-1958

Don MacNeil

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To my mother, for her untiring efforts in trying to teach me spelling and grammar. Also, for her role as a military wife and mother always keeping the home fires burning during our father's deployments and business trips away from home.

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I would also like to thank Doreen Larsen-Riedel, the daughter of the *St. Roch's* skipper Sgt. Henry Larson, for offering photographs and documents from her father's records as they related to Labrador.

Research Assistants at St. Francis Xavier University helped in the preparation of this work and Chris Yurris and Dianna Kendall are owned a debt of gratitude for their excellent work.

Abbreviations and Definitions

Ice recce: Ice reconnaissance - surveying ice condition from the helicopter.

Local Seq.: Local Sequence or local training exercise.

Misc. Seq.: Miscellaneous Sequence. e.g. General training, sightseeing, aerial photography flights, etc.

Misc. Test: Any flight to determine airworthiness of an aircraft.

Misc. Trans. Any flight involving the transport of goods or personnel.

Misc. – Seven Islands: Flight to a specific geographic location. e.g., Seven Islands.

SAR: Search and Rescue

Seq.: Abbreviation for sequence and refers to the purpose of a flight.

Seq. Radar: Training exercise so the ships radar operators could practice tracking the flight.

Sec. Seq. Homings: Training flights to provide pilots and shipboard radar and radio operators with practice in helping flight crew home-in on the ship when weather was marginal.

Editor's Note

This book records the activities of the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) icebreaker HMCS *Labrador* and the role of her Helicopter Utility Squadron 21 (HU-21) Air Detachment 2 during her Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic operations throughout *Labrador's* time with the RCN.

Most of the information in this book was adapted into a narrative by the editor from detachment diaries and logbooks, which were generally maintained by the second-in-command of the detachment. Additional information was obtained from the following:

- The personal log books of detachment pilots, including the author's father Lt (P) John A. "MacBagpipes" MacNeil;
- Official and personal photographs taken by Lt (P) MacNeil and others;
- Information conveyed to the author by his father;
- Information conveyed to the author by his late father-in-law Commander "Peter" E. G. "Fido" Savage, DSO, DSC, MID, Royal Navy, who visited *Labrador* as an RN Arctic warfare expert attached to the British High Commission in Ottawa during this period;
- Information obtained from the author's friend and Detachment 2 commander onboard *Labrador* in 1957, LCdr Robert T. Murray RCN (Ret'd)., CD;
- Personal interviews conducted with former *Labrador* crew members;
- Navigational charts created onboard *Labrador*;
- Sources quoted in footnotes and the bibliography in the appendix to this book; and
- HMCS *Labrador* records available in the Directorate of History and Heritage archives (DND).

Introduction

HMCS *Labrador*, commissioned in 1954, is the only Royal Canadian Navy icebreaker ever constructed. *Labrador* was the first deep draft vessel to transit the Northwest Passage and the first naval vessel to circumnavigate North America in a single voyage. The ship was a symbol of Canada's Arctic sovereignty and a pioneer of Arctic science and navigation. *Labrador's* RCN crew and embarked civilian scientists experimented with new technologies, such as cold-water diving, modern hydrographic surveying, and the operation of helicopters from ships underway. Over the ship's short, four-year RCN career it and its crew garnered deep respect and appreciation from across Canada, from its American allies, and the scientific community in North America and abroad.

Excellent histories of the *Labrador*'s operations in the North have already been published by Canadian historians, most recently *HMCS Labrador: An Operational History* – which appears in this operational history series.[1] This book does not seek to retread that same ground; it is not a general history but a more specific resource, focusing on the icebreaker's important helicopter operations from 1955 to the transfer of the vessel from the RCN to the Department of Transport in 1957. This volume reproduces the ship's flight logs to provide researchers with a snapshot of how aerial operations took place in the late 1950s Arctic. Through these logs, historians can trace the logistics, procedures, pace, and dangers of Arctic flying during this formative period.

These operations were pioneering flights – both in terms of the technology involved and the way it was employed. Helicopters themselves were a new invention in the 1950s and quickly became an essential component in a modern icebreaker's operations as those vessels sought to pick their way through leads in the thick Arctic ice. Used for ice reconnaissance and transport, rotary wing craft were an extension of the ship and vital to its success.

The information provided in this volume offers researchers a complete, day-by-day history of the *Labrador's* rotary wing operations in a level of detail never published before and can be used by scholars and students of Arctic operations to strengthen future studies and support ongoing research into the Canadian Navy's multi-generational efforts to work effectively in Canada's Far North.

Canada's Military Icebreaker

Until the Second World War, the Canadian Arctic was of little commercial, political, or military interest to most and was largely protected by its isolation, lack of infrastructure, sparsely land masses, and inhospitable climate. The Arctic waters were mostly uncharted and the administration and defence of Canada's North was left to the RCMP, the Hudson Bay Company, and the Department of the Interior. The Canadian military had a limited presence in the region until 1944, when the Canadian Army ventured north in a winter exercise called *Eskimo*, ironically held in northern Saskatchewan, well south of the Arctic Circle. The RCAF, meanwhile, had begun aerial mapping of the large, uncharted areas in the North, but the Royal Canadian Navy shunned northern operations – lacking the right equipment and any real motivation to be there. Initial RCN forays into the Arctic waters were, therefore, tentative and irregular.

This inattentiveness ended in the mid-1950s with the construction of the Distant Early Warning Line. Devised as a means of detecting Soviet bombers *en route* to the continental US, the DEW Line was a series of radar stations stretching across the North American Arctic from Alaska to Greenland. Many of these sites were in Canadian territory and accessed through Canadian Arctic waters.

Because of the distances involved, the quantity of materials needing to be transported, and the remote locations of the DEW Line radar stations, hundreds of American ships and aircraft were deployed to support construction operations over an intensive three-year period.

The scale and scope of planning, organization and building this system was beyond anything every attempted in the north American Arctic.

Convoys of ships were required to carry the huge amount of material for DEW line construction and, at the time, very few ships existed capable of operating in heavy ice conditions. Some ships would be strengthened to contend with light ice, but many were standard freighters and surplus Second World War 'Liberty Ships', with hulls easily ruptured by loose blocks of "old" multi-year ice. Convoys needed to be escorted by icebreakers to safely reach their destinations. Canada had no such vessel – and few ice-strengthened ships of any size capable of escorting convoys.

HMCS *Labrador* was the first and only RCN Arctic patrol icebreaker and, at the time of construction by Marine Industries of Sorel, Québec in 1951, it was a state-of-the-art ship. *Labrador* was launched on December 15, 1951 and christened June 14, 1952 by Madame Jeanne St. Laurent, the wife of Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent. A further two years of outfitting was required before the vessel was commissioned by the RCN on July 1954.

Shortly after commissioning, *Labrador* left for the Arctic on a secret mission – the circumnavigation North American through the Northwest Passage. Success was by no means certain and the nature of the operation was kept secret to minimize the embarrassment to the government in case it failed. The circumnavigation – which was a success – was less important than the operations along the way, which constituted the ship's primary mission. These tasks included icebreaking duty, supply operations for the Distant Early Warning Line, and the construction of navigational markers and radar beacons, convoy escort, landing beach surveying and clearance, and scientific research work – including hydrography, oceanography, atmospheric studies, ice research, and environmental studies.

This deployment was a stunning success and was followed by repeat performances of a similar nature. Until her transfer to the Department of Transport in 1957, *Labrador* operated in the Arctic under the RCN's naval jack, supporting defence projects, breaking ice, charting the Northwest Passage, representing Canadian sovereignty and control across a region the size of Europe.

Helicopter Detachment

HMCS *Labrador* was designed as an updated American Wind class icebreaker, drawing on the experience of this class, which had operated

in the Arctic since the Second World War, the Canadian vessels featured several major improvements. One of the most significant was the installation of a helicopter deck almost twice the size of the American design, allowing the ship to carry up to three helicopters. The later installation of an aircraft hangar and workshop facilitated aircraft maintenance during the harsh Arctic conditions, which could manifest even during summer months.

The RCN formed an air branch in 1947 with aircraft donated to Canada from the post-World War Two Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm's surplus inventory. It would not be until 1951 that helicopters were considered for use by the RCN, and this was driven by the Canadian government's decision that the RCN was to be equipped with an icebreaker. Like the U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers, a Canadian ship could use helicopters for ice reconnaissance as well as personnel and stores transport between ship and shore, among other applications. Consequently, a squadron named "#1 Helicopter Flight" was established at the Canadian Navy Air Station (CANAS) HMCS *Shearwater* and initially equipped with three Bell HTL–4 aircraft. LCdr J.D. "Darkie" Lowe was appointed Officer-in-Charge of the Flight. Additional pilots were recruited from existing RCN squadrons and converted to helicopter flying. Others were recruited from outside the RCN, including the author's father, who was an ex-RCAF fixed wing pilot who had not obtained a permanent RCAF commission after a World War Two tour of duty.

L to R: LCdr "Dennis" Foley & LCdr "Darkie" Lowe April 15, 1952 Photo Source: DND 10722E

LCdr D. "Dennis" L. Foley was appointed as a helicopter pilot and as the Air Engineer Officer responsible for maintenance and maintenance personnel within the flight. Air maintenance personnel were trained by the United States Navy at Lakehurst, New Jersey, with additional training being provided by Bell Helicopters at their factory in Fort Worth, Texas.

#1 Helicopter Flight would later be re-designated as Helicopter Utility Squadron 21 (HU-21) and include in its inventory two additional helicopter models: the tandem rotor Piasecki Helicopter Corporation HUP-3 Retriever and the Sikorsky H04S single main rotor helicopter. It would be from this squadron that pilots, their maintenance personnel and aircraft would be selected to form what was designated as "HU-21, Detachment 2", *Labrador's* air detachment. Depending on the operational needs, various combinations of HTL-4 and HUP-3 aircraft were used. In later years, the detachment generally consisted of two HTL-4's and one Piasecki HUP light transport helicopter.

Labrador's Hangar. Photo Credit: Lt (P) J.A. MacNeil

Bell HTL-4's (HTL-4) were acquired by the RCN in August of 1951 for flight training, light search and rescue, equipment or personnel transport, and aerial photography. Developed by Bell Helicopter of Dallas, Texas for the U.S. Navy, the HTL-4 was powered by a six-cylinder Franklin internal combustion engine of 178 bhp, enabling a maximum speed of 92 mph and a range of 212 miles. Its load carrying capacity consisted of the pilot and various combinations of one passenger and additional external loads.

The excellent visibility afforded by their bubble canopies made the HTL-4 an excellent tool for ice reconnaissance and provided *Labrador* with an eye-in-the-sky when she had to pick a suitable route through heavy ice fields, approach shoal waters, or negotiate dangerous headlands and harbours. Both aircraft were equipped with pontoons which allowed the aircraft to land safely on reasonably calm seas,

although taking off could be a challenge as main rotor torque would cause the aircraft to rotate about its axis while still on the water, even with counter-torque applied by the tail rotor. Pilots learned to overcome this quirk by water-taxing up to an ice flow which would be used to prevent the aircraft from spinning on the water prior to lift-off.

Initially designed for the U.S. Navy, the Piasecki HUP-3 aircraft were acquired by the RCN from the U.S. Army, which also operated HUPs in the early 1950s for use as light cargo and medical evacuation helicopters. Powered by a Continental R-975-46 550 bhp radial piston engine mounted below the rear rotor mast, the HUP-3 had a maximum speed of 105 mph and a range of 340 miles. Usually flown by a crew of two, this aircraft could carry four passengers or three stretcher cases. It was a difficult machine to fly solo and some pilots say it flew better sideways than it did in a cockpit forward orientation. Also equipped with an external cargo hook, the HUP could carry cargo as either an external sling load or internally in her cabin. With an internally mounted rescue winch, the HUP's could also be used in rescue missions to hoist a person from the ground or water into the cabin through a hatch in the central cabin floor area.

Bell HTL-4, Photo Credit – Lt (P) J.A. MacNeil

The machines were critical to *Labrador's* years of successful Arctic operations. They extended the reach of the vessel in a vast region with little infrastructure while providing navigational assistance in places where hydrographic surveying was out of date or non-existent. In areas with no safe harbours, helicopters were taxis and cargo movers. In many respects, they were the unsung heroes of early icebreaking.

Part 1
Labrador's Circumnavigation, 1954

On July 10, 1954, HMCS *Labrador* arrived in her home port of Halifax, completing her maiden voyage from Sorel, Québec where she had been built by Marine Industries. During the next week and a half, the ship was quickly provisioned for its four-month cruise to the Arctic. Provisions included hundreds of tons of stores, food and spare parts for the ship and her helicopter detachment. The ship also embarked a consignment of coal for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police outpost at Alexandra Fiord on the east coast of Ellesmere Island.

As previously observed, *Labrador* was a unique ship, being both a military vessel and a research vessel. Her civilian scientific staff for this trip was headed by Dr. D. C. Rose of Canada's National Research Council and his team included nine other scientists. Each scientific party reviewed their research plans with Captain Robertson and the ship's officers so that daily plans could be drawn up to best utilize *Labrador's* resources and crew.

HU-21 Squadron - Helicopter Detachment 2 - Log Tables

As previously mentioned, the daily record of flight operations presented in this book have been sourced from existing Detachment log book records and are shown in the following format.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
Squadron Side Number (S/N)	Name	Name	Activity	Launch Time

The Aircraft column contains the side number assigned by the squadron from which the aircraft[2] was drawn. Pilot identifies the person flying the aircraft. Crew refers to a pilot or non-pilot passenger, ice observer or photographer. Duty indicates abbreviations commonly used in naval aviation log books describing the mission (refer to Appendix Two for further information). The Time column shows the actual time the

aircraft became airborne (if no time was recorded, a dash (-) appears in this column).

Preparations - June 1954

In June 1954, *Labrador* was still undergoing completion work at Davies Shipbuilding dockyards in Lauzon, Québec prior to departing for her home port of Halifax and her first Arctic voyage. The first mission log entries began at the time.

Sunday, June 13

Pisasecki HUP-3 – SN 247, Photo Source: Canada Aviation & Space Museum Negative # 14458

Bell HTL-4 #301, piloted by Lieutenant (P) "Duke" Muncaster with Petty Officer (PO) Osgood as crew, departed from Canadian Naval Air Station (CANAS) *Shearwater* [3] (Halifax, N.S.) to join HMCS *Labrador* at Lauzon, Québec. Given the short range of the Bell and low speed, their flight plan included a refueling stop at Saint John, New Brunswick with an overnight stay at Millinocket, Maine. Good weather was experienced from Dartmouth to Lauzon making for an uneventful trip.

Monday, June 14

The aircraft departed Millinocket at 1000 for Lac Megantic, Québec where the aircraft was refuelled. It then proceeded to Lauzon, Québec,[4] arriving at 1500, and landed on the flight deck of *Labrador* (still in dry dock). The flight crew were met by their new commanding officer, Captain Robertson and Captain Dean, Port Naval Officer for Sorel, Québec.

Tuesday, June 15

Able Seaman (AB) Griffin and Berendt joined the detachment. Chief Petty Officer (CPO) W. "Bill" Shorten was still in Sorel locating helicopter stores but was expected that evening. The helicopter was not required this day. CPO Shorten arrived at 1530.

Wednesday, June 16

Since the helicopter was not required, a check of the "Recto-starter"[5] was conducted; it proved to be serviceable. *Labrador* left dry dock for

Québec City to take on fuel while Detachment personnel Osgood, Berendt and Griffin travelled to D'Iberville in the afternoon to obtain a travel advance.[6] Lt (E) "Bill" Maxwell arrived from Sorel.

Thursday, June 17

The ship slipped her lines at 0700 for the gun firing area near Grandes-Bergeronnes, QC. At 1100, the helicopter was required to transport ashore Mr. Rogers, a photographer with the Department of National Defence. In the evening, two officers were transferred to Trois-Pistoles to catch a train.

Friday, June 18

What was to be a long day commenced at 0715 with a transfer trip to Murray Bay. A Sikorsky HO4S-2, #963 flown by Lt Sandy James carried out calibration flights[7] after two trips to Trois-Pistoles. Calibration flights ceased at 1800 when an oil leak from the aircraft's transmission case was discovered, grounding the aircraft at Grandes-Bergeronnes. A request for technical advice from home base at *Shearwater* was issued.

Saturday, June 19

With no information on the problem received as yet, the HO4S was still unserviceable at Grandes-Bergeronnes, QC. *Labrador* remained in the area while the Bell was used for flights to and from the grounded HO4S. One trip was made to Trois-Pistoles, QC with Captain (L) J.D. Deane, Principle Naval Overseer.

Sunday, June 20

After taking Lt Maxwell ashore to Red Islet and back carrying one radio transmitter, the ship sailed for Rimouski, QC. There was still no word on how to repair the Sikorsky. A 50 hour maintenance routine was completed on the Bell in about four hours.

Monday, June 21

The ship remained in the Rimouski, QC area near Mont Joli trying to complete her high speed trials, but the engines were not cooperating and prevented her from attaining the designed top speed.

Tuesday, June 22

After the Bell picked up the transmitters at Red Islet and Grandes-Bergeronnes, the ship managed to complete two full speed runs while the ship's photographer took photos. Meanwhile, Lt James was still

awaiting arrival of the Pratt & Whitney Canada field representative to respond regarding repairs to the Sikorsky H04S.

Wednesday, June 23

Labrador entered dry dock, so no flying activity took place this day.

Thursday, June 24

Lt Muncaster and PO Osgood left for RCAF Station St. Hubert, Québec where the aircraft were to be based until the ship was commissioned.

Friday, June 25 to Wednesday, July 7

Note: Periodic flying took place from St. Hubert to Sorel and back, however no daily diary was kept for this period.

Thursday, July 8

The Bell and detachment personnel returned to HMCS *Labrador* from St. Hubert for the commissioning of the ship. The commissioning ceremony took place with the ship's officers and crew dressed in white summer dress uniforms, presenting a very impressive sight. After the ceremony, the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral E. R. Mainguy, OBE, CD, RCN was flown to St. Hubert in the Bell where a DC-3 "Dakota" was waiting to return him to Halifax.

Friday, July 9

Operationally, this was a quiet day with only two missions flown. The most exciting events of the day were all the commissioning parties which took place onboard.

Saturday, July 10

Identical routine to the previous day with not much work but much entertainment taking place onboard.

Sunday, July 11

On this date, *Labrador* sailed for Halifax, but experienced minor breakdowns in the ship's steering gear in a narrow channel of the St. Lawrence River, causing some panic. One flight was launched to bring onboard Mr. L. Simard, owner of Marine Industries Ltd., to say farewell to Captain Robertson.

Monday, July 12

Another photo flight was launched with a reporter onboard from "Weekend Magazine", followed by a reconnaissance flight to investigate what appeared to be fog ahead of the ship.

Tuesday, July 13

Poor weather precluded any chance of flying this day.

Wednesday, July 14

With the ship arriving in Halifax at approximately 0930, Bell 301 was flown ashore to *Shearwater* for a rotor blade change. The Bell was to operate from there while the ship was in Halifax.

Thursday, July 15 to Wednesday, July 21

Note: No diary was kept for this period as the helicopters were operating from Shearwater before rejoining Labrador on Thursday, July 22. The aircraft embarked were two Bell HTL-4 aircraft (#300 and #301), with pilots Lt Laurie and Lt Muncaster. The helicopter detachment was successful in getting permission to bring along ABSE McNaughton to look after the detachment's safety equipment. This brought the air detachment's manpower to nine people consisting of the two pilots, one CPO Plane Captain, one PO Air Rigger, one Leading Seaman (LS) Air Fitter, one Able Seaman Safety Equipment and three maintenance personnel.

The Voyage North - July 1954

Thursday, July 22

Lt (P) "Duke" Muncaster flying Bell 301 and Lt (P) Laurie flying Bell 300 left *Shearwater* to join *Labrador*.

Friday, July 23

On this day, the ship sailed after a delay of two days because *Labrador's* hydrographic sounding boat had not arrived on time. A photographer was flown onboard prior to leaving the dock to take photos as soon as the ship was underway. A mile away from the dock, it ran into fog, preventing departure photography.

On commencement of the voyage, *Labrador's* own daily newspaper began publication. It was called "Bergy Bits" after the small icebergs the size of a ship's lifeboat that sometimes dotted northern waters. It was

edited by the ship's Padre Thomas Jackson with contributions of content and cartoons supplied by everyone onboard.

Note: The following daily Detachment diary records, maintained by one of the detachment pilots, did not always contain the side numbers of the detachment helicopters or the details of every flight on a given day. The author has had to rely on the personal logbooks of each pilot when available for the details of each flight. For the period recorded below, the logbook of Lt Muncaster is not available.

Saturday, July 24

The fog lifted about 1000. Both helicopters, Laurie in 300 with Berendt as passenger and Muncaster in 301, were airborne at 1400 to practice homing on the ship using the ship's radar for guidance and also to practice using the radio compass and direction finding equipment to locate the ship. However, this proved unsuccessful ("busted flush" as noted in the diary) due in part to operational issues on the ship.

The area overflown was west of Stephenville, Newfoundland and by the evening *Labrador* had entered the Strait of Belle Isle.

Sunday, July 25

A Sunday routine was followed with the first icebergs sighted at 0300 hrs and quite a few more spotted in the Strait of Belle Isle and north of Newfoundland. No flying took place this day.

Monday, July 26

Four flights were launched to again practice homing on the ship using the helicopter's radio compass and the ship's radar. Laurie made two flights in 301 with Berendt to conduct homings on the ship and another with Griffen for a test flight. 300 required a new set of engine ignition points and an engine starter by the time the day was over. This was the only spare starter onboard with four months to go on this trip.

Tuesday, July 27

No flying took place due to all-day fog. Nearing the Arctic Circle, the seas were clear of ice because of the proximity of the Labrador coast. Temperatures hovered around the low 40's F (5°C). The ship's company was piped down in the afternoon.

Wednesday, July 28

A quiet day was experienced with little activity onboard. Laurie made one flight in 301 with Dr. Armstrong as passenger to conduct an ice recce (reconnaissance) flight.

LCVP "Albert" being loaded, Photo Source: Lt J. A. MacNeil

Thursday, July 29

The ship turned west into Lancaster Sound experiencing 4/10th [8] ice, with fog surrounding the ship for a good part of the day. At approximately 1400 hrs., the ship entered a giant ice flow with 10/10 ice coverage. Had fog not prevented flying, the helicopter would have immediately proven its value for ice recce. The ship turned and after 15 minutes steamed north, getting through the icepack to an area of about 1/10 ice coverage. The crew then went into a two watch system with eight hours on and eight hours off each.

Friday, July 30

The ship entered Lancaster Sound with still no ice but plenty of fog, which kept the aircraft on the deck.

Saturday, July 31

The ship arrived in ice-filled Resolute Bay[9] at approximately 0200. At 0900 the helicopter was required to find a suitable landing place for the LCVP[10] ashore. Fog caused the helicopter to divert to the local airfield, as there was a breakdown in the ship's Radio Finding (RF) beacon transmitter, preventing it from homing on the ship.

August 1954

Sunday, August 1

Laurie made two flights with Cdr Leeming as passenger to conduct an ice recce and survey of the beach at Resolute Bay. The helicopter was used again to assist the LCVP to and from shore in weather that was still marginal - one minute poor visibility and the next good.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Prim Ice Rece. beach at Resolute Bay	-
301	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Ice Rece.	-

Monday, August 2

After arriving at Croker Bay off Devon Island, a navigation beacon party was put ashore. *Labrador* then steamed for deeper water, returning in the evening when the helicopter was flown off to look for the shore party and guide the LCVP back through ice to the ship.

Note: Erecting navigation beacons was to become a constant activity for all the years Labrador sailed in Arctic waters. Some beacons were bright orange radar reflectors erected on guy wire-stayed poles. Others were eighteen-foot navigation markers made of four by four timber and built to a tripod design, with a base that could be weighed down with rocks. Weighing 750 pounds, the wooden markers required a team of twelve men to transport on land and could be erected by six men in about half an hour.[11] Some radar reflectors were even mounted in anchored dories to act as floating beacons marking shoals or other navigation points.

Even the ship's LCVPs had radar reflectors fitted so they could be guided back to the Labrador using the ship's radar and two-way radio communication with the LCVP's coxswain.

Tuesday, August 3

This was a busy day for the helicopters as the LCVP heading for shore was blocked by ice. Instead, a helicopter was used to land the shore parties and their gear ashore.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Lt Kelley	Prim rece.	-

300	Laurie	PO Smith & Mr. Loomar	Transfer	-
300	Laurie	Mr. Loomar, Shorten	Transfer	-

When the ship returned in the evening, both helicopters were used to retrieve the shore party and gear in a remarkably short time.

With both helicopters on their way back in formation, they spotted their first polar bear and gave chase, amazed at his speed for his size.

Wednesday, August 4

With the ship anchored outside Dundas Harbour (off Devon Island), her sounding boat surveyed the harbour and a party went ashore in the LCVP to erect beacons. Fog in the morning precluded any flying.

Lts Laurie and Muncaster, along with AB McNaughton, went into the water to test immersion suits. They lasted 15 minutes with no trouble at all, claiming they could have stayed in much longer. Lt Muncaster removed his mitts and found that three minutes was as long as his fingers could take. On replacing his mitts, his fingers soon warmed up enough to use them. The water temperature was 35 degrees to 35.7°F.

In the bay, the weather improved sufficiently to enable Laurie to do an aerial test of the radio on 300 with Commander Leeming as passenger.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Prim rece.	-

Cdr Penton, RN completed his fourth trial of the new Admiralty gyro-magnetic compass just before the ship reached Craig Harbour.

Thursday, August 5

The ship arrived at Craig Harbour on the southern tip of Ellesmere Island at approximately 2000.

Inspector E. S. W. Batty, RCMP was flown ashore in 300 by Laurie to the local RCMP Detachment and Lt T. "Tom" A. Irvine, CD *Labrador's naval*

hydrographer was taken on an ice recce to find a suitable anchorage outside the harbour.

Ice stretching across the harbour entrance from the mainland to Smith Island prevented entry. Mr. Loomer, along with a radar beacon to be erected, were landed ashore with Loomer left overnight and the ship then sailing for deeper waters.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Inspector Batty	Transfer - Craig Harbour	-

Friday, August 6

The ship returned to Craig Harbour this morning and the Captain was taken in the helicopter to survey the ice situation. Ice coverage was still 10/10, so the Captain decided to have the ship attempt to break through it. This proved futile as the ice thickness was eight feet and there were no openings or leads into which *Labrador* could push the broken ice.

With further ice progress blocked, the aircraft were used to give members of the ship's company a ride to look at the ice and the rugged Arctic land. About ten people were taken for these "tourist rides". Lt Irvine was also taken ashore with his theodolite, and both he and Mr. Loomer were returned at 1600.[12]

Shortly afterwards, an exercise was completed in taking onboard an "Eskimo"[13] family, their effects and their dogs. The Inuit man named Arreak (an RCMP special constable), his wife and "four of the finest looking Eskimo children ever seen"[14] were embarked. This family and all their possessions were being moved to Alexandra Fiord along with their dogs - seventeen in all! The Huskies were boarded last and chained to the anchor cable in the foc'sle. Someone suggested that the Captain's dog, a Corgi, must look tasty to some of these Inuit Huskies, so double chains were used to restrain them. CPO Reginald Player was to lose his unattended gloves when they were wolfed down by the lead dog the first time he went forward with water for these animals.

Labrador sailed at 1900 for the family's new home.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	None	Transfer	-
300	Laurie	Loamy	Transfer - Craig Harbour	-

Saturday, August 7

As the ship slowly headed for Smith Sound, bathyscaph and hydrographic readings were taken along the away. A normal Saturday routine was followed as there were no other commitments for the ship.

Labrador encountered ice at approximately 1800, so a helicopter was flown off to survey the ice conditions until an open water lead was found to allow passage.

Sunday, August 8

The ship arrived at Alexandra Fjord on Ellesmere Island at approximately 0100, at which time the Captain was flown ashore to make arrangements for unloading.

Quite a few ice recce trips were conducted this day to report any changes in the ice pack location and to ensure that the LCVPs would be able to enter the harbour. Arreak, his family and dogs were landed.

Due to the shallow waters, a marginal landing area and uncooperative ice and wind conditions, the landing of supplies could only take place in three hour periods on either side of high tide, resulting in a prolonged off loading process.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Alexandra Fjord ice recce	-
300	Laurie	Dr. Armstrong	Ice info	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Ice recce	-

300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim. ice recce	-

Monday, August 9

The ship was still engaged in the unloading of RCMP stores at Alexandra Fiord. Captain Robertson was taken on a muskox reconnaissance flight and eight of these Arctic-adapted animals were located. On the way back, an Inuit kayak with a harpoon was found on shore. The abandoned RCMP settlement at Bache Peninsula was also explored with RCMP Inspector Batty.

Tuesday, August 10

High winds and rough seas stopped all unloading of provisions to shore. The United States Coast Guard icebreaker USCG *Eastwind* (WAGB-279), a Wind Class icebreaker that was built for the USCG during the Second World War, rendezvoused with the Labrador. The American crew was quite impressed with the new HMCS Labrador, the design of which was based on their own Wind Class. Dr. Rose was flown to *Eastwind* in 300 by Laurie to consult with the Americans.

Eastwind sailed for USAF air station Alert at 1900 and *Labrador* returned to Alexandria Fiord to await more favourable conditions.

Wednesday, August 11

While the ship's company finished unloading all stores ashore, CPO Shorten and the "Buffer" went walrus hunting in a row boat, but had no luck. Too tired to row back to the ship, they went to the RCMP and begged a ride back to *Labrador* onboard one of the LCVP's.

The last two of the LCVP's were loaded with coal and a competition was arranged between the officers in one LCVP and Chief's with Petty Officers in another for a race ashore and back. The Chief's won by less than a minute; the winners were treated to an ale in the Wardroom and received a trophy made from an old porcelain mug and a battered tin plate, inscribed "*Presented by the Ellesmere Island Jockey Club*".

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Lloyd	Ice recce	-
301	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Transfer	-
301	Laurie	Burns	Search for CPO Shorten	-

Thursday, August 12

A Sunday routine was observed this day as the ship's company had worked the previous Sunday.[15]

Lt Laurie and CPO Shorten in 301 conducted an early morning ice recce of Smith Sound.

A photographer was flown in one of the Bells to capture a photo of the ship passing near an unusually shaped iceberg.

Helicopter 300 started to give trouble and was still unserviceable this day. The carburetor, induction distributor and carburetor air control were all changed. A stripped stud was found on the engine and repaired.

HMCS Labrador & Iceberg. Photo Source: DND Photo via Lt J.A. MacNeil Collection

The aero-engine technicians also changed the points on the port magneto and the spark plugs, resulting in improved engine performance.

Friday, August 13

On an ice recce flight this morning, the helicopter located a shortcut for the ship.

When started, the engine in 300 was still running roughly, so the condenser on the port magneto was changed. There was no improvement, leaving the technicians baffled. Meanwhile, the ship arrived in Craig Harbour to unload stores and erect a radar beacon.

Only transfer flights were flown to shore. Laurie made one transfer flight into Craig Harbour in 301, with Berendt as passenger, to pick up the ship's mail.

Saturday, August 14

On the way from Craig Harbour to Resolute Bay, no flying took place. However, oceanographic stations were conducted and the engine problems with 300 were squared away; it ran well enough during a flight deck check.

Sunday, August 15

The ship arrived at Resolute Bay. The resupply fleet - consisting of *D'Iberville*, *H.B. McLean*, *Gander Bay* and *Maruba* - were at anchor in the harbour approaches and unloading their cargos.

Aircraft 300 was test-flown and the engine ran satisfactorily at last. Numerous transfer flights were flown for mail and to the Canadian Coast Guard icebreakers *C.D. Howe* and *D'Iberville*.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Capt Robertson	To *D'Iberville* & *C.D. Howe* at Resolute	-
300	Laurie	Inspector Batty	Transfer	-
300	Laurie	None	To *C.D. Howe*	-

Labrador's hydrographic party had completed their triangulation survey of the harbour and were taking soundings of the bay.

Monday, August 16

Only two transfer flights were required, so the air crew had little to do. After unloading beacon parties, the ship sailed for Resolute Bay and was visited on the way by the *C.D. Howe's* helicopter with their pilot and his mechanic aboard.

Tuesday, August 17

Arriving in the Resolute Bay area, the ship sailed for the day to Beechey Island at Erebus Bay on Devon Island where it is thought that the Franklin Expedition crews may have spent a winter.

The air detachment crew flew ashore by helicopter and after having a look around, had some sport by firing their shotguns.

Lt Laurie conducted a transfer flight with Commander Leeming as passenger.

Wednesday, August 18

Still at Resolute Bay, the helicopter was dispatched to pick up the beacon party at Beechey Island, while Surg Lt Kidd was taken to C.D.Howe in the evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	None	Mail run	-
300	Laurie	Mr. Loomer	Transfer	-
301	Laurie	Surg Lt Kidd	To *C.D. Howe*	Evening

Thursday, August 19

The survey of Resolute Harbour and approaches having been completed, *Labrador* departed for Peel Sound in ice that was 10/10th coverage; the ship was unable to get close enough to shore to land the beacon and a fishing party. *Labrador* continued her scientific work but ran into heavy ice at the entrance to Peel Sound between Somerset and

Prince of Wales Island. As a result, she turned around towards Resolute but received a radio message from the "*Monte Carlo*", a privately chartered Boston fishing dragger manned by a group of American college students and their advisors.[16] They were engaged in plotting the magnetic north pole in the Baring Channel (at the northern end of Prince of Wales Island and about 30 miles distant from *Labrador*). The *Monte Carlo* was in danger from the ice pack - which had moved again - and Captain Robertson felt it was *Labrador's* responsibility to get them out.

An air search flown by Laurie in 301 with Captain Robertson as passenger failed to find the dragger.

Friday, August 20

Labrador waiting for the Monte Carlo at the Eastern end of Baring Channel; a plan had been developed to either bring the dragger through ice to Resolute or evacuate the crew by helicopter and leave their ship there for the winter. Unfortunately, fog rolled in at 1800 and spoiled plans for a rendezvous. Meanwhile, the ship lost radio contact with Monte Carlo.

Saturday, August 21

While the fog was persistent in the morning, it lifted in the afternoon and the Captain was flown to the *Monte Carlo* by Laurie in 300 while *Labrador* entered Baring Channel. The Captain returned with news that the *Monte Carlo's* master had consented to either being led through the ice or towed out of the ice pack. *Labrador* had to break her way through the ice pack to reach the *Monte Carlo* and then break the dragger out of the ice pack, which was accomplished by 2330. While in tow, *Monte Carlo's* crew of eighteen came onboard *Labrador* to use her showers and ship's canteen.

Sunday, August 22

With *Monte Carlo* secured in *Labrador's* stern towing notch, an attempt was made to tow the yacht but this was soon considered too dangerous in the prevailing ice conditions. Therefore, the yacht followed behind *Labrador* as her helicopters searched for open leads in the ice to ease the passage for the *Monte Carlo*. The rescued yacht and her rescuers arrived in Resolute at 2230 and here *Monte Carlo* was provisioned with water, fuel and other supplies, and advised to return to Boston, as *Labrador* could no longer be available to effect another rescue.

A quick flight was made ashore to drop off mail, collect supplies and make a (fruitless) check for incoming ship's mail. On return of the chopper, the ship left immediately for Dealy Island and all points west.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim. - Ice recce	-
301	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim.	-
300	Laurie	Squadron Leader Day	To Resolute Bay	-
300	Laurie	Squadron Leader Day	Transfer	-

Monday, August 23

In heavy fog, the ship was having trouble making passage through the ice pack. Since the fog remained all day, it was decided to declare this day a "Sunday Routine".

Tuesday, August 24

When the fog finally lifted at 1700 this day, the helicopters were flown on an ice recce; while navigating in the fog, *Labrador* had managed to get herself into a heavy ice pack. The aircraft were soon able to find a lead and guide the ship out to open water - mainly using radio communications.

Labrador Powers Through Ice to Open Lead. Photo Source: Lt (P) J.A.MacNeil

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Berendt	Prim. - Ice recce	-
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim. - Ice recce	-
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim. - Ice recce	-
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Prim. - Ice recce	-

In the five-day period from August 19 to this date, the ship had carried out trials of the caps (unknown term) on AGM 5 trials,[17] had run sounding lines and conducted oceanographic stations across Lancaster sound and Wellington Channel and had visited Erebus Bay and Beechey Island.

Members of *Labrador's* crew had also been flown ashore to inspect the graves of three crew members from the Sir John Franklin expedition, which were marked by old headboards inscribed with the names of the individuals and the name of their ship (presumed to have sunk somewhere in this area).[18]

Wednesday, August 25

The detachment helicopter flew an ice recce to direct *Labrador* the last 20 miles to Dealy Island south of Melville Island for a rendezvous with USS *Burton Island* and USCGS *Northwind*, both Wind Class icebreakers and *Labrador's* American sister ships.

On arrival, a magnetic survey party was put ashore.

In the afternoon, *Labrador* was unable to get close to the Burton Island to effect a personnel transfer, so *Labrador's* helicopters where used to transfer four of *Burton Island's* officers onboard to dine, including her Captain and Chief Scientist who came aboard to discuss the work ahead for all ships. Since this was the first meeting of American and Canadian

ships from the eastern and western Arctic, a mess dinner was held onboard *Labrador* to celebrate. As luck would have it, fog settled in and the American guests had to stay onboard overnight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Loomer	Misc. Transfer	-
301	Laurie	Capt Trickey	Prim.to *Burton Island*	-
300	Laurie	Capt Trickey	Prime. Transfer	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Prime. Transfer	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Prime. Transfer	0205

Thursday, August 26

After returning the Captain of Burton Island and Dr. Cameron to their ship, *Labrador* set sail for Prince of Wales Strait in 10/10 ice conditions, making progress through the ice difficult.

Friday, August 27

Fog condition kept the helicopters on deck while progress through ice made for slow going. A couple of ice recce flights were possible by noon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Ice recce	-

301	Laurie	Berendt	Ice recce	-

Saturday, August 28

The ship was still navigating in fog and heavy ice. An ice recce flight in the fog could not find an open water lead, but *Labrador* expected to be at Bernard Point the following day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Ice recce	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Ice recce	-

Sunday, August 29

Labrador reached Richard Collinson Inlet on the northern end of Victoria Island and found *Northwind* at anchor there, serving as a fixed radio beacon which was required for the survey work to be undertaken by both *Labrador* and *Burton Island*. This rendezvous provided another opportunity for the senior officers and chief scientists to discuss plans and operations.

Laurie made one flight in 300 to *Northwind* and returned with Cdr Leeming as passenger.

Monday, August 30th

The ship arrived at Russell Point on the Northeast tip of Banks Island where the Commander was flown ashore. The helicopter then went to look for Mr. Harvey, Blandford and his hydrographic party which had been marooned for three weeks because their tracked vehicle (a "Weasel") had broken down.[19] They were found in good spirits and Blandford was flown aboard while the remainder of the party were brought back with all their gear by LCVP. All triangulations were henceforth carried out onboard ship and the survey continued along Banks Island.

Tuesday, August 31

After fetching Mr. Loomer's expedition, helicopter 301 was test-flown after a clutch change, then both helicopters and pilots were used for triangulation work with the hydrographers. Using the helicopters, as many hydrographic stations were completed in a few hours this day as the shore party had done over two weeks on foot and using the Weasel tracked vehicle.

An RCAF Lancaster aircraft made a "mail by air" delivery using two canisters with parachutes. However, both parachutes failed to open.

One canister with mail landed with no harm to the contents, but the other was a 150 pound canister containing aircraft spares (among other things). The container's surviving content thought to be salvageable was an aircraft starter, but even that was deemed to be unusable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Loomer	Transfer	-
301	Laurie	Mr. Bladford	Transfer	-
300	Laurie	None	Collect mail (from Lancaster air drop)	-

September 1954

Wednesday, September 1

At 0330, Labrador was called on to free the USCGS icebreaker *Northwind*, which was caught near Peel Point in very heavy ice moving in from the North. Ice recce trips were flown continually for her until noon, when she finally managed to join *Labrador* and *Burton Island*.

At 1730, both helicopters went ashore to Russell Point to recover a cache left by Vilhjalmur Stefansson's party of 1913-18 for the National Museum of Canada. It was located and a large sled, books, compass,

small anchor and numerous small items that had been left lying around were brought back.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	CPO Shorten	Ice recce for *Northwind* in Prince of Wales Strait	-
300	Laurie	McNaughton	Ice recce for *Northwind*	-
300	Laurie	McNaughton	Prim. Transfer	-

Thursday, September 2

A party of seamen with tools and materials was assembled to travel ashore by helicopter and make a first attempt at erecting a shore beacon. The flat boards for the top of the beacon were left behind, while the remainder were flown in with two men in three separate flights.

The two pilots and the two seamen had the beacon erected at a location on top of a very high and prominent hill exactly one hour after the first aircraft was airborne. If a party by LCVP could have reached this far, it would have taken the better part of a day to complete this same exercise. After this beacon was erected, the helicopter returned for the hydrographers and then carried on with the high-speed triangulation work started earlier.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Bell	Trans. of Beacon	-
301	Laurie	Bladford	Survey of Banks Island	-

Friday, September 3

In order to avoid high winds and distortion of readings from heat waves[20] on the horizon, triangulation was initiated at 0600 and lasted until noon, resulting in a very successful day.

Flying Bell 300, Laurie and the hydrographer Mr. Bladford continued with their survey of Banks Island.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Bladford	Survey of Banks Island	-

Saturday, September 4

Flight crews and hydrographers continued their survey work the same as the previous day, except that now the pilots were questioning if they could apply for hydrographer pay!

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Bladford	Survey of Banks Island	-
300	Laurie	Dormoth	Transfer	-

Sunday, September 5

Triangulation work continued, but fog and low cloud required the helicopters to return to the ship by around 1000 with little survey work accomplished. Weather with sleet, fog and rain was forecast to last for a number of days, thus putting an end to further scientific work.

The *Burton Island* and *Northwind* came alongside. Socializing and partying among the three ships was quickly organized.

A high level conference was held to determine when the three ships would be leaving this area and what else needed to be accomplished before departure.

An electronic position indicator (EPI) was transferred from *Burton Island* to *Labrador* for later navigational use and the AGM5 trials. *Labrador* then set sail for De Salis Bay on the South coast of Banks Island. She had been tasked to carry out further oceanographic work en route.

Laurie and Bladford flying in 301 completed their survey work on Banks Island.

Monday, September 6

Given the parties the night before, Monday - thankfully! - proved to be a quiet day with only one flight to *Northwind* involving the return of personal items: caps and pilots' wings left behind during the parties as well as a few photographs recording the activities.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Bladford	Survey	-

Tuesday, September 7

Arriving at De Salis Bay on the southern end of Banks Island, the helicopters were used for triangulation and communications to help establish where three microwave stations ashore would be erected by two separate work parties.

A survival party consisting of CPOs Shorten and the "Buffer" (CPO Player) were landed ashore to spend twenty-four hours testing ration kits designed as Arctic survival rations for shore parties.

The helicopters had to be flown in the evening to search for Shorten; he was found walking along the beach pulling his dingy.

An LCVP was sent ashore to pick up the shore parties and their gear but the surf swung the craft broadside as she was backing off the beach and she quickly filled with water, with the craft and her passengers being washed up onshore. Helicopters were again required to effect a rescue operation for the survival party, microwave parties and now the LCVP

crew. This operation entailed the first night-flying for the helicopter crews since leaving Halifax.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	LCdr Irving	Inspection of main station at De Salis Bay	-
301	Laurie	PO Gordon	Misc. photography of Main Station	-
301	Laurie	CPO Player	Prim. Search & Rescue	-
300	Laurie	(Three passenger trips)	Prim. evacuation of LCVP	-

Wednesday, September 8

Cdr Leeming was flown ashore in the early morning to inspect the beached LCVP, but the weather was too rough to do anything about it this day (it would be three days before it could be salvaged).

Thursday, September 9

The helicopters flew equipment ashore to salvage the LCVP, but work had to cease by 1400 as the surf was washing water into the craft as fast as it was being pumped out.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Salvage of LCVP	-
301	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Salvage of LCVP	-

Friday, September 10

Weather conditions this morning were ideal to retrieve the LCVP; a salvage crew was flown ashore and was successful in pushing the craft off the beach and towing it back to *Labrador* by 0730. The ship was quickly underway for Sachs Harbour near Cape Kellett at the Southwest end of Banks Island to rendezvous with *Northwind* and *Burton Island*. Here a *Labrador* shore party erected the EPI for use by the two American ships, which were going to be operating in this area. This gave the Americans a fixed geographic point by which they could chart their positions with a high degree of accuracy. *Labrador* would work with both American ships in the Beaufort Sea, north of Alaska and Canada's Yukon for eleven days doing oceanographic work, bathymetric studies and a last AGM5 compass trial before heading south for Cape Prince of Wales, located in Western Alaska.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Dormoth	Test	-
300	Laurie	McNaughton	Trans	-

Saturday, September 11

A bag of outgoing mail was flown to the *Northwind* which was to deliver it to *Burton Island* where it could be forwarded home to Canada. *Labrador* was engaged in doing EPI runs testing the new AGM5 compass. Since the ship was again in open water it began to roll even with the use of the hydroplanes.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passenger	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Transfer to *Northwind*	-
300	Laurie	Capt Robertson	To RCMP at Sache Harbour	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Richie	To*Burton Island*	-

Sunday, September 12

An actual "Sunday Routine" was exercised this day and CPO Shorten was presented with an Arctic survival medal at "Divisions".[21]

Monday, September 13

The Bell 300 was unserviceable, requiring a rotor clutch shoe which had been scrounged from the spare parts stores onboard *Burton Island*. This was in exchange for aircraft batteries which were badly needed by the Americans, a good example of the informal co-operation which took place during these joint American and Canadian operations.

Even though the weather was rough with wind blowing at 40 knots, *Burton Island* came alongside[22] *Labrador*.

Tuesday, September 14

With 300 still undergoing the clutch repair, 301 was used to fly the Captain to *Northwind* this evening.

Wednesday, September 15

Another bag of mail was flown to the *Burton Island* by 301. Laurie test-flew 300 and found it to be unserviceable again.

The ship meanwhile headed north to survey the edge of the polar ice pack.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Dormuth	Test	-

Thursday to Sunday, September 16-19

Labrador nosed in and out of the ice pack near 75° N while keeping EPI control with the two American ships. No flying took place during this period.

Monday, September 20

As the ship headed for Cape Prince of Wales, both aircraft were flown for local flying practice. Lt Laurie flew 300 with McNaughton as passenger doing radar sequences.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	McNaughton	Seq. Radar Ex.	-

Tuesday, September 21

Labrador reached Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska where one personnel transfer flight to *Northwind* and another taking Dr. Armstrong ashore were completed. Incoming mail was also transferred from *Burton Island*. By early afternoon, the weather was too rough for flying and in a steady current, *Labrador* headed for Esquimalt.

Wednesday, September 22

LCVP being unloaded, Photo Source: DND

Surg Lt Kidd reported that the Engineering Dept.'s Chief Petty Officer (Chief Stoker), was seriously ill and suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. As the ship headed for Esquimalt at her best speed in high winds and rolling seas, the ship's medical staff, aided by volunteers from the ships company, began a life and death struggle to keep him alive through blood transfusions and oxygen therapy. *Labrador's* engineering officer, LCd. (E) A.H. Kerly, brilliantly improvised an oxygen tent from commercial oxygen bottles used in oxyacetylene welding. This provided the means to administer oxygen to the patient until the ship could dock at Esquimalt on September 27th and the patient could be transferred to the RCN hospital at HMCS *Naden*.

Thursday, September 23

On passing through Unimak Pass in the Aleutian Islands, a flight was made ashore by Laurie with Griffin as passenger in 300 to Cape Sarichef on the western tip of Unimak Island, to obtain supplies for treatment of the sick Chief Stoker.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Griffin	Cape Sarichef Unimak Island	-

Friday, September 24

Labrador continued at her best speed possible *en route* for Esquimalt with no further need of helicopter flights.

Saturday & Sunday, September 25-26

Labrador progressed towards Esquimalt at 15 knots on this last long leg down the western coast of British Columbia, expecting to arrive the following evening.

Monday, September 27

Labrador arrived in Esquimalt at 2000 where Chief Stoker was transferred with haste to *Naden* hospital. The ship was secured for harbour.

Tuesday, September 28

Both aircraft were flown in the local area.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Dormoth	Victoria, B.C.	-
301	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Seq.,Victoria, B.C.	-

Wednesday, September 29

A flight was required by Laurie in 300 to the RCN air base at Patricia Bay to see about a radio and to obtain maps for the remainder of the trip.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Osgood	Patricia Bay	-

Thursday, September 30

Both aircraft were required to fly Captain Robertson and the Executive Officer, Commander Leeming, to the Biological Institute at Nanaimo. CPO Shorten had to make a trip to Nanaimo by car with fuel and oil for the helicopters and, finding a long lost cousin, spent the week-end there.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Nanaimo	-
301	Muncaster	Cdr Leeming	Nanaimo	-

October 1954

Friday, October 1

Commodore Patric Budge,[23] DSC, MID, CD, RCN was picked up by helicopter from the *Naden* parade square and transported to the ship to call on Captain Robertson.

Saturday & Sunday, October 2-3

Nothing was reported in the log book, as the crew (except for those on duty) were likely given a well-earned week-end off.

Monday, October 4

Laurie flying 300 took his brother and a friend for a sightseeing flight in the local area.

Tuesday, October 5

No detachment activity reported.

Wednesday, October 6

Laurie in 300 made one transfer flight.

Thursday & Friday, October 7-8

The detachment was tasked with providing local helicopter familiarization flights to a large group of RCN Venture Cadets who had expressed interest in aviation careers. Over the two days, ninety-eight cadets were given quick flights over the base at Esquimalt; hopefully for the navy, many aviation career ambitions were ignited. The RCN, at this time, was actively recruiting pilot candidates to fly the ever-increasing number of aircraft and helicopters that were being added to serve the operational needs of RCN Squadrons.

Sadly, CPO Stoker's condition did not improve; by this date, he had passed away in the HMCS *Naden* hospital.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	46 Passengers - Several trips	HMCS Venture Cadets around harbour.	-

Saturday & Sunday, October 9-10

Nothing was reported in the log book for these dates, as the crew (except for those on duty) were likely given the week-end off.

Monday, October 11

Laurie flew the Captain and Commander to Moresby Island in 300 for a visit to the Captain's old homestead.

During the period from arrival on September 27th to this day, the ship's time in port was reported to be very hectic as reporters from various media outlets scoured the ship for exciting stories for Canadian readers and radio audiences about the ship's historic voyage. The ship also required repainting, routine maintenance on all her systems and re-provisioning for the remainder of the trip around North America.

Senior ships officers were fully engaged in rounds of meetings with senior RCN officers, civilian organizations and members of the scientific community.

Leave for the ship's crew expired at midnight this day in preparation for sailing the following morning on the next leg of her historic voyage.

There was time, however, for the ships officers and men to pull a practical joke on HMCS *Naden* base personnel. Under the cover of darkness, one of the 750 pound wooden navigational beacons was transported ashore by LCVP and chained to the reviewing stand of *Naden's* parade square where the Commodore of the Barracks would be holding divisions at 0800 the following morning.[24] *Labrador* was not to be forgotten by all who assembled on the parade square on Tuesday morning!

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Capt Robertson, Cdr Straith	To Moresby Island	-

Tuesday, October 12

Labrador slipped her lines at 0700 en route for the city of Vancouver and a historic rendezvous off Point Atikinson with the RCMP patrol ship *St. Roch*. The *St. Roch* was still under the command of RCMP Sergeant Henry A. Larsen who had twice commanded the ship through the Northwest Passage, once from west to east in 1940 to 1942 and the second from east to west in 1944.

"Painting Ship", RCMP Patrol Vessel St. Roch alongside HMCS Labrador - Esquimalt Harbour, Photo Source: Doreen Larsen-Reidel

St. Roch was on her way to be turned over to the City of Vancouver for retirement from service. Fortunately for the officers of *Labrador*, the *St. Roch* had just returned from Halifax and Victoria via the Panama Canal; this would prove to be a valuable source of information to the officers of *Labrador* in taking the reverse route back to Halifax.

En route to Vancouver, the helicopters flew oceanographers who were conducting current studies in Active Pass, a treacherous channel with very strong currents that made the passage of ships in this area one requiring accurate and careful navigation.

Labrador arrived in Vancouver at 1500, with the *St. Roch* leading the way into harbour. Both helicopters led the *St. Roch* and in tribute had the name of one ship painted on the floats of one helicopter and the name of the other on the second helicopter. On arrival, *Labrador* and *St. Roch* tied up alongside each other where *Labrador* personnel participated in the *St. Roch* retirement ceremony.[25]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Photo of Nadon & Beacon	-
300	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Prim. Vancouver & Photo & *St. Roch* escort	-

Wednesday, October 13

No entry in the Detachment diary was made.

Thursday, October 14

The air department hands were flown for a look at Vancouver from the air. Later in the day, Dr. Rose was flown to the University of British Columbia for a luncheon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Osgood, Berendt & Paupst	Sightseeing Vancouver	-

Friday, October 15

Captain Robertson and the first lieutenant were flown locally on a sightseeing tour. Leading Seaman Dormuth left the ship for *Shearwater* to undergo a course at the Shearwater Air Maintenance School. A small farewell party was held at the St. Regis Hotel in Vancouver.

Saturday, October 16

The ship sailed for San Francisco and both helicopters were launched to fly over Victoria and Esquimalt as the ship sailed past into the open Pacific Ocean.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Unknown passenger	Photo	-
300	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Seq.	-

Saturday to Tuesday, October 16-19

Labrador continued en route to San Francisco in weather that was too rough for flying.

Tuesday, October 19

Labrador arrived in San Francisco as scheduled where an appeal for blood donations by the City of San Francisco was met by 35 volunteers from *Labrador.*[26]

Wednesday, October 20

Captain Robinson was flown over to HMCS *Magnificent* (a Majestic-class light aircraft carrier) in San Francisco Bay by Laurie in 301.

Thursday, October 21

Aircraft 300's generator tachometer had become unserviceable, so one was scrounged from the U.S. Naval Supply Depot in Oakland. Meanwhile, a minor inspection was started on her sister ship, 301.

Friday, October 22

Labrador sailed for Balboa, Panama, so no flying was required. The weather *en route* was very hot and humid, prompting some crew members to rig hammocks on the upper deck for recreation purposes. One of *Labrador's* 3 inch 50 caliber gun sponsons, which had yet to be fitted with a gun, was flooded and used as a swimming pool to help keep crew members cool in the oppressive weather conditions.[27]

Saturday, October 23

The minor inspection on 301 was still underway when a hole was found in the gas tank requiring replacement of the tank.

Sunday, October 24

No activity reported.

Monday, October 25

A post-inspection test flight was flown by Muncaster in 301, while a photographic flight was launched in 300 flown by Laurie with Lt Maxwell as passenger.

Tuesday, October 26

Labrador was still en route down the West coast of the USA to Panama while the air detachment completed some local flying, with Laurie completing eight sightseeing trips in 300 and Muncaster flying others in 301.

Wednesday, October 27

With *Labrador* closing on the coast of Mexico, both helicopters did some successful beach combing to pick up coconuts along the way. *Labrador* then had to alter course farther out to sea to avoid a closing tropical thunderstorm.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Osgood	Visit to Mexico coast	-
300	Laurie	Shorten	Visit to Mexico coast	-

Thursday, October 28

Laurie treated five of the ship's cooks and stewards to a sightseeing trip around the vicinity in Bell 300.

Saturday, October 29

No flying took place this day.

November 1954

Monday, November 1

No flying took place this day. The ship's ETA for Panama was the following morning.

Tuesday, November 2

Before arrival at Balboa for the transit of the Panama Canal, both aircraft were flown. Bell 300 lost a fan belt in the air but fortunately the aircraft was only one quarter mile from the ship and Laurie was able to make an emergency landing safely back onboard. *Labrador* meanwhile arrived in Balboa and prepared for the canal transit.

The ship's operations report for this period reported below deck conditions to be very hot necessitating a change in watch rotation for engine room personnel and reducing the number of engines online to just two. Other spaces were so unbearably hot that cots and hammocks were rigged on the quarter and boat decks to facilitate crew rest.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	3 passenger trips	Near Panama Canal	-
301	Muncaster	Passenger trips	Near Panama Canal	-

Wednesday, November 3

No flying was required as the ship was in transit through the canal to Colon, Panama, at the Atlantic end of the canal. On reaching Colon, the ship set a course for St. George's, Granada.

Thursday, November

Labrador picked up her canal pilot, quarantine and canal measurements officer and proceeded to the canal company jetty in Balboa. Since it was Panama's Independence Day with associated celebrations delaying the canal transit, ships officers called on the local USN representative Rear Admiral Milton E. Miles who returned the visit by lunching onboard *Labrador.* That evening, a large reception was held on the flight deck for

Chinese, Italian and French officers from other naval ships in the area. Entertainment consisted of "kyaak (sic) paddling" and French Canadian "chansons". No flying activity was reported.

Friday, November 5

Labrador slipped her lines at 0700 and commenced the canal transit. At Pedro Miguel, reports of a landslide in the Contractor and Gold Hills area potentially blocking their transit had scientific member Dr. Ross excited about the potential of a detour around the Horn, where he could get more cosmic ray readings that far south.

After a short delay, *Labrador* was able to pass through a slightly narrowed canal onto Colon where they dropped the canal pilot and set a course for Grenada.

Monday, November 8

Both aircraft flew near Asura Island off the Venezuelan coast.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Berendt	Near Venezuela	-
301	Muncaster	Unknown	Near Venezuela	-

Wednesday, November 10

Prior to arrival in port at Grenada, both aircraft were flown ashore to arrange for the ship's arrival. All docks being occupied, *Labrador's* Captain decided to anchor for their time there - a fortuitous decision as later events would prove. The Lieutenant Governor of Grenada gave a cocktail party ashore that evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Padre Tom Jackson	Trans. into Grenada	-

300	Laurie	Unknown	Trans	-
301	Muncaster	Unknown	Unknown	-

Thursday, November 11

The Lieutenant Governor of Grenada and three other dignitaries were flown aboard for a luncheon. It was then that *Labrador's* officers learned that the most elaborate arrangements had been made for the ship's visit including many soccer and cricket games. *Labrador's* officer had to tactfully explain that the main purpose of the ship's visit was for much needed painting of the ship after so many months at sea and that the ship had neither a soccer nor cricket team. However, bus trips and swimming parties were arranged for the ship's company. One hundred and fifty Grenadians were invited onboard for a reception to take place on the 12th.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Local - Grenada	-
300	Laurie	Lt Gov. of Grenada	Local - Grenada	-

Friday, November 12

The air detachment flew in the morning. At the same time, the ship's main starboard engine room was flooded with potentially catastrophic results, as salt water had leaked into one of the two 5,000 HP main electric propulsion motors.

The flooding occurred due to the failure of a cast iron plug in the suction line of the emergency generator salt water booster pump. With salt water 24 inches above the deck plates, it caused a power panel short circuit and circuit breaker burning, flooding of the number one salt water pump and flooding of the starboard electric main propulsion engine.

Immediate fresh water flushing and baking of electrical panels and pump saved these components. The starboard 5000 hp main propulsion engine was also flushed with fresh water and then heated with a Herman Nelson aircraft heater from this date until arrival in Halifax.

Being handicapped by this event, it was decided to set sail immediately for Halifax as the ship would only be able to make eight knots on one screw. *Labrador* departed for home at 1545.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passenger	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Recce of beach for H.R.H. Princess Margaret	-
301	Laurie	Burnes	Mail run	-

Saturday, November 13

With the ship en route for Halifax or Boston - depending on the repair work underway to salvage the very expensive starboard electric propulsion motor - no flying was required during the day. However, a bright moon allowed Laurie to fly the Captain in 300 and LS Waring to be flown by Muncaster in 301 over the towns of Nevis and St. Kitts, two of the Leeward Islands as the ship slowly passed by these landmarks at night.

Sunday, November 14

At dawn this morning, the air detachment flew its last flight over land for this cruise, with Laurie taking Burns in 300 for a flight over the islands passed the night before. *Labrador's* destination was the tropical island of Anguilla, the northernmost of the Antilles Islands.

Monday, November 15

With a heavy swell causing *Labrador* to roll severely in the rough conditions, it was still undetermined if the ship would dock in Boston or Halifax.

Tuesday, November 16

Overnight, the ship received a message from HQ in Halifax to proceed to Boston at the Captain's discretion. Captain Robertson decided that his discretion was to divert to home port at Halifax. It was estimated that if the weather moderated, the ship could reach "Slackers" by Sunday. *Labrador's* new course now took her close to a favourite port for the RCN, the island of Bermuda, where the RCN's 880 Squadron were currently utilizing Kindley Field[28] (the airport there) for winter flying exercises.[29]

Wednesday, November 17

At 1430, the ship was 60 nautical miles south of Bermuda when both aircraft flew to Kindley Field to meet the SAG. It was discovered that the SAG and party were still at Norfolk, Virginia. The helicopter crews met the advance party under the command of Lt Phillips. The aircraft returned onboard at 1700 while the ship was 35 miles off Bermuda.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Paupst	60 miles to Bermuda & return	-
301	Laurie	Unknown	60 miles to Bermuda & return	-

Thursday, November 18

The Captain still required eight hours of flying time, so a flight was made to conduct a quick trip to see a passenger liner traveling 9 miles from *Labrador's* position.

The estimated time of arrival in Halifax was expected to be 1000 on Sunday, November 21.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Local seq.	-

Friday, November 19

No flying activity recorded.

Saturday, November 20

No flying activity recorded.

Sunday, November 21

Labrador arrived in Halifax at 1000. A flurry of congratulatory letters were received from the Prime Minister of Canada, Lieutenant Governors, private citizens and "religious crackpots" [*Note: context not explained in the log!]*. All letters were tactfully acknowledged.

Monday, November 22

VH-21 Detachment 2 was returned to HMCS *Shearwater* in the morning.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	none	To *Shearwater*	-

Monday, November 29

Labrador's crew commenced leave.

Tuesday, November 20

The Naval Officer's Association of Halifax visited *Labrador* for a lecture on the voyage which at the time of its inception and execution had been a secret. The lecture was followed by a tour of the ship.

December 1954

Flight operations with *Labrador* in harbour took on a routine of flight training and miscellaneous flights to and from the ship. No details of this period were available in the ship's operation report or in the available pilot log books.

Wednesday, December 01

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
301	Laurie	LCdr Bayes	Misc. Trans. *Labrador*	-

Monday, December 13

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
300	Laurie	Webster	Sequences - night	-

Tuesday, December 14

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
945	Bays	Laurie	Sequences - X Out	-

Thursday, December 16

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
945	Welsh	Laurie	Sequences - X Out	-
300	Laurie	Mackenzie	Test - *Labrador* - return	-

Friday, December 17

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
946	Laurie	Welsh	Prim. Search Lunenburg	-
945	Laurie	Fox Etchells	Stanley & return	-

Monday, December 20

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
946	Laurie	Muncaster	Sequences	-

Wednesday, December 22

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
946	Laurie	3 Passengers	Seq. Transfer	-
945	Laurie	Frayn	Sequences	-

Thursday, December 23

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
946	Laurie	2 Passengers	Sequences - Hoisting	-

Tuesday, December 28

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
945	Laurie	Welsh	Sequences	

Thursday, December 30

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
945	Laurie	2 Passengers	Hoisting	

DEW Line Task Force Command Centre, 1955

Post-1954 Refit

Labrador had been rushed into service immediately after her commissioning in 1954 and immediately left for the Arctic and the circumnavigation of North America. As such, there had been no time for the full sea trials which are normally conducted on a new ship to discover any defects and confirm the correct operation of all shipboard equipment. Therefore, beginning in January 1955, *Labrador* underwent an extensive refit to effect some 300 repairs and complete modifications to the ship [30] to correct defects identified after her construction, and to complete new or previously unfinished modifications to improve shipboard operations.

As *Labrador's* refit continued, a message was received by Canadian Naval HQ from the USN's Chief of Naval Operations asking that *Labrador* be deployed in support of an upcoming sealift operation being organized to transport materials, personnel and equipment by sea into the Eastern Arctic for construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line. The USN wanted *Labrador* to take full responsibility for sea lift operations into the eastern sector of the Foxe Basin area during the upcoming summer. This request was granted by RCN headquarters staff on the condition that scientific work would not interfere with operational requirements.[31]

With her refit completed, it became necessary to complete a proper sea trial due to the large number of modifications and the missed sea trials in 1954. Therefore, in the middle of May 1955, she proceeded off the coast of Maine to conduct the required trials.

On her return from sea trials, *Labrador* embarked eleven civilian scientists, two civilian technicians and a six-man diving team. These were in addition to her complement of twenty-five officers and two hundred and twenty-two crew members, six months of provisions and tons of special equipment such as navigation beacons and electronic equipment. She then prepared to set sail on her second Arctic voyage at 1500 hours on June 1, 1955.

1955 Mission

Labrador's primary mission for this voyage through to the end of September was to serve as the command centre for the DEW Line task force.

A secondary, but extremely important, component of this mission was to survey and chart the waters through which the task force would operate, as most of this area was either poorly or completely uncharted using modern marine survey methods. This involved the installation of Electronic Position Indicator (EPI) stations to provide fixed geographic points from which *Labrador* could plot her soundings of the areas under study with a high degree of accuracy. These surveys would be the basis of maps to be issued to the convoys of ships which would navigate these hazardous, ice-choked seas to the required construction sites throughout the Eastern Arctic.

Piasecki HUP-3, Squadron Number (S/N) 947, Photo Source: DND via Canada Aviation & Space Museum # 285487

The helicopters of HU-21, Detachment 2 would prove invaluable in supporting these tasks. They would be the eyes of the ship as she picked her way through ice packs and ferried personnel and cargo from ship to ship and ship to shore.

HU-21 Detachment 2 Formation for 1955 Operations

In preparation for this second voyage, HMCS *Labrador's* air detachment for this period was formed at HMCS *Shearwater* on May 9, 1955.

Aircraft

- One Piasecki HUP-3, Squadron Number (S/N) 947
- Two Bell Helicopter HTL-4's, S/Ns 303 and 302

Detachment Commander

- LCdr (P) E "Ted" Fallen

Pilots

- LCdr (P) Roger Fink
- Lt (P) John Laurie (*Note: Promoted to LCdr later in the year.*)
- Lt (O)(P) Harry Dubinsky (*Note: Initially qualified as an observer and then as a pilot.*)

Air Engineer Officer

- LCdr Bill Maxwell

Air Maintenance Chief Petty Officer (CPO)

- CPO Lew Turner

Air Maintenance Personnel

- Petty Officer (PO) Yool
- Leading Seaman (LS) G. Brooker
- LS Ross
- Able Seaman (AB)
  - Shand
  - McArther
  - Laszewski
  - Umphry
  - Smith

Pre-Arctic Cruise Preparations

Between May 9th and *Labrador's* departure for Hudson Bay and the Foxe Basin area on June 1st, flying and maintenance personnel of *Labrador's* helicopter detachment were busy preparing aircraft for an

extended deployment away from their home base, and providing for flight training and practice for the pilots assigned to the voyage.

The following details have been gleaned from log books of the pilots involved, operational reports and information from some of the people who were on this voyage.

Monday, May 9

Lt (P) "Bill" Frayn, assigned as the fourth pilot during this cruise, carried out local flying practice.

Tuesday, May 10

Frayn flew Bell 300 with Captain Robertson as passenger to *Labrador* for landing practice while Lt (P) Laurie flew HUP 945 to *Labrador* and completed local sequences.

Wednesday, May 11

Local flying was conducted at *Shearwater* with Laurie flying HUP 947 to practice hoisting; Bell 302 was also airborne.

Thursday, May 12

Laurie flew 302 with Lt (P) A. T. "Bud" Service onboard to *Labrador* which was anchored in Bedford Basin; he returned to *Shearwater* to pick up Lt (P) John Riley who was also flown onboard *Labrador*. Both Service and Riley were completing lesson plan number 26 of the 31 lesson plans required to qualify to fly solo in the Bell HTL-4.

Laurie also completed a compass swing on Bell 300 and then flew HUP 945 to check out Commander Bradley[32] on the HUP.

Friday, May 13

Local flying was conducted at *Shearwater* with 302 while Laurie flew Mr. Belliham to Chebucto Head in 300.

HU-21 Squadron students completed their training program on the Bell HTL-4's.

The advanced party of maintenance crew joined *Labrador* at the Naval Armament Depot for the sea trials cruise.

Saturday, May 14

Frayn was assigned as officer in charge of the detachment. Bell 300 was flown aboard *Labrador* for the sea trials cruise. Bell 300 made one trip for VHF[33] trials while en route to Rockland, Maine.

Sunday, May 15

No flying took place this day.

Monday, May 16

300 made one trip into Rockland, Maine and returned.

HUP 947 was flown by Laurie and Service in formation with LCdr (P) Fink in HUP 945 (Hayter and Dubé onboard) and Bell 302 in flypast rehearsals for the upcoming visit of the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Admiral E. R. Mainguy, OBE, CD RCN (the flypast was planned to take place on their return trip to *Shearwater)*.

Tuesday, May 17

300 made one flight into the Rockland area while 947 underwent a compass swing at *Shearwater*.

Wednesday, May 18

300 made two trips into the Portland area while 302 conducted local flying at *Shearwater*.

HUP- 947 and Bell 302 were flown in the flypast for the Chief of Naval Staff by pilots Fink and Hayter respectively with Laurie flying 945 with Service as co-pilot.

Thursday, May 19

Bell 300 was used for observation and photography during the ship's turning trials.[34] Laurie flying 966, an HO4S-3, with Lt (P) Muncaster as co-pilot, were also launched for miscellaneous duties and aerial photography. Since 947 was undergoing a minor inspection, Laurie flew HUP 945 with Lt (O)(P) Harry Dubinsky onboard for local sequences.

Meanwhile, 302 had flotation gear installed while at *Shearwater* and received an anti-corrosion treatment, while Fink flew sequences in the HO4S, 966.

Friday, May 20

300 was used for observation and photography of the ship's turning trials. Laurie and Dubinsky in 302 completed a compass swing[35] and 947 was flight-tested after its minor inspection by Fink with Munro as co-pilot. Laurie in 945 with Caslake on board conducted demonstrations using the HUP's cargo hoist.

Saturday, May 21

300 was flown to Canso, N.S. from *Labrador* while the ship was anchored in St. Margaret's Bay.

Sunday, May 22

No flying took place on this day.

Monday, May 23

As it was Victoria Day, no *Labrador* detachment aircraft were flown; however Fink and Laurie flew an HU-21 Squadron Sikorsky HO4S-3 to serve as a target for *Labrador's* radar trials.

Tuesday, May 24

The Detachment received a radio message that Dubinsky was not going to be with the detachment for this trip and that LCdr (P) E.A."Ted" Fallen would join as officer-in-charge of the detachment. HUP 947 was flown by Fink, with Cribb and Bourquin as crew, completing a compass swing in this aircraft. Laurie flew HO4S-3 number 966 with Sir Henry D. McLaren[36] and Snider to *Labrador.*

Wednesday, May 25

Detachment 2 was re-formed this day with thirteen officers and men. Laurie flew 947 with co-pilot Frayn for an hour of sequences at *Shearwater* while a maintenance check flight was conducted on 302.

Thursday, May 26

Local flying at *Shearwater* took place in 300 and 302 to practice water landings.

Friday, May 27

LCdr Fallen arrived at *Shearwater* and was flown in an HO4S–3 to Middleton, Nova Scotia to secure personal gear, while Laurie flew 300 in local sequences and tests.

Saturday, May 28

Fallen with Fink did an hour's flying refresher with HUP 947, plus some water work[37] and a few deck landings aboard *Labrador* in Bell 302. Laurie and Frayn were part of the ship's company undergoing watch-keeping training and, when relieved from bridge watch-keeping duties by one of the ship's other officers, were available for flying duties.

Sunday, May 29

No flying was conducted on this day.

Monday, May 30

300 was flown Laurie to *Labrador* and return.

Department maintenance personnel were onboard for storage of detachment stores.

Tuesday, May 31

This day dawned with the ceiling and visibility below visual flying rules (VFR). In order to embark the helicopters aboard *Labrador,* an "operational flying clearance" had to be approved. All helicopters were flown aboard (300 by Laurie while Fink flew HUP 947 with Smith as passenger) in little over an hour from take-off of the first Bell, with all helicopters and spares lashed down and secured for sea by noon.

Arctic Cruise Begins

June 1955

Wednesday, June 1

No flying took place on this day but spare parts and stores were secured and aircraft lashed down for sea by 1430. *Labrador* slipped her lines at 1500 en route to Hudson Bay and the Foxe Basin area to support construction of the Canadian/United States joint venture Distant Early Warning (DEW) Radar Line (Project 572).

Labrador would be required to erect navigation beacons, select and survey harbours, clear beach approaches of obstructions for landing of cargo and escort the United States, Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) convoys carrying the equipment and workers to construct DEW Line radar sites through ice fields.

A signal pistol and cartridges were air dropped on the flight deck by an HO4S-3 at 1500 as the ship sailed out of Halifax Harbour.

Note: This day also saw a change in the numbering system for squadron aircraft. All of the helicopter side numbers were changed from 900 series to 200, i.e., HUP 947 became 247 and HO4S-2 961 became 261. The Bells went from 300 series to 200; 300 became 200, 302 became 202.

Thursday, June 2

No flying took place on this day as the weather was unfit. Maintenance personnel spent the day tidying up the flight deck and the spares storage areas.

Friday, June 3

Bell 202 was flown in the local area by Fink, with Captain Robertson onboard, for proficiency flying while the ship was proceeding to the Strait of Belle Isle.

Saturday, June 4

The first "Bergy Bits"[38] were spotted on this cruise while the ship was carrying out hydrographic work in Strait of Belle Isle. The Captain requested a brief reconnaissance flight of some Newfoundland villages along the coast.

Sunday, June 5

Labrador arrived off Stephenville, Nfld. where both Bells were used to transport Captain Robertson and Lt Kelly, United States Navy Liaison Officer, to the United States Air Force (USAF) base at Harmon Field[39] near Stephenville.

At Harmon Field, they held meetings and visited the Base Exchange.[40] The aircraft were also used to transport four of the ship's company to Harmon Field for some local leave until Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Captain Robertson made a quick trip to New York for a three-day conference with rear Adm. R. Mason, USN, Commander of Task Force six (CTF 6), the convoy which would be carrying the DEW line materials, equipment and personnel. These senior officers discussed a wide range of operational issues regarding the upcoming sealift and *Labrador's* role in it.[41]

Monday, June 6

The ship was employed in doing hydrographic stations in the local area. No flying was carried out.

Able Seaman Air Fitter Class 1 (ABAF1) Shand was confined to sick bay for an indefinite stay.

Tuesday, June 7

Labrador was anchored in St. Georges Bay, Nfld. when at 0800 the HUP was prepared to fly off to Harmon Field, but the wind proved too strong (gusting 25 to 40 mph) for safe operation.

Hydrographic survey exercises were also cancelled due to wind and sea conditions.

Wednesday, June 8

HUP 247, flown by Laurie with Fallen as co-pilot, made two flights ashore. One was to take Chaplain T. L. Jackson and the Supply Officer, Lt Smith, to Harmon Field and return. A second trip was made to pick up Captain Robertson on his return from the Task Force conference in New York, Lt Kelly and the ship's mail.

Fink was on watch-keeping while Frayn was on flying duties.

Thursday, June 9

As the ship conducted survey work through the Strait of Belle Isle, no flying could take place due to the foggy weather and rough seas, with up to fifty icebergs showing at one time on the ship's radar screen.

Friday, June 10

ABAF1 Shand was released from sick bay and returned to full duties as the ship proceeded along the Labrador coast towards Hudson Strait.

Foggy weather and heavy seas containing bergy bits made conditions unfit for flying. At one point, Labrador had up to 50 icebergs again appearing as contacts on her radar screens.

Saturday, June 11

Fog present all morning lifted by noon, which allowed local flying proficiency in the two Bell aircraft to take place with Laurie flying Humphrey in 200.

Sunday, June 12

No flying took place this day, so Divisions could be held on the flight deck. The early morning fog slowly dissipated all day as the ship proceeded on course to Greenland, encountering the first loose pack ice.

Monday, June 13

Labrador carried out oceanographic survey work off the coast of Greenland, while proficiency flying took place for all pilots in the Bells and in HUP 247, the latter flown by Fallen with Fink as co-pilot.

A handling accident with the HUP took place which damaged the perspex cockpit windscreens, so an A-25 [42] action was started. Corrosion was found on 202 requiring a CNA-21[43] action to be started.

Tuesday, June 14

Departing the Greenland coast for Hudson Strait, sea conditions caused a moderate roll to start so no flying was possible. Some pack ice was encountered in the evening.

Wednesday, June 15

In fairly heavy ice, *Labrador* carried out hydrographic stations near Resolution Island with no flying

required. Arriving in Hudson Straight, *Labrador* came under operational control of the Task Force CTF6 commander.

Thursday, June 16

Laurie instructed all of the new pilots, including Fink, Frayn and Fallen, in aerial ice reconnaissance procedures; as *Labrador* was in the process of navigating through fairly heavy ice, Laurie had the benefit of a good instructional example.

Fog and drizzle were encountered late in the afternoon.

Aircraft maintenance personnel started a minor inspection on Bell 200.

Friday, June 17

Labrador attempted to reach oceanographic stations near the mouth of the Hudson Strait.

One ice recce flight using 200 was carried out in Hudson Strait by Laurie, with Captain Robertson on board, to observe the ice situation ahead of the ship.

The minor inspection was completed on 200 and it was deemed ready for a test flight.

Saturday, June 18

In poor weather consisting of wet snow, *Labrador* was still in fairly heavy ice approximately twelve feet thick while making her way up Hudson Strait towards Coral Harbour on Southampton Island. Arriving in Coral Harbour, the ship proved capable of breaking through the thick ice flows which covered the bay.

Once the ice was cleared out, *Labrador's* crew were engaged in erecting triangulation beacons ashore, beach clearance operations involving the ship's divers, and surveying and sounding the beach approaches - all in preparation for the supply ships which were due to arrive with materials for offloading ashore.[44]

Sunday, June 19

Surrounded by heavy fog, *Labrador* stopped in pack ice, so flying was precluded until mid-afternoon when an ice recce was flown by Fink in 200 with the Captain aboard, but no open ice leads were to be seen.

Laurie conducted a test flight in 202 with Ross as passenger.

Monday, June 20

Labrador was again stopped in pack ice when all four pilots were employed using 247 for ice recce in the Labrador Sea and the approaches to Hudson Strait until open water was discovered ahead.

This Strait usually remained filled with drifting ice until August when the outflow of ice from Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin stopped.

By 1230, the ship was underway. Just before dinner, another ice recce was conducted by Laurie in the HUP 247 with Fallen on board as co-pilot.

LCdr (P) Fink flew 200 for a miscellaneous air test.

Sunset occurred this evening without complete darkness, as at this northerly latitude, *Labrador* was now experiencing 24 hours of daylight.

Tuesday, June 21

With the ship lying off Cape Dorset Island on the southern side of Foxe Peninsula, Baffin Island, Laurie flew the Captain in 202 to the settlement of Cape Dorset.

On landing there, the Captain issued a request for the Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant (Surg. Lt) Derek Kidd, to be flown ashore, as the wife of the community's male nurse required medical attention. Laurie returned to the ship in 202 and came back with Surg. Lt Kidd to treat the patient.

Labrador took up oceanographic stations towards Salisbury Island while a Bell took the Geodetic engineer to the southern end of Salisbury Island. In the afternoon, 247 was used by Fink to fly the rest of the geodetic survey team and their equipment to the southern end of Salisbury Island, at the western end of Hudson Strait.

The survey team was picked up the next day, providing the first useful operational work for the HUP.

By afternoon, the ship was proceeding towards Mill Island between Foxe Channel and Hudson Strait.

Wednesday, June 22

Labrador was off Salisbury Island, Hudson Strait in 9/10 pack ice when 247 and 200 were flown off to pick up the geodetic engineer.

On landing the HUP back on board, the kitoon[45] broke loose from the hangar deckhead and was broken by the rotor blades of the aircraft, with no damage to the blades.

A misunderstood radio message from the Bell about the Geodetic survey team caused temporary panic onboard the ship until the message was correctly interpreted.

The remaining Bell 202, which had been flown twice this day for ice recce, aerial photography and personnel transfers (Ross and Humphrey) by Fink, was declared unserviceable when it was

discovered that it had a broken Sprag Mount.[46] As no spares were available, a Sprag Mount was borrowed from 200.

Labrador proceeded toward Digges Island on the way to Coral Harbour, Southampton Island.

Thursday, June 23

With the ship now off Digges Island, 247, flown by Fink and Laurie, transported Captain Robertson and Fallen to the Inuit village of Ivujivik, on the Québec side at the western end of Hudson Strait.

Laurie flew Surgeon Lt Kidd in 202 to the Inuit village of Ivujivik where a twenty year old Inuit girl was suffering from trichinosis and required urgent medical attention.

While the Inuit girl was being treated, the Chief ERA[47] was flown ashore by Laurie in 202 where the Chief conducted an inspection of the village's main power generator, which was used for radio communications with the outside world.

Numerous "Eskimo" stone carvings were bought and returned to the ship for resale in the ship's canteen to the ship's company. The ship then proceeded west towards Coral Harbour.

Friday, June 24

The ship was beset in 9/10 pack ice, so an ice recce was carried out in 202 by Fink, with Humphrey onboard, discovering that the only open water was adjacent to the south shore of Southampton Island in unsounded waters. *Labrador* remained in ice with a "Sunday Routine" being observed. A flight to Coral Harbour was considered, however, the Captain felt it was too far for an aircraft to fly into the shore base for the ship's mail.

Note: From 25 June to 3 July, HMCS Labrador and her helicopters operated near Coral Harbour on Southampton Island, where the Foundation Company of Montreal, prime contractors for the eastern sector of the DEW Line, had established a temporary-staging base.

The eastern sector stretched from the middle of Boothia Peninsula (Shepherd Bay) in the West, to Cape Dyer on the East Coast of Baffin Island, topographically a nightmare of precipitous mountains and rocky gorges.

Saturday, June 25

With the ship still beset in ice, the air detachment received permission from the Captain for Fink to fly 247 into Coral Harbour and retrieve *Labrador's* mail. It was a slow trip that proved to be uneventful but much appreciated by the ship's crew, who were very happy to receive mail for the first time in three weeks.

An ice recce of Coral Harbour disclosed 10/10 ice coverage with no signs of breakup.

Sunday, June 26

The ice surrounding *Labrador* was still 9/10 coverage, so an ice recce was flown, but no satisfactory open water leads were discovered.

The rotor bearing assembly for 200 arrived with the mail, but not the Sprag Mount which was expected in the next mail delivery and which was needed to make this aircraft serviceable again.

Monday, June 27

An ice recce was carried out in 202, but no good leads were discovered.

The ship received word of more mail in Coral Harbour, but the distance between the ship and shore was considered too great with the time remaining on the aircraft to make the trip and return before its next required inspection.

A further ice recce discovered an open lead in the ice which allowed the ship to proceed into fairly open waters.

Tuesday, June 28

The ship was now ten miles offshore from the Coral Harbour landing beach and proceeded to break up harbour ice allowing wind and current to clear out the loosened ice.

202 was sent ashore for mail in the morning while 200 was fitted with the new Sprag Mount which, being an older type, required modification before it could be installed. On completion of this repair, the aircraft was test-flown and, apart from a loose irreversible,[48] it performed satisfactorily.

Fink in 202 with Captain Robertson onboard made a late evening flight to Coral Harbour for mail.

Lt (P) John Laurie was promoted this day to Lieutenant Commander (LCdr).

Wednesday, June 29

The ship was now within five miles of the landing beach and ice that was broken up the previous day had disappeared to seaward.

The Bells were used in the morning to erect geodetic beacons. LCdr Laurie, piloting 200 with Bolton on board, landed beacons on the beach at Coral Harbour located on Southampton Island while Fink in 202 with Blandford aboard perform the same task.

The two Bells were sent ashore in the afternoon with Captain Robertson in 202 and in 200 Lt Kelly, USN was flown ashore by Fink.

Thursday, June 30

One of the Bells was sent ashore for Mr. Williams, a friend of the Captain. 200 was taken to Coral Harbour by Laurie to check rigging of a mast in the Air Force hanger, while 247 was used to carry mechanics and gear ashore for this purpose.

Nearly all ice had disappeared from the harbour, so the ship's boats were used to carry out a hydrographic survey of the beach.

Fink in Bell 200 took the Captain ashore for a visit to the Hudson Bay Company store at Coral Harbour.

July 1955

Friday, July 1

With the ship still in Coral Harbour, the two Bells were airborne in the morning. One of the Bells at the airfield spotted a fire in the Foundation Companies warehouse and stood by in case there were firefighter casualties, however no one was hurt in the inferno.

The two Bells were used to take the Captain and Dr. Campbell on a beach survey in the afternoon. While this party had been ashore, their pilot, Laurie, killed time fishing and caught a large 24" Arctic Char - purported to be one of the most challenging sport fishing species to land.

Saturday, July 2

One Bell was sent to the airfield at Coral Harbour to pick up Frank Kelly and the other was sent to the settlement to retrieve Father Schoque, an Oblate priest who was to conduct mass onboard.

Winds ashore, a distance of some five miles away, turned out to be twice as strong as they were at the ship. The priest was returned ashore and Surg. Lt Kidd was picked up from ashore after supper.

Note: Labrador's work area shifted to Foxe Basin for the remainder of July and the first week of August. Foxe Basin was a hazardous area in which to work as it was a body of water where hydrographic data was scanty and the waters only crudely charted.

Labrador's work in this area was also made difficult by "rafting" and "hummocking" of older ice carried over from one year to the next, making progress through this very rough ice challenging and dangerous to navigate.

Sunday, July 3

With the ship still in Coral Harbour, Fink in 202 flew Captain Robertson ashore for mail and to make arrangements for members of the National Film Board and their equipment to be brought out to *Labrador* by LCVP.

Sunday divisions were held on the flight deck.

A highly successful blade tracking adjustment on 200 was carried out on the flight deck.

One of the Bells was flown ashore to drop off a radio and mail to the anthropologist, Dr. Collins, at Native Point, while the ship proceeded southwest en route to Nottingham Island and Foxe Channel.

Monday, July 4

Labrador encountered 8/10 pack ice on the East side of Bell Peninsula, so two ice recces were flown as the ship encountered pressure[49] pack ice at about 2200 and stopped for the night.

Laurie suggested constructing the Electronic Position Indicators (EPI) navigation beacons aboard *Labrador* and airlifting them ashore by HUP helicopter. Plans were then finalized for airlifting seven tons of EPI gear to Cape Fisher if the ship's boats were unable to do so.

Tuesday, July 5

Labrador was still icebound in Foxe Basin while the shipwright constructed a davit on the forward corner of the flight deck to lift the heavy EPI gear from the quarterdeck to the flight deck for the planned airlift.

The HUP was flown ashore by Fink and Laurie, where they carried out cargo hoisting trials using three different types of nets, each carrying 500-pound drums of water to simulate the planned EPI loads. These wire rope nets were considered unsatisfactory, so the Boatswain (Bos'n) was instructed to make six more 8' x 8' nets.

The two Bells were landed on an adjacent ice flow during hoisting operations involving the HUP to ensure their safety during these maneuvers.

Wednesday, July 6

In the morning with the ship still icebound, Fink in 202, with Commander Leeming onboard, carried out an ice recce and discovered an open water lead about ten miles ahead, which allowed the ship to get underway at noon. Further leads were discovered at about 1800 and the ship proceed in more favourable water conditions west towards Cape Fisher on Southampton Island to erect the EPI station.

Thursday, July 7

Labrador was icebound in the morning at position 0900, with Cape Fisher thirty-five miles away, when the Captain was taken ashore by Laurie in 200 for a preliminary selection of the EPI site.

A USN P2V Neptune[50] was overhead at about 1000 and passed an ice recce report of Foxe Basin by radio to the ship.

The ship got underway again about noon and at 1600, all helicopters were used in transferring personnel ashore for the final selection of the EPI site.

The HUP and a Bell flew ashore to Cape Fisher. 247, flown by Fink and with AB Shand onboard, transported Mr. Forster, while Laurie in 200 carried Captain Robertson.

One flight took Mr. Schatzberg for final selection of the EPI site. "Operation Shotgun", the airlift of EPI equipment to the selected site, was scheduled to get underway at 0800 the following day.

Friday, July 8

Flying started at 0830 with both the Bells and 247 used to move personnel and cargo ashore.

Laurie in the HUP took the first sling load ashore; it threatened to become unmanageable but it was successfully dropped ashore. From then on, everything went smoothly. All material including tents, technical equipment, tide gauge, building materials, generators, fuel, food, and radio mast - needed to create the station and supply the men who would be operating it - were delivered ashore.

By 1700, the Atwell Hut,[51] most of the EPI station, a tide gauge and 15 personnel, including the National Film Board (NFB) camera crew, had been successfully airlifted ashore. This operation could have been completed this day but was delayed until the next day, thereby allowing the crew ashore to get caught up on the erection of the

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Shand	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
247	Fink	Osgood	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
247	Laurie	8 Passengers	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
247	Laurie	None	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-

Saturday, July 9

The remainder of the EPI gear, fuel, food, etc., was taken ashore and at about 1700, the EPI construction crew and the National Film Board personnel were brought back on board.

A total of 29,000 pounds of cargo and personnel were carried ashore in this two day period, requiring 20 flying hours. Laurie worked the HUP very satisfactorily, taking nine loads ashore using the external cargo bay sling, with the heaviest load being 600 pounds.

Construction of the of the Atwell Hut and the EPI station had required 290 man-hours.

At 1800, a message was received from *Shearwater* regarding the need for a tail rotor hub inspection, which grounded both Bells. However, by 2200 aircraft 200 had already been examined and declared serviceable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Shand	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
247	Laurie	9 Trips	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-

Sunday, July 10

Bell 202 was inspected for the tail rotor hub fault and also found to be serviceable. A further minor inspection commenced on 202 in the afternoon and was finished by 1900.

The HUP was cleaned and "Simonized" to protect it from saltwater corrosion.

The ship meanwhile proceeded toward Cape Queen on Foxe Peninsula, Baffin Island, doing oceanographic stations *en route*, with ice coverage about 5 to 8/10. The intent of this passage was to establish another EPI station in the vicinity of Cape Queen.

Monday, July 11

Labrador arrived about 10 miles off Cape Queen, Baffin Island in the morning. Laurie flew an ice recce flight in Bell 202 with Mr. Schatzberg to locate an EPI site. 202 was flown again in the afternoon and found satisfactory.

Fink also flew an ice recce in 202 with Smith on board to the Cape Queen vicinity.

The air detachment was granted a Sunday routine (however, one watch was required on duty to support the Bell flights).

A decision was reached to airlift an EPI station ashore on Tuesday in the vicinity of Cape Enauolik on Baffin Island, on the opposite side of Foxe Channel.

Tuesday, July 12

Heavy fog didn't lift until noon, so the ship was unable to approach shore closer than 8 miles for the EPI lift. Operation "Shotgun II" was underway after lunch with all aircraft deployed. Laurie flying the HUP took cargo to Wildbird Islands.

The completed Atwell Hut and part of the EPI gear were ashore by 1900 as well as sufficient personnel to start EPI erection; Mr. Forrester was also landed.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	MacArther	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Islands	-
247	Fink	MacArther	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Islands	-
247	Laurie	4 Passengers	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Islands	-

Both of these EPI stations were manned by Canadian Naval personnel, who kept their beacons working while living in uncomfortable and isolated facilities.

Wednesday, July 13

Flying this day started at 0830; the remainder of the EPI gear and part of the diesel oil supply were moved ashore, with flying completed by 530. Laurie flying the HUP took MacArther and Turner to Wildbird Islands. The airlift could have been finished by flying until 2000, but the Captain decided to complete the task on Thursday.

Thursday, July 14

The remainder of the diesel fuel and fresh provisions, and a spare EPI antenna, were flown ashore. The EPI station was completed and functioning, so all construction personnel were transferred back onboard by 1230. The ship then got underway toward Hall Beach (Site 30), Melville Peninsula, located at the North end of Foxe Basin, 400 miles north of Coral Harbour.

Laurie flying the HUP took Commander Leeming to Wildbird Islands;

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Turner	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Islands	-
247	Laurie	2 Passengers & Leeming	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Islands	-

Friday, July 15

With the ship beset in 9/10 close-packed ice from 2000 Thursday, word was received of extensive

damage from rain and wind to the EPI station at Cape Fisher. The ship got underway at 0800 proceeding towards Cape Fisher to effect EPI repairs.

The air department was granted a "make-and-mend"[52] for the great effort it had made in conducting the two previous airlifts to this site.

A Bell was flown ashore at midnight to survey the EPI station damage and find out what repairs would be required. The station's tents and the EPI tower had been knocked down by the strength of a passing storm. All material requiring repair was brought back on board, reinforced and returned to shore for reinstallation.

Saturday, July 16

Two radio antennae, plus the personnel required to erect them and to repair a diesel generator, were flown to the Cape Fisher EPI station by

Fink, making three trips in Bell 200 with PO Yool and Commander Leeming being two of his passengers. The station was repaired by 1400 and by 1700 it had been calibrated.

The ship then got underway for Hall Beach arriving at 1800. Heavy ice was encountered *en route*, but no ice recce was requested from the Captain.

Sunday, July 17

The ship's company assembled for divisions and church services on the flight deck.

Considering that the ship was making slow progress in heavy ice, it was surprising to the air detachment that no ice recce was requested by the Captain and by 2200 the ship was again beset in ice.

Monday, July 18

The air department was turned out to apply a coat of nonskid paint to the forward end of the flight deck. The ship continued in heavy, hummocked ice requiring a recce to be flown by Fink in 200 with Cdr Leeming onboard; shortly they found an open shore lead about 35 miles to the West.

Tuesday, July 19

Labrador was again beset in heavy ice and launched an ice recce flight flown Laurie in 200 with the Captain onboard. A reasonable lead was discovered by about noon, but the ship was unable to proceed.

A demolition team laid charges in an attempt to break up the ice, which freed the ship and allowed her to get underway at about 1800. The helicopter was used as a "follow-me Jeep"[53] in the 9/10 close ice.

Laurie made two ice recce flights in 200, one with Captain Robertson and another with Shand aboard.

Wednesday, July 20

Labrador found an ice-free lead close to shore and managed to make good headway, but encountered heavy rafted ice and suspected an unmarked shoal.

A Bell was flown over the suspect area and by use of the traditional lead sounding line, it was positively identified to be about five fathoms deep.

Captain Robertson was flown ashore to an Inuit winter camp. Later, he and the LCdr Lloyd, the First Lieutenant, were flown into Barrow Falls, Melville, Peninsula to view the magnificent scenery and ruins at Cape Wilson before returning to the ship (with no fish) at midnight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	LCdr Lloyd	Prim. ice recce	-
202	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Inuit winter camp & Cape Wilson ruins	-

Thursday, July 21

HUP 247, piloted by Fallen, was flown to Hall Beach to deliver and pick up mail - very welcome after a three-week period without mail. One of the Bells was used to fly Mr. Blandford ashore to survey sites for day-marker beacons.

Friday, July 22

Another milestone in helicopter-icebreaker operations was achieved this day when large "Day Mark" beacons were erected on the flight deck, picked up by the HUP (flown by Laurie) and transported ashore, where Fink, a Bell pilot, guided the placing of the beacon into position.

These beacons weigh approximately 750 pounds and stood 15 feet high with a triangular base measuring 8' x 8' x 8'. Laurie was commended for his work with the HUP!

The Bells were employed in transfer and liaison work throughout the remainder of this day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passenger	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Mr. Forrest	Misc. Transport Site 30	-
247	Laurie	None	Beacon external load air lift - 4 trips	-
247	Laurie	None	Beacon external load air lift - 2 trips	-

Saturday, July 23

Because of low visibility due to rain, snow and with expected high winds, a planned trip by 247 to Site 29, Scarpa Falls, Melville Peninsula, a distance of 60 miles, was canceled.

The HUP was used in the afternoon to bring the following persons aboard for a conference with the Captain: Col. Cranshaw, USAF, officer in charge of the military airlift for Eastern DEW Line construction, Mr. Loman, Senior Representative, Western Electric Company, Eastern Section Dew Line and Mr. Mullins, District manager for the Foundation Company of Montreal, prime contractor for this section of the DEW Line. These visitors were flown ashore to Hall Beach later in the day.

Sunday, July 24

As the weather was still marginal, no flying could take place.

Monday, July 25

The weather was poor in the morning, but the two Bells were used in the afternoon to ferry Mr. Blandford and Mr. Boon ashore so they could erect magnesium beacons, which were to be used for a survey of the shore camp and beach area. These beacons were erected by 1730.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Mr. Bourton	Beacon Party Site 30	-
202	Fink	Mr. Bourton	Beacon Party Site 30	-
200	Fink	Mr. Blandford	Beacon survey	-

Tuesday, July 26

The two Bells were used all day for hydrographic survey work and really proved their worth according to the surveyors Mr. Blandford and Letice; they stated that it would have taken weeks to do the job without them.

The HUP was used to transport a camp supervisor from Hall Beach, where they also picked up some welcome mail and delivered the supervisor to Site 29 at Scarpa Lake. Later, Surg. Lt Kidd was flown ashore to attend to a worker with suspected heart failure.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Chaisson, Boulton	Hydrographic survey Site 30	-
202	Fink	Boulton	Hydrographic survey Site 30	-
202	Fink	MacArther	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Laurie	Letice, Mr. Blandford	Hydrographic survey Site 30	-
200	Laurie	Letice, Mr. Blandford	Transfer survey	-

Wednesday, July 27

The Bells were used to help in the final stage of the land survey and in liaison with the sounding boats and divers who were conducting an offshore underwater survey. The aircraft also took the Captain ashore and flew a photographic trip for aerial coverage of the survey area.

Fallen and Laurie flew Surg. Lt Kidd in 247 to the Inuit village of Igloolik Island in search of Inuit art treasures, but found that male members of the community were hunters and had little time for works of art. Surg. Lt Kidd held sick parade and found the village inhabitants in reasonably good health.

Father Fournier, a Catholic priest, was flown back to Site 30 and Surg. Lt Kidd held sick parade at Site 30, finding all personnel there to be in reasonably good condition.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Chaisson, Blandford	Hydrographic survey Site 30	-
200	Fink	PO Vool, Capt Robertson	Misc. Trans. & Photo Site 30	-
247	Laurie	Fallen, Kidd	To Igloolik Island	-

Thursday, July 28

Various transfer trips were flown to Site 30 with the Bells and the HUP. A drum of aircraft lubricating oil was "external hoist-delivered" to the Foundation Company to be airlifted to a grounded Norseman at Keith Bay (Site 27) on Simpson Peninsula.

In all, *Labrador* spent eight days at Hall Beach clearing landing areas, sounding anchorages, erecting the navigational beacons and preparing charts for the expected convoy of supply ships.

However, it was not all work and no play. The ship's company won a softball game in a closely fought match against a team from the civilian contractor, the Foundation Company of Canada, which ended in a score of 24 to 23.[54] The conditions for the game were a bit rough, with slippery footing underneath and a rough field that consisted of two ponds in centre field and the rim of a lake on the edge of left field.[55]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Capt Robertson, Cdr Webb	Misc Cargo Trans. Site 30	-
200	Laurie	R.C. Priest	Trans. Site 30	-

Friday, July 29

The two Bells were used for liaison flights to Site 30 and three Marconi representatives were brought back onboard for a communications conference.

The Captain was taken ashore about 1830 to deliver up-to-date charts of the landing beach.

The ship got underway at 1900 to resupply the Cape Fisher EPI station.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Capt Robertson, 3 Pass.	Misc.Trans. Site 30	-

Saturday, July 30

With the ship in 8/10 winter ice and having to zigzag, the sounding line was abandoned as the ship made for a suspected shore lead in the ice to Southward. The weather was unfit for flying with rain and heavy fog restricting visibility to 200 yards.

August 1955

Monday, August 1

The ship was in heavy, hummocked ice with 9/10 close-packed coverage, and became beset in the afternoon requiring an ice recce flown at 2100, which identified a good open water lead about 2 miles from the ship.

Tuesday, August 2

The Bells were used for ice recces. A new system was used whereby the incoming officers of the watch were flown on ice recces just prior to taking over their watch, giving them a better feel for the ice conditions in the area ahead of the ship. Laurie flew two of these flights with 200.

A decision was made to start the air replenishment of EPI Station Grenfell at midnight but by 0030, it was decided that due to the cloud cover, it would be too dark for external cargo hoisting operations.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Capt Robertson,	Prim. ice recce	-
200	Fink	Lt Kelly, USN	Prim. ice recce	-

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Laurie	Creel	Prim. ice recce	-
200	Laurie	Ruse	Prim. ice recce	-

Wednesday, August 3

One Bell and the HUP were used for the resupply of the EPI Stations located on Wildbird Island, Foxe Basin, Baffin Island. Four barrels of fuel and about 1500 pounds of supplies were taken ashore, and all EPI personnel were also brought aboard "for a shower, pay, haircut and break from a lonely existence"[56] and then returned to their isolated shore station.

This operation was completed by 1130 when a minor inspection was commenced on Bell 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Umphry	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Island	-
247	Laurie	Brooker	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Island	-

Thursday, August 4

With the ship in rain, fog, low cloud and visibility of approximately 200 yards at Cape Fisher, the weather was unfit for helicopter or boat resupply operations to the EPI station.

The minor inspection on Bell 200 was completed.

Friday, August 5

The ship conducted a route survey of a shore lead to the North towards Winter Island, off the South coast of Melville Peninsula.

Bell 200 was test-flown and found to be serviceable when word was received that USS *Edisto's* Bells were grounded because of tail rotor hub faults that had been cleared July 10 on *Labrador's* two Bells. *Labradors* officers considered sending one Bell and crew to *Edisto* to assist with this maintenance issue on their helicopters, but the idea was discarded.

Saturday, August 6

On return to the EPI station at Cape Fisher, it was discovered by Laurie flying 202 with Turner on board that the shoreline was completely blocked by ice, so the ship's boats were unable to carry out the resupply operation. Consequently, the Bells and the HUP were used to complete the resupply of this station.

Ten barrels of fuel plus about 1500 pounds of provisions were taken ashore and these operations were completed by 1330, with the ship then underway towards Coral Harbour.

The HUP was started on its first shipboard minor inspection.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Brooker	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
202	Fink	Turner	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-
202	Laurie	Umphry	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Island	-
202	Laurie	Turner	Cargo Trans. Wildbird Island	-
247	Laurie	Brooker	Cargo Trans. Cape Fisher	-

Sunday, August 7

Although the ship was on a Sunday routine, the aircrew continued the minor inspection on HUP 247 in weather with heavy drizzle and fog, but with little ice in the Hudson Strait area.

Monday, August 8

A Bell was able to return with mail at 0730, with *Labrador* arriving in Coral Harbour at 0800.

The two Bells were used throughout the day for liaison work, carrying mail ashore and conducting search and rescue flights.

Bell 200 flown by Fallen with CPO Lew Turner as crew and Bell 202 flown by Laurie with Surg. Lt Kidd were deployed to Coral Harbour in search of a lost American soldier who had too much to drink and got lost when he went for a walk on the tundra. He was located at about ten in the evening, a little worse for wear but very happy to have been found.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Umphry	Misc Beacon Party Coral	-
200	Laurie	None	Mail - Coral Harbour	-
202	Laurie	3 Passengers	Transfer	-
202	Laurie	Dr. Kidd	Prim. S & R	-
202	Laurie	Dr. Kidd	Prim. S & R, soldier found at 2200hrs	-

Tuesday, August 9

Labrador had the US Navy surveying ship USS *Pursuit* (AGS-17) in company this day, heading for Chesterfield Inlet to conduct a harbour survey. It was a rough trip through shallow waters in poor weather with heavy rain, fog, 45 knot winds and an ocean swell running; consequently no flying was carried out. An EPI station was transferred to *Pursuit.*

Extra lashings were put on all aircraft to secure them to the flight deck while *Labrador's* crew was given a make-and-mend.

Bell 200 was declared unserviceable with an undiagnosed fault.

Wednesday, August 10

The weather was still bad but improving towards evening as *Labrador's* sounding boat *Pogo* was detached to conduct the harbour survey of Chesterfield Inlet, off the Canadian mainland.

Labrador meanwhile proceeded towards Cape Kendall on Southampton Island.

Thursday, August 11

Bell 200 had its blades tracked and no discrepancy was found, but work continued to trace the fault which had caused it to be unserviceable.

The minor inspection on HUP 247 continued with the engine work completed and the engine reinstalled.

With the ship located about 12 miles off Cape Kendall, the Captain was flown ashore in 202 for a reconnaissance to find a site from which to conduct an Astro fix. The Astro party was not sent ashore, as the Captain was reluctant to put them ashore with *Labrador* having only one helicopter serviceable. A reconnaissance of this site found it also unfit to land personnel using the LCVP. This was the first commitment that HU-21 Squadron, Detachment 2 was unable to meet on this cruise.

Bell 200 was test-flown in the late afternoon and found serviceable. Trouble appeared to have been an accumulation of faults in the cyclic control linkage and a need for adjustment of the dynamic stop cables.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Capt Robertson	Misc Beacon Party Coral	-
202	Fink	Turner	Misc Air Test	-

Friday, August 12

With the ship off Chesterfield Inlet, the Captain was flown ashore in the Bell.

The HUP's blades were cleaned, polished and reinstalled.

The LCVP was sent ashore where it had an engine failure and had to be towed back by *Pogo, Labrador's* hydrographic sounding launch.

Once the ship's boats were hoisted onboard, *Labrador* headed for Coral Harbour.

Saturday, August 13

At 1500, the ship arrived at Coral Harbour and a Bell was used for liaison flights ashore. Laurie took the mail ashore at 2300 and discovered that he had four passengers to bring back onboard, which took until 0200 as only one passenger could be carried per flight. This was the first night-flying of the cruise and the ship got underway at 0230 for a rendezvous with a USN convoy in Evans Strait, southeast of Coral Harbour between Southampton and Coats Islands.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Laurie	None	Trans. Coral	-
200	Laurie	Major Burges	Trans. *Lindenwall*	-

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Laurie	Back, Markham, Crocker, Kelly & 4 Others	Trans. Coral & Mail	-

Sunday, August 14

The Coral Harbour convoy, consisting of the USN icebreaker USS *Edisto* (AGB 2) and three cargo ships, rendezvoused with *Labrador.* The convoy was then formed into two columns, HMCS *Labrador* leading one column and the USS *Edisto* the other, to allow for maneuvering room among the convoy in the scattered ice. The two icebreakers then commenced escorting the convoy through Foxe Basin *en route* to Hall Beach, Site 30. The latest ice recce suggested a good possibility of getting through the prevailing ice pack to this site.

The Bells were used for ice recces, as well as mail and personnel transfers between ships, as the ships fought their way north through the pack ice. Some stores for the air department which arrived by ship in this convoy were flown to *Labrador's* hangar.

This 440 nautical mile (NM) voyage was to take seven days and during one 24-hour period the convoy only covered eight miles due to ice conditions.

Monday, August 15

The Coral Harbour convoy made good time in the vicinity of Cape Fisher with all ships in a single column and still in a loose formation to allow maneuvering room in scattered ice.

The Bells continued the routine of an ice recce before each bridge watch, giving the incoming officer of the watch a better idea of the ice conditions ahead of the ship.

The minor inspection was completed on the HUP and the aircraft was successfully test-flown and found serviceable.

Mr. Schatzberg was flown to the EPI station at Cape Fisher in the afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Umphry	Prim. ice recce	-
202	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Prim. ice recce	-

Tuesday, August 16

The convoy proceeded in 4/10 to 6/10 ice coverage with small ice flows and blocks of ice.

Extensive ice recces were flown by the helicopters to find the best possible route through the ice for the unstrengthened freighters of the convoy.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Prim. ice recce	-
200	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Prim. ice recce	-
200	Laurie	Lt Shenker	Prim. ice recce	-

Wednesday, August 17

Ice recces were conducted by the Bells and Captain Robertson was also flown to *Edisto* for a conference; meanwhile, the convoy's speed was reduced to about 2 knots.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Umphry	Prim. ice recce	-

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Shenker	Prim. ice recce	-
202	Laurie	Capt. Robertson	To *Edisto*	-

Thursday, August 18

The HUP was test-flown after having completed its minor inspection and performed very well. Laurie then used it to carry Smith with a parcel to *Edisto*, conduct a test hoist and an ice recce.

Even with ice recces throughout the day, the speed of advance for *Labrador's* convoy column was very slow, with only about nine miles completed for the day. The other convoy being escorted by the *Edisto* crept ahead by venturing closer to shore.

Experience showed that more progress was made by keeping underway at night than by stopping, so for those in command of the ships, the passage was a "nightmare",[57] as the reduced visibility of night-time navigation required complete concentration and vigilance by the bridge watch on each ship.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Brooker	Prim. ice recce	-
247	Fink	Umphry, Turner, Ross	Misc. air test	-
247	Laurie	Smith	Parcel to *Edisto,* test hoist, ice recce	-

Friday, August 19

Bad weather with rain and fog came in about 1100, resulting in no flying this afternoon.

Fink, suffering from a health problem and under the medical officer's orders, was taken off flying and watch-keeping duties for a week. Laurie launched in 202 with Umphry on board to conduct an ice recce.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Umphry	Prim. ice recce	-

Saturday, August 20

The fog cleared around 1000 and *Labrador* had to back-track to assist the ship USNS *Crane,* which was very slow and falling behind other ships in the convoy.

A cold front moving into the area brought the risk of fog, rain and low ceilings in the late afternoon.

Sunday, August 21

The weather improved for flying and also made the going easier for the convoy, with some advance units approaching Site 30 in the early afternoon.

Labrador and her convoy arrived off Hall Beach at 1000 and the ship anchored for first time since leaving Halifax. Laurie launched in 200 with Commander Leeming on board to conduct an ice recce and transfer mail ashore.

The Convoy

All of the ships in the convoy, except for the two icebreakers, were not designed to navigate through ice, although some had been ice strengthened to allow passage in very light ice. A number of the ships in the convoy sustained ruptured plates, but task force commanders were relieved to find that the damage was not more extensive (given the difficult ice conditions) than a few ruptured plates, damaged propeller blades and one ship holed in the forepeak.

Convoy ships commenced preparations for around-the-clock unloading, which would take the next month to complete!

The HUP flew into Site 30 for mail at 1530. The Captain meanwhile had decided to draft AB Smith back to *Shearwater* for compassionate reasons.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Cdr Leeming	Prim. ice recce & Mail Trans.	-

Monday, August 22

With the convoy preparing to offload at Site 30, the HUP and Bell were used for personnel transfer flights and mail runs to and from the ship. Laurie in 200 flew Petty Officer Yool to photograph Hall Beach (Site 30) from the air.

In order for landing craft to make their way safely to their designated offloading point ashore, RCN diving crews were again called on to blow up boulders, rock shelves and any ice that obstructed the landing beaches.

Tuesday, August 23

High winds and snow flurries curtailed helicopter flying.

Bell 202 failed to start ashore, so batteries and new spark plugs were flown in with the other Bell.

Laurie in 202 made a mail flight into Hall Beach and in the evening went back again with AB Smith, who was to be returned home to Halifax by a Maritime Central Airways commercial aircraft.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Lt. Shenker	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
202	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
202	Laurie	None	Misc. Trans. Mail - Hall	-
202	Laurie	AB Smith	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-

Wednesday, August 24

In weather that was still marginal with wet snow and high winds, both Bells were difficult to start, so partial winter cowlings were fitted on both, and the Herman Nelson heater was used henceforth prior to the first start each morning.

Lt Fulmer, USN came aboard in the evening from *Edisto* with a Bell Helicopter Service Bulletin regarding the urgently required maintenance on *Edisto's* Bell Helicopter tail rotor hubs. Using *Labrador's* machine shop, the Americans were able to make their Bells serviceable again. Laurie made a flight in 200 with Captain Robertson.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
202	Laurie	Capt Robertson (C.T.U.6.3)	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-

Note: C.T.U.6.3 refers to the Commander Task Unit 6.3

Thursday, August 25

High winds were still being experienced but several liaison flights were made ashore with the Bells and Laurie flying the HUP. Convoy offloading at Site 30 was proceeding satisfactorily.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Cdr Leeming	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
247	Laurie	3 Trips	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
200	Laurie	Col Dailey	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-

Friday, August 26

Nothing reported for this date.

Saturday, August 27

A Bell was flown ashore with Mr. Hagg, who was returning home on compassionate leave.

Fairly heavy fog was experienced, so direction was required for the trip in and out from Site 30, and was ably supplied by the First Lieutenant onboard *Labrador* using the SPS6 radar.

No flying was required until 2030 because of the fog, when direction again by the ship's radar was required for the trip ashore.

A party was held to celebrate John Laurie's birthday.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Mr. Hagg	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-
202	Fink	LCdr (*illegible*)	Misc. Trans. - Hall	-

Sunday, August 28

Labrador proceeded east in company with *Pursuit* to seek out a route to Site 31 located on Rowley Island in the northern sector of Foxe Basin, and also to complete beach surveys.

The Captain was flown ashore late in the evening and was unable to return to the ship due to fog, so he had to remain ashore overnight.

Monday, August 29

Fog and rain precluded flying all day and Bell 200, which was onshore with the Captain, refused to start even with locally acquired batteries. Consequently, when weather permitted, *Pogo* was sent ashore to pick up the Captain and to deliver an air maintenance technician ashore with a new set of spark plugs and tools to try to restart the Bell.

A minor inspection was started on Bell 202.

Tuesday, August 30

With rain and fog in the morning, the ship moved closer to Site 31, as *Pogo* had discovered deeper water inshore when it went to pick up the Captain from shore on Monday.

The ship departed for Site 30 at noon with Lt (P) Frayn to remain with Bell 200 at Site 31 until the ship returned in a few days.

The minor inspection on 202 was completed.

Wednesday, August 31

With the ship anchored off Site 30, Bell 202 was test-flown in the morning and Fallen flew the Captain ashore to await the arrival of three Senior United States Military Officers and a civilian VIP from Hall Beach. The VIPs in this party included:

- Vice-Admiral F. C. Denebrink, USN, commander of Military Sea Transport Services (MSTS),
- Rear-Admiral Redfield Mason, USN
- Brig. Gen. Voorhees, U. S. Army, commander of MSDS, Atlantic Area,
- Mr. Harry D. Lohmann, Vice President of The Western Electric Company
- Captain Pryce

This party arrived via an American R5D aircraft at 1630, when the two admirals along with Brig. Gen. F. T. Voorhees and four others were flown aboard *Labrador* by HUP and a Bell for meetings with Captain Robertson. Laurie flew Captain McArthur aboard in 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Capt MacArther	Test & Transfer	-
202	Laurie	None	Misc. Trans. - Site 30	-

September 1955

The weather for the first two weeks of September proved to be poor while *Labrador* was engaged in surveying and charting Site 31 - Rowley Island, Site 32 - Bray Island and Site 33 - Longstaff Bluff.

Thursday, September 1

The HUP, flown by Laurie, was used to transport Rear-Admiral Mason, Brig. Gen. Voorhees and Captain Pryce ashore.

Labrador weighed anchor at 0930 and, in company with USS *Lindenwald* (LSD-6) and one cargo vessel, proceeded to Site 31 at Rowley Island.

Laurie, again in the HUP, transported a Herman Nelson heater to Site 31 to help restart Bell 200, which had been grounded by fog on 28 August and would not restart for Frayn by pre-heating the engine. Excessive heat from the Herman Nelson caused a crack and some distortion in the cockpit bubble of 200. Both helicopters returned to the ship at 1930.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Laszewski, Ross	Misc. Trans. - Site 30	-
247	Laurie	CPO Turner	Misc. Trans. - Site 31	-

Friday, September 2

Labrador was at anchor in the morning off the Site 31 area in snow showers, so an ice recce to the site was delayed because of poor weather.

Saturday, September 3

The weather turned to Indian Summer, with bright sunshine and light winds. Ice was still clinging to the beach at Site 31, but the weather facilitated some liaison flights to the contractor's camp at this site by Laurie in 202 with Captain Robertson onboard.

Labrador departed to survey a route to Bray Island, while a ship's supply rating was flown ashore for return to Halifax.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Ross	Misc. Trans. - Site 31	-
202	Laurie	Capt. Robertson	Misc. Trans. - Site 32	-

The ship was off Bray Island after dinner and the Captain was flown ashore to Site 31.

A polar bear which had been molesting the camp was hunted down by helicopter and shot by the Captain using a shotgun and rifle slug. The bear was dispatched, but then sank into the water before it could be retrieved.

Heavy ice was observed on the landing beach.

Sunday, September 4

In bad snow showers and fog, *Labrador* surveyed the route to Longstaff Bluff, Baffin Island.

The air detachment crew started what were thought to be difficult repairs on the bubble canopy of Bell 200 which had been cracked and distorted through excess use of the Herman Nelson heater.

Labrador arrived at Longstaff Bluff and anchored off shore.

Monday, September 5

The HUP and Bell 202 were used to good advantage while working with a beach survey party erecting beacons on rugged terrain near Longstaff Bluff.

Many VIP flights were made between the ship and the beach campsite with two Western electric officials who were brought aboard in spite of the weather.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Laszewski, Shand	Misc. Trans. - Longstaff Bluff	-
247	Fink	Ross	Misc. Trans. - Longstaff Bluff	-
247	Fink	Ross, Shand	Misc. Trans., Photo - Longstaff Bluff	-
247	Fink	Ross, Shand	Beacon Party - Longstaff Bluff	-
202	Laurie	Kidd	Misc. Trans. - Longstaff Bluff	-
202	Laurie	Capt. Robertson, 9 Passengers, Col. Dailey	Misc. Trans. Ship-Shore, photo	-
202	Laurie	1 Foundation Co., 1 Western Electric Passenger	Misc. Trans. - Site 33	-

Tuesday, September 6

HMCS *Labrador* departed Longstaff Bluff at 0900 to rendezvous with the USS *Rushmore*, a Dock Landing Ship (LSD-14) and the MSTS cargo vessel, *Lt George W. G. Boyce* (T-AK 251) and to escort them to Longstaff Bluff for offloading.

The hydrographic launch *Pogo* and the hydrographers were left behind to complete a survey of the Longstaff Bluff beach area. A Bell was flown to *Rushmore* after supper to check for *Labrador's* mail. The convoy set course for Site 33, Longstaff Bluff.

Wednesday, September 7

USNS Lt James E. Robinson. Photo Source: Gerhard L. Mueller-Debus

Labrador arrived back off Longstaff Bluff at noon, when 202 was flown into the airstrip to deliver outgoing mail. The engine cooling fan on 202's driveshaft bearing disintegrated in-flight and was only discovered on shutdown due to oil leaking onto the flight deck. To repair 202, the fan drive shaft assembly was removed from 200 and placed in 202, and then 202 was ground-run and checked for metal particles in filters, but none were found.

Next, the HUP failed to start, possibly due to a sticking primer solenoid, and was still unserviceable the next day after installation of a new solenoid.

Thursday, September 8

Work on the unserviceable HUP continued with installation of a new solenoid, which did not correct the fault. However, a new fault was discovered in the primer switch wiring which corrected the problem.

Serviceable again, the HUP was used later in the day to erect "day mark beacons" on a high bluff.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Ross, Shand	Misc. Trans. Longstaff Bluff	-

Friday, September 9

Mr. Weber was taken ashore at 0800.

Bell 202 was declared unserviceable due to slow clutch engagement, so it was decided to install new clutch shoes. Consequently, it was expected there would the no serviceable Bells for at least the next two days.

The ship got underway at 0830 en route to Brady Island for a survey of the Site 32 beach approaches.

The air maintenance crew surprised everyone when they had the new clutch shoes installed on Bell 202 by 1730 when it was ground-run and declared serviceable again.

Labrador anchored off Site 32 beach at 2200.

Saturday, September 10

Bell 202, flown by Laurie, was used to conduct a survey of Site 31 on Rowley Island for prospective day marker beacon sites onshore.

When the tide had receded at 1600, one LCVP with a Beacon Party was landed ashore.

Lunch bags were flown ashore at 1830 from the ship to the forty men in the shore parties.

A Bell was used to guide the second LCVP into the beach to pick up the Beacon Party and to round up other shore party members.

The first LCVP was re-floated and returned to the ship during the middle watch.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Lt Shenker	Misc. Trans. Site 32	-
202	Laurie	Col Dailey	Misc. Trans. Site 32	-

Sunday, September 11

High winds and inclement weather precluded further hydrographic survey work at Site 32, so *Labrador* got underway at 0830 for Site 31, arriving there about 1600 in weather unfit for flying.

Monday, September 12

Bell 202 flew ashore with a survey party, but high winds and snow showers made survey work impractical.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Shand	Misc. Beacon Party. Site 31	-

Tuesday, September 13

This turned out to be a productive day, with both the Bell and the HUP being used for beach surveying, photographic runs and general transfer.

Laurie, along with crewman PO Yool, flew 247 to an altitude of 5000 feet to better photograph the Rowley Island Site.

Labrador rendezvoused with USS *Pursuit* (AGS 17), the attack cargo ship USS *Thuban*[58] (AKA 19), the MSTS cargo ship and aircraft ferry, *Lieut. James E. Robinson*, (T-AKV 3)[59] and USS *Lindenwald (*LSD 6) to lead them through Frozen Strait (between South Hampton Island and Vansittart Island) to Repulse Bay.

HUP 247 was used to transfer nautical charts to all ships in the convoy.

An experiment using the aircraft to keep polar bears away from the beach area by low-level flying was tried with little success.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Shand	Misc. Beacon Party. Site 31	-
202	Laurie	Blandford	Misc. Beacon Party. Site 31	-

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Laurie	LCdr Fred Kelly, Capt. Ball, PO Yool	Trans. Photo @ 5,000 ft Site 31	-

Wednesday, September 14

Labrador got underway at 0830 en route for Site 30.

The HUP was flown ashore for a mail pickup in the afternoon and returned with 12 full bags. Captain Pullen was brought aboard as well as LCdr Croal and the geodetic party.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Ruse, Shand, Laszewski	Misc. Trans. - Site 30	-

Thursday, September 15

The winds were too high in the morning for flying. However, in the afternoon, Laurie in the HUP made several flights to and from Site 30 with Lt Kelly, Dashley and Forrester on board.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Shand, Ross, Shenker	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-
247	Laurie	Lt Kelly, Daley, Forrester	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Friday, September 16

Labrador was at anchor off Site 30 where a Bell was used for transfer trips ashore while the air detachment maintenance personnel continued working on Bell 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Shenker	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Saturday, September 17

Labrador answered a distress call from the Canadian Fisheries Research Board patrol vessel M/V *Calanus* which reported it was low on fuel. The vessel was refuelled at about 0230 in the area near Igloolik an Inuit hamlet, in Foxe Basin.

The Bells were used on the ship's return to the Site 30 anchorage, transferring mail to USNS *Lt George W. G. Boyce.*[60]

Some EPI technicians were also transferred ashore for return to HMCS *Shearwater* and to bring aboard Canada's Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, Mr. G. Robertson and his party.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Blandford	Trans. Mail to USNS *Boyce*	-

Sunday, September 18

The VIPs were returned to shore and additional mail for the ship was brought back onboard.

A new fan shaft assembly for Bell 202 had finally arrived with the mail delivery.

Captain Pullen was taken ashore in the evening for an ice recce, but his tour was cut short due to lack of ice, so the ship got underway at 2340 for Frozen Strait and Eskimo Point.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Ross, Lt Shenker	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-
247	Laurie	Capt Pullen, C2 Dufor, Lt (??)	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Monday, September 19

Labrador rendezvoused with *Pursuit* to lead a convoy consisting of *Thuban* (AKA 18), *Robertson* (T-AKV 3) and *Lindenwald* (LSD-6) through Frozen Strait to Repulse Bay.

Navigational charts were distributed to all ships using the HUP and *Labrador* then detached from the convoy, proceeding to Eskimo Point.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Ross, Laszewski	Misc. Mail Trans. Site 30	-

Tuesday, September 20

The fan shaft assembly was installed in 202 and 200 was again made serviceable for a test flight, but no further flying took place due to the ship's evolutions.

Wednesday, September 21

Labrador arrived off Eskimo Point at 1000 and a Sikorsky HO4S-2 helicopter from sea lift flag ship USS *Tanner* AGS-15[61] landed aboard with their skipper to parlay with Captain Robertson.

Bell 200 was flight-tested and found serviceable, so both Bells were used for flights to the beach.

Labrador got underway for Coral Harbour at 1530, when Inspector Alexander Stirling McNeil of the RCMP and two Army patients were brought onboard.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Lt Shenker	Misc. Test Flight	-

Thursday, September 22

Labrador arrived off Coral Harbour about 1730 when Laurie in the HUP, this time with crewman AB Smith, transferred Inspector McNeil and the two army patients into Coral Harbour for air transport to hospitals in the South. *Labrador* got underway at 2400 to rendezvous with *Rushmore.*

Friday, September 23

Due to the late work schedule on Thursday night, the ship's company was not called to duty until 1100. A "pipe down" was declared at 1432 which allowed the ship's company a further rest period.

Saturday, September 24

The ship proceeded up Frozen Strait to rendezvous with *Lindenwald,* as her Sikorsky made three trips to transfer passengers and gear between the two ships. *Labrador* arrived off Repulse Bay at 2030.

Sunday, September 25

LCdr Bill Maxwell, the ship's Air Engineer Officer, CPO Lew Turner and LS Gerry Brooker were sent to the USS *Pursuit*, on 25 September, to work on a USAF Grumman, SA-16 *Albatross* amphibian that had experienced propeller trouble.

An LCVP towed the Albatross to *Labrador* where it was secured astern. However, the seas were too rough to continue trouble-shooting. Foul weather continued the next day, cancelling beacon transfers by the HUP and trouble-shooting on the Albatross. Later in the day, the Albatross was towed toward USS *Rushmore* (LSD 14), where it was to be hoisted aboard for transport back to the United States.

Bell 200 was used by LCdr Fink in the afternoon to take the Captain and Surg Lt Kidd ashore to Repulse Bay to check on the health of a Hudson's Bay Company family and the Roman Catholic fathers.

Inspector Alexander Stirling McNeil, RCMP

When the USN asked the RCN for a Rear Admiral (R/Adm) to act as the Canadian liaison onboard the USN sea lift flag ship USS *Tanner,* the RCN response was that they only had three R/Adm's at the time and they were all busy, so would an RCMP officer who was a wartime RCAF Wing Commander be acceptable. The USN response was: "tell him to bring his red suit".

Inspector McNeil proved worthy of the USN's trust, serving a key function in his liaison work between the USN and local communities and also with the RCN, becaming a legend within the RCMP and Canadian policing circles for his role as one of the founding pilots of the RCMP's Air Division.

He was born in Winnipeg in 1908 and joined the Mounted Police, reaching the rank of Superintendent and Commanding Officer of "L" Division. As a founding pilot of the RCMP Air Division, McNeil flew the first RCMP aircraft Norseman CF-MPE into the Arctic with no charts, but invited Wop May (the famous Canadian Bush Pilot whom the Red Baron was chasing when he was killed) to accompany him as guide.

He transferred to the RCAF during the Second World War where he rose to the rank of Wing Commander in charge of Security and Intelligence for the West Coast of Canada. On his return to the RCMP at the end of the war, he was again promoted, this time to Corporal. During his service in the RCMP, he conducted dogsled patrols in the Arctic, arrested Grey Owl and played for the Saskatchewan Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League. He also commanded the RCMP Musical Ride and was the Training Officer of the RCMP at Depot Division.

On retirement in Brentwood Bay, B.C., he was active as President of the RCMP Veterans Association, Air Force Officers Association, Royal United Services League, and as a Board member of the Central Saanich Police Board, Central Saanich Hospital Board & the BC Corps of Commissionaires.

Monday, September 26

Bad weather again cancelled the plans to ferry beacons ashore using the HUP, but the weather cleared swiftly in the late afternoon.

The Bell was used to bring out the Hudson's Bay Company Factor and his family to *Labrador* so as to conduct a medical x-ray of the Factor's wife in the ship's hospital.

Rushmore returned to the area and the Albatross was transferred over to her for hoisting aboard and return to the USA.

Tuesday, September 27

Labrador's flying program was again canceled due to fog, rain and snow. The USAF Albatross was finally hoisted aboard *Rushmore,* which departed for the USA in the afternoon.

Wednesday, September 28

HMCS *Labrador* departed Frozen Strait, en route to Hall Beach.

Weather in Foxe Basin deteriorated with winds gusting to 60 knots, causing the ship to roll heavily and potentially endangering the aircraft, so a flight deck crew watch was required during the night to maintain a check on helicopter security.

Thursday, September 29

The winds continued to blow at 60 knots with the snow, rain and low ceilings causing the ship to continue rolling heavily, but the high winds started to drop in the afternoon.

Friday, September 30

The weather improved, although a mixture of rain and snow was still falling and the ship was now riding more easily while proceeding north to Site 30 and arriving off Hall Beach about 1700.

Bell 202 was used to take LCdr Kelly ashore for an outbound flight and to gather the ship's mail. When attempting to restart for the return flight, 202's battery failed, so 200 was flown ashore and her batteries were used to start the engine in 202. A Bell helicopter from the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker *C. D. Howe* came aboard for Mr. Conrad.

October 1955

Saturday, October 1

The ship was underway to conduct further survey work of Sites 31, 32, and 33 and the weather was again poor with rain, snow and high winds.

Labrador arrived at the northern end of Foxe Basin and anchored off Bray Island at about 1830 to conduct further surveys of Rowley, Bray Island and Longstaff Bluff.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	LCdr Kelly, USN	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Sunday, October 2

Poor weather continued for most of the day negating any flying.

Monday, October 3

In excellent weather, the two Bells were used in the morning for a beach survey at Site 32.

Fallen, Fink and Frayn, piloting the three helicopters, were busy in the afternoon conducting sightseeing flights for members of the ship's company.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Turner	Survey Site 32	-
247	Fink	MacArthur	Misc. Trans. Site 32	-
200	Laurie	Cpl Claisson	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Tuesday, October 4

Labrador was en route from Site 32 to Longstaff Bluff in good weather, however, no flying was required.

Wednesday, October 5

Laurie flying 247 carried a total of 20 personnel on sightseeing flights to Longstaff Bluff while the two Bells were used from morning until dark on a survey of Site 33 beaches and the inner harbour. The helicopters' great value were proven at this site, as rough terrain on the islands would have made the survey work formidable with any other means of transport.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Mr. Boulton	Survey Site 33	-
200	Fink	MacArthur	Survey Site 33	-
200	Fink	Mr. Blandford	Survey Site 33	-
247	Laurie	20 Passengers	Sight Seeing Site 33	-
202	Laurie	Mr. Blandford	Survey Site 33	-
202	Laurie	Letec	Beacons Site 33	-

Thursday, October 6

The weather was unfit all day for flying or for survey work with a low ceiling, snow and fog.

The maintenance team received word via Canair 69[62] that the Bells required a rotor head inspection prior to their next flights.

Friday, October 7

The rotor head inspection was carried out on the two Bells and 202 was determined to be serviceable. However, 200 required a pitch control link end replacement. A CNA 21 action was taken. In the afternoon, weather proved to be suitable for flying, but unfit for survey observations.

Saturday, October 8

At noon, the weather cleared sufficiently for flying and survey work continued, but deteriorating weather again stopped operations at about 1600. Laurie made one flight into site 32 using 202 with AB Shand onboard and another with Bolton on board to conduct a survey of site 33.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	MacArther	Survey Site 32	-
200	Laurie	Shand	Mail to Site 33	-
202	Laurie	Boulton	Survey Site 33	-

Sunday, October 9

In excellent weather, the Bells completed Site 33 survey work in the morning while the HUP was used for passenger tours and to take the Captain ashore, and a senior Maritime Central Airways pilot was brought aboard the ship for a visit.

The ship was underway again at 1804 to Site 31. Around that time, a sign created by Brooker, one of the air maintenance technicians, with the words *Labrador, Arctic Airways, Elevation 50',* was erected above the hangar entrance.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Fink	Capt Robertson, Lt Frayn, Lt Irvine	Misc. Trans. Site 33	-
247	Fink	Capt Robertson, Lt Frayn, Lt Irvine	Misc. Trans. Site 33	-
202	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Trans. Site 30	-

Monday, October 10

Bad weather with snow, wind and fog canceled a planned mail run in the HUP to Site 31, where the ship anchored at about 1330.

Tuesday, October 11

Both Bells were used to transfer beacons ashore and to facilitate their erection at Site 31 on Rowley Island in weather that remained quite good, allowing the job to be completed.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Mr. Chaisson	Survey Site 31	-
200	Laurie	Mr. Blandford	Survey Site 31	-

Wednesday, October 12

The Bells were used for azimuth transport, some triangulation work and to take the Captain and Mr. Myers ashore. Whiteout conditions were encountered over Rowley Island, believed to be caused by a combination of the very low ceiling and unbroken new snow cover on the ground.

Ice Accumulation on Labrador. Photo Source: Lt (P) John A. MacNeil Collection

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Mr. Chaisson	Survey Site 31	-
247	Laurie	4 Passengers	Air Lift 2 Beacons, Survey Site 31	-

The HUP, flown by Laurie, was called in to carry and erect two beacons ashore at Site 31, as the LCVP was unable to land a beacon party. It was reported that Laurie did an excellent job flying in the gusty conditions.

Thursday, October 13

With the winds gusting as high as 25 to 35 knots, no flying could take place and fortunately was not required anyway.

Pogo, requiring one full day to complete the sounding work for the Site 31 harbour survey, was unable to do so due to high seas.

Friday, October 14

Pogo was away in the morning to finish the harbour soundings and one Bell was used to complete the beacon survey, allowing the ship to get underway for Foxe Basin by 1800.

Saturday, October 15

By early morning, *Labrador* was anchored off Hall Beach in foul weather with winds too high for flying until late afternoon.

In these conditions, the ship was rolling at anchor up to 20° from side to side and was also experiencing considerable pitching. This made for uncomfortable conditions onboard, as the ship's stabilizers were not effective at anchor.

A Bell went ashore just before dark and returned with eight bags of mail for the ship's company.

Sunday, October 16

Observing a Sunday routine, early and late day sightseeing tours were conducted for the ship's company.

Ice was observed still grounded all along the beach, so Laurie in 202 flew Captain Robertson to Site 30 and return.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Capt Robertson	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-
202	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-
202	Laurie	Capt Robertson	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Monday, October 17

The wet snow and high winds prevented "Operation Jeep", the landing of the ship's Jeep by LVCP to shore. One flight was made by one of the Bells.

Tuesday, October 18

The HUP was used to fly Mr. Blandford, Mr. Bolton, Mr. Litec, LCdr Taylor and Mr. Che ashore. These "lucky dogs" were on their way home as the ship got underway again at 1030 and put the last of Hall Beach behind her.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Lt Frayn, Lt Irvine	Misc. Trans. Site 30	-

Wednesday, October 19

Labrador carried out survey lines, soundings and oceanographic stations, with the winds becoming increasingly stronger.

Thursday, October 20

Labrador hove-to riding out a very bad storm with blowing snow and gale force winds. A "pipe down" was called in the afternoon due to the uncomfortable sailing conditions.

Friday, October 21

Due to the continuing poor weather, further work in Foxe Basin became impractical and the ship made her way for Coral Harbour. Again, an afternoon "pipe down" was declared due to the pitching and rolling of the ship. The ship's open decks and the aft parts of the helicopters were soon coated with ice due to the heavy spray blanketing the ship

Saturday, October 22

Labrador arrived off Coral Harbour at 1000 where all helicopters were washed down with hot freshwater to remove the ice and salt accumulations. Bell 200, flown by Laurie, was used to pick up another load of very welcome mail and was nearly caught in a fast moving storm. A new attempt to land the ship's Jeep by LCVP was again abandoned due to a rising sea state and poor visibility. *Labrador* stood out to sea to ride out this new storm.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Laurie	Shand	Misc. Trans. Coral Harbour	-

Sunday, October 23

The ship returned to the vicinity of Coral Harbour, but winds were still high and no attempt was made to land the Jeep.

Monday, October 24

The ship arrived off Coral Harbour at 0800 and the Jeep was successfully landed ashore at last.

Both Bells were flown ashore for mail and medical runs.

Labrador got underway at 1000 for Cape Enauolik to recover EPI gear.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Lt Irvine	Misc. Trans. Coral Harbour	-

Tuesday, October 25

The ship arrived off Cape Enauolik at 0800. However, heavy snow showers in the area delayed flying until 0930 when only the Bells were used; the HUP was being held in reserve in case the Bells were caught ashore by the weather. All small gear ashore was recovered by noon.

Bell 202 threw one of its fan belts, requiring new ones to be flown ashore and installed by one of the air maintenance technicians. *Labrador* got underway at noon to conduct survey work to the North.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Lt Irvine	Misc. Trans. Wildbird Islands	-
202	Laurie	1 Passenger	Cargo lift of EPI at Wildbird Islands	-

Wednesday, October 26

The ship carried out oceanographic stations to the west of Prince Charles Island while a minor maintenance inspection was started on Bell 202.

Thursday, October 27

Labrador carried out further survey and oceanographic work in a line to the south of Prince Charles Island.

Captain Robertson was suddenly taken ill during the night, suffering from a perforated ulcer, so when a decision was made to medivac him to a medical facility ashore, the ship proceeded towards Coral Harbour at full speed.

Friday, October 28

Surg Lt Kidd determined that the Captain had to be flown south to a major hospital with the facilities required to treat him.

Labrador continued to Coral Harbour at full speed for a rendezvous with an RCAF rescue plane that was to pick up the Captain for the flight south. The weather during this transit was quite bad with wet snow and low ceiling.

Saturday, October 29

Fallen flew the HUP with Surg Lt Kidd and Captain Robertson ashore to Coral Harbour, from where the Captain was flown south by an RCAF Search and Rescue DC 3 Dakota aircraft for emergency surgery in a Montréal hospital.

Bell 200, flown by Laurie, was used to take their baggage ashore, allowing the Dakota to depart for Montréal via Kapuskasing, Ontario at 1215.

The ship was now under the command of Commander John M. "Mac" Leeming, CD RCN for the remainder of the deployment and got underway again departing Hudson Bay to commence intensive oceanographic and hydrographic survey operations in Hudson Strait near Digges Island.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	None	Mail & Capt Robertson's baggage to Coral Harbor for evacuation.	-

Sunday, October 30

In fairly good weather, *Labrador* carried out oceanographic work between Coats Island and Digges Island.

Monday, October 31

The ship continued oceanographic work between Coats Island and Digges Islands in heavy fog during the morning, consequently no flying took place.

Tuesday, November 1

It was planned to fly the Bells into the settlement of Ivugivik, but high winds, rain and low ceilings encountered in the straits between Digges Island and the mainland curtailed flying.

With weather improving in the afternoon, Bell 202 was test-flown and found serviceable, while the ship continued surveying near Nottingham and Salisbury Islands.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Fink	Brooker	Misc. Air Test	-

RCAF PBY-5A Canso. Photo Source: Canadian Warplane Heritage

Wednesday, November 2

Labrador proceeded to Ivugivik Harbour, however flying was canceled due to high winds, rain and low ceilings. Consequently, the LCVP was used to take a party ashore where Surg Lt Kidd examined and treated some of the local native inhabitants.

Thursday, November 3

Fairly high winds with some snow continued, allowing inventory work of all the air maintenance spare parts stores to continue and also the painting of the air maintenance workshops.

Friday, November 4

During a fair-weather day but with no flying required, the air detachment were given a "pipe down" at 2000 with the ship continuing survey work.

A cold front went through about 2200 and caused temperatures to drop sharply.

Saturday, November 5

Labrador arrived off Cape Dorset in the morning and the two Bells were flown ashore at noon with Surg Lt Kidd to examine and treat the Inuit community as required.

Quite a number of stone carvings were purchased ashore, with personnel and aircraft back aboard by 1500, when the ship got underway to the east of this position to continue the survey and oceanographic commitment in Hudson Strait.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	Lt Shanker	Trans. Cape Dorset	-

Sunday, November 6

With *Labrador* continuing the survey work in Hudson Strait, a decision was made that 15 miles was too great a distance for the helicopters to fly into Lake Harbour.

Monday, November 7

There were no flying commitments this day as *Labrador* worked her way down to the mouth of Hudson Straight. One Bell flew locally in the afternoon while the air detachment men continued cleaning and painting of the detachment workshops.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Brooker	Seq. Local Seq.	-

Tuesday, November 8

With rain, snow and a low ceiling causing poor visibility, *Labrador* completed the Hudson Strait survey and oceanographic commitment, freeing herself to proceed back to Lake Harbour.

Wednesday, November 9

The ship arrived 20 miles off Lake Harbour by 0800.

Two Bells were used to fly Surg Lt Kidd ashore to examine a sick RCMP Corporal Carr.

Bell 200 threw a fan belt on the return journey, so 202 was held ashore in case it was needed there.

The winds picked up to gale force gusting to 60 knots shortly after the ship got underway. These gales were to become daily occurrences.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Fink	Surg Lt Kidd	Misc. Trans. Lake Harbour	-

Thursday, November 10

Labrador passed out of Hudson Strait at about 1300. However, high winds and seas from the North prevented a turn to port, forcing the ship to proceed slowly northeast in winds still gusting to 60 knots and heavy seas causing heavier rolling and pitching.

Friday, November 11

The heavy wet weather canceled Remembrance Day services and a "pipe down" was declared at 1400, with all-weather decks designated out of bounds to members of the crew.

The weather finally permitted the ship to turn southward for the return trip down to the Straight of Belle Isle at 1600. *Labrador* then began weathering the sea conditions better; the increased speed of the ship was making her stabilizers more effective, especially with the wind and swell now coming from astern.

Saturday, November 12

The wind was still high, but with the swells becoming longer, the ship started rolling heavily again.

Due to the ferocious wind conditions, the tail rotors of the two Bells were removed for safe storage in the hangar. However, the heavy spray

continued rolling over the flight deck and onto the three aircraft; consequently all aircraft would have to be de-salted when the weather permitted.

Sunday, November 13

A special "safe return" Sunday routine was declared and no work carried out, allowing the ship's company to recover their sea appetites, sleep and sea legs interrupted by the storm, while *Labrador* returned to the Straits of Belle Isle at about 1630.

Monday, November 14

With the weather moderating considerably, the ship again took up oceanographic stations and all air detachment hands were employed washing down the salt accumulation on all aircraft.

The spare parts inventory was completed and survival bags were returned to Arctic Stores. Surg Lt Kidd advised that Petty Officer Robinson needed to be evacuated for medical treatment ashore, so the ship set course for Stephenville, Nfld. at full speed, where the patient was to be transferred to an RCAF aircraft for transfer to a hospital in Halifax.

Tuesday, November 15

Labrador arrived off Stephenville at about noon hour, when Petty Officer Robinson and Surg Lt Kidd were taken aboard HUP 247 and flown by Laurie, with LS Gerry Brooker as crew, to the USAF base at "Harmon Field" in Stephenville, Nfld.

PO Robinson was later flown to the Royal Canadian Naval Hospital (RCNH) in Halifax by an RCAF Canso amphibious aircraft.

All air detachment hands were employed cleaning the hangar area.

Deteriorating weather prevented the HUP from returning to the ship at 1600, so LCdr Smith and LS Humphries had to be left ashore overnight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Laurie	Dr. Kidd, Capt Robertson, PO Brooker	Air Evac	-

Wednesday, November 16

Fallen flew two trips in 247 to Stephenville. One trip was flown to take two of the ship's company ashore for leave and to pick up Smith and Humphries, who had been left there the night before, and also to bring a Roman Catholic priest, Father Westbury, to the ship to conduct mass.

The second trip for the HUP was to meet a TransCanada airline flight, which was carrying Rear Admiral (RAdm) R. E. S. Bidwell, CBE, CD, RCN, Flag Officer Atlantic Coast (FOAC), and transport him to the ship for his official visit to *Labrador*.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Laurie	LCdr Lloyd	Local to Stephenville, Nfld	-

Thursday, November 17

No flying activities reported for this day.

Friday, November 18

HMCS *Labrador* arrived in Halifax after 170 days at sea.

Saturday, November 19

No flying activities reported for this day.

Sunday, November 20

No flying activities reported for this day.

Monday, November 21

Labrador completed an operation of five and three-quarter months to Foxe Basin in support of building the DEW Line.

HUP 247 (pilot unknown) and the two Bells 200 (pilot unknown) and 202 (piloted by Laurie) were flown ashore to HMCS *Shearwater*.

Conclusions for 1955

During DEW Line operations in the summer of 1955, approximately 209,000 tons of cargo were delivered to landing zones across the Arctic, largely through the efforts of the U.S. and Canadian navy. In addition, an estimated 9,000 personnel were moved, mostly by American and Canadian Air Force aircraft and civilian contracts with Canadian companies servicing the Eastern Arctic, to facilitate this operation.

The following notations aptly summarize the success of HMCS *Labrador* during her 1955 Arctic voyage, the leadership of Captain Robertson and the teamwork demonstrated by her crew:

From the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Burke (Note: USN):

"For Capt Robertson, RCN:

With the Foxe Basin supply operations now successfully completed please accept my hearty congratulations for the most excellent performance of your task group. The undertaking was a stupendous effort with the accepted standards of ice, weather, and unknown hydrography. The successful attainment of all objectives is a tribute to your professional ability and courage."

From the Commander, MSDS, Vice Adm. Denebrink (Note: USN):

"Upon successful completion of your assigned tasks in MSTS Arctic operations in 1955, I wish to express my congratulations and my appreciation for the outstanding services you have rendered as a Task Group Commander of combined U.S. - Canada forces. Your leadership, courage, professional skills, and determination have been of the highest order throughout trying operations in uncharted waters and hazardous ice conditions and reflect the greatest credit upon you and your service. It has been a pleasure to have you served with us in our mutual endeavours. Please convey to all your command my congratulations, best wishes, and appreciation for their substantial contribution. As a personal note may I say that when I saw you in Foxe basin I knew at once you would deliver the goods. Well done."[63]

1956 Operations[64]

Labrador's success in 1955 created great military as well as civilian scientific interest and demands from various sources on both sides of the U.S./Canada border to utilize her unique capabilities in 1956.

With the heavy sea lift demands for transport of material to the Arctic for continuing construction of the DEW Line outstripping the resources of the U.S. Military Sea Transport Service, Canada was asked for *Labrador's* assistance to escort supply convoys, survey sea routes, deploy navigational aids and prepare landing beaches.

The Canadian Department of Transport requested assistance as well to resupply Arctic weather stations, while the Defence Research Board requested the use of *Labrador* in the Gulf of St. Lawrence for oceanographic survey work during the first quarter of 1956 and in the Arctic summer months.

Both the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys as well as the Fisheries Research Board requested her services for the summer months.

First Quarter of 1956 - Gulf of St. Lawrence Cruise

This section records *Labrador's* daily activities during February of 1956 in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, where she was to conduct oceanographic and hydrographic survey work determining the feasibility of opening a winter shipping route to Québec City. *Labrador* thereby became the first ship to reach Québec City during winter freeze-up.

Sponsored by the Defence Research Board and with Captain Tom Pullen in command, *Labrador* sailed for the Gulf of St. Lawrence on a twelve day voyage to conduct the required survey work.

Helicopter Detachment operations began as follows.

Saturday – February 18

Detachment 2 was formed this day with aircraft and personnel drawn from Helicopter Utility Squadron 21 (HU-21) based at Royal Canadian Naval Air Station (RCNAS) Shearwater. Detachment personnel included: LCdr Fallen, Detachment Officer in Charge, LCdr Ian

Webster[65] detachment pilot, SLt FitzGerald, detachment pilot, two Petty Officers and five men.

Aircraft included one Bell HTL-4 (squadron side number 201) and one Piasecki HUP-3 (squadron side number 247[66]). These aircraft are hereafter referred to by their RCN squadron side number, e.g., 207.

Detachment supplies were transferred to *Labrador,* but aircraft and pilots remained at *Shearwater*. SLt FitzGerald flew local sequences in the detachment HUP 247 with SLt Munro and Captain Pullen onboard.

Sunday – February 19

Detachment aircraft remained at RCNAS.

Monday – February 20

Piloted by LCdr Ted Fallen, HUP 247 flew Captain Pullen to RCNAS with Farley as crew.

Aircraft 201 was unserviceable for most of this day, but was serviceable again by evening and was flown to the ship. SLt FitzGerald, with crew member Neilly, flew 201 on a miscellaneous test flight while *Labrador* refuelled at the ImperOil (Imperial Oil) dock in Dartmouth.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Lt Neilly	Misc Test	1730

Tuesday – February 21

Both detachment aircraft were flown aboard, with 201 flown by LCdr Fallen and with McArther as crew and HUP 247 flown by FitzGerald. Detachment gear was then stowed for sea.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Fallen	McArther	Misc Test	0900
201	Fallen	McArther	Misc Trans.	1335

Wednesday – February 22

The HUP was discovered to have a ruptured avgas tank and it was returned to *Shearwater* for repairs, as it would have insufficient fuel reserves with the damaged tank to support cruise objectives. Flight deck gear was stowed for *Labrador's* departure at 1420. Detachment personnel reverted to ship's routine.

Thursday, February 23

Labrador arrived in Chedabucto Bay in the morning. One flight of the HTL-4 was conducted for pilot familiarization by Fallen with FitzGerald as co-pilot. With weather closing in, *Labrador* departed northward out of the bay for sea.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Fallen	FitzGerald	Sec Seq	0900

Friday, February 24

Labrador proceeded into George Bay and out again in the late evening initially encountering light pack ice and heavier ice later to the south, with the ship becoming temporarily beset a few times. No flying was conducted.

Saturday, February 25

In clear weather, *Labrador* headed for Newfoundland, arriving in the vicinity at 0830. One flight of 201 was flown for pilot familiarization by Fallen at 0900, with Webster as co-pilot; another one in 201, again piloted by FitzGerald with Webster as co-pilot, was launched at 0940. With a gale warning issued, no flying was conducted in the afternoon. By nightfall, the ship was headed for the lee shore on the East side of Anticosti Island for protection from the oncoming gale.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Fallen	Webster	Sec Seq	0900
201	FitzGerald	Webster	Sec Seq	0940

Sunday, February 26

Labrador cruised west along the northern shore of Anticosti Island under the intensifying storm, requiring the crew to lash and secure all loose equipment. With a hull designed for ice breaking and not for heavy weather conditions, *Labrador* was soon rolling heavily - much to the discomfort of the crew. The storm was producing winds of 50 knots and still building by the first watch in the evening. By middle watch Monday morning, the storm had abated and the ship was clear of Anticosti.

Monday, February 27

As a result of the below freezing temperatures and the spray from the storm, *Labrador* and the helicopters on her flight deck were encrusted with ice. Using a Herman Nelson heater, the tail and main rotors of the helicopters were freed of their ice and washed with fresh water to remove any salt water residue. No other impact from the storm was suffered by the air detachment. The ship proceeded up river as far as Rimouski, Québec and then headed back downstream for Sept-Îles, Québec with hopes of a mail pick-up.

Snow & Ice Accumulate on Bell HTL-4. Photo Source: Lt (P) J.A. MacNeil

Tuesday, February 28

With *Labrador* off Sept-Îles in the morning before noon, one flight of sequences was flown at 1030 by FitzGerald with Webster flying as co-pilot. At 1230, another flight into Sept-Îles was launched, with Fallen as pilot and Webster as co-pilot, to obtain port clearance for the ship and to scout ice conditions in the harbour. One other training flight was conducted by Fallen at 1430 with McIntyre as crew before the ship had berthed in port by the afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Webster	Sec Seq	1030
201	Fallen	FitzGerald	Misc – Seven Islands	1230
201	Fallen	McIntyre	Sec Seq	1430

Wednesday, February 29

At 0800, *Labrador* slipped her lines and headed to open water after escorting a ship alongside the Iron Ore company jetty at Sept-Îles. One flight by Fallen at 0915, with FitzGerald as crew, took an Iron Ore employee ashore; Dr. Lauzier, the Chief Scientist, had also been given a similar flight. Another flight at 1040 with FitzGerald as pilot and Cdr Law as crew attempted unsuccessfully to find the ship's mail but it had not yet arrived at Sept-Îles .

In the afternoon, a short flight in 201 with FitzGerald as pilot and Cook as crew was conducted to practice navigational homing on the ship, in sunny skies which lasted all day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Fallen	FitzGerald	Misc – Seven Island	0915
201	FitzGerald	Cdr Law	Sec Seq Homings	1040
201	FitzGerald	Cook	Sec Seq Homings	1515

Thursday, March 1

Labrador proceeded southward around Gaspé, Québec toward Prince Edward Island for oceanographic stations. One unserviceable condition

on aircraft 201 was repaired, and an air test and photo flight were conducted at 1430 in the afternoon under fair weather that lasted throughout the day.

Friday, March 2

Oceanographic stations were completed north of Anticosti Island and the ship headed for the Strait of Belle Isle. A pilot practice flight was flown by FitzGerald in 201 at 0920 with Webster, Llewellyn and Burrder as crew. With winds becoming excessive, the flight was terminated and flying cancelled for the rest of the afternoon.

Saturday, March 3

Proceeding from the Strait of Belle Isle to Corner Brook, *Labrador* arrived by mid-afternoon and berthed for the night. No flying was possible due to continuing high winds.

Sunday, March 4

At 0830 the following morning, *Labrador* proceeded to St. Georges Bay, arriving in the late afternoon. Two staff members of the Bowater Company were transferred at 1645 by helicopter 201 to Harman
Field at Stephenville with Fallen as pilot and FitzGerald as co-pilot. Another flight in 201, again with Fallen and FitzGerald as pilots, and including passenger Norm Pascoe,[67] a Montreal Star reporter, was launched at 1755 to Stephenville to pick up *Labrador's* mail. Since the local postmistress could not be made available before flying, visibility became critical and as the aircraft were not equipped with night time navigation lights, Fallen and FitzGerald elected to return to the ship at 1755 without *Labrador's* mail - which was unfortunately dispatched back to Halifax.

Monday, March 5

In the early afternoon, *en route* to Halifax, one flight in 201 by FitzGerald was made at 1350 for pilot proficiency and passenger familiarization. Norm Pascoe, passenger Kelly and LCdr Cavanaugh were also treated to short flights, but increasing winds and snow showers called a halt to further flights.

Tuesday, March 6

Approaching Halifax harbour in the early morning, two transfer flights in 201 to RCNAS Shearwater were launched and completed in the afternoon by FitzGerald with LCdr Fallen as passenger. A make-and-mend harbour routine was initiated and Fallen disembarked.

Wednesday, March 7

With poor weather having prevented flying, work parties commenced painting the ship, starting with the hangar shelters.[68]

Thursday, March 8

One flight in 201 by FitzGerald with Cribb as crew was launched to CANAS at 0910. Weather closed in and was below limits for the rest of the day. Meanwhile, rumours of a change in detachment personnel began to circulate.

Friday, March 9

Snow flurries and high winds all day prevented flying. The personnel rumours proved to be true, with orders being received drafting[69] LS Leduc, AB McArther and AB Girardin ashore from the detachment.

Saturday, March 10

Although weather was good, no flying took place with a Saturday routine in effect.

Sunday, March 11

The excellent weather continued under a Sunday Routine.

Monday, March 12

Continuing good weather permitted one flight in 201 to RCNAS at 0950 by FitzGerald with Cribb as crew, ending with a demonstration for local Jr. Chamber of Commerce members on the return trip to the ship. A series of equipment transfer flights were conducted to RCNAS by FitzGerald at 1410 with McIntyre, but at 1600 a MICN (Maintenance Instruction – Canadian Navy) requirement grounded all HTL-4`s.

Tuesday, March 13

Fair weather all day permitted one short flight in 201 by FitzGerald as pilot and McIntyre as crew to RCNAS where the MCIN inspection was to take place on the Bells.

Wednesday, March 14

On inspection, Bell 201 was grounded when the oil sump was found to be unserviceable and required replacement.

March 1956 – Mayport, Florida - Paint Ship Trip

In preparation for her 1956 Arctic operations, *Labrador* sailed on 15 March to Mayport, Florida to paint the ship (which is not possible to do in Halifax during the cold, wet Canadian winter months). Once shipshape again and before returning home to Halifax, she was to be dispatched to New York City so the ship's officers and scientific staff could attend a conference on the planning of her role in support of the summer DEW Line supply operations.

Halifax to Mayport

Thursday, March 15

By noon, the 201 was declared serviceable and was flown aboard *Labrador* by FitzGerald with McIntyre as crew and secured for sea. Most detachment stores were also secured. The flight deck still required painting. No further changes to detachment personnel took place.

Friday, March 16

Labrador slipped her lines at 0200 and proceeded to sea in good flying weather. Detachment personnel continued with chipping and replacing paint in the late morning. One half of one hangar bulkhead and inside rooms were readied for painting. One short local familiarization and practice flight in 201 was flown by FitzGerald at 1430 in the afternoon with Russell and Vales as crew.

Saturday, March 17

A flash storm enveloped *Labrador* during the night and persisted until late afternoon. With its rounded, ice breaking hull, *Labrador* rolled 45 degrees at the extremes and was rolling 30 degrees most of the time. Although equipped with stabilizers, they did not prevent such extreme rolling and consequently a Hermon-Nelson heater broke loose on the flight deck. It punctured a hole in the port side float chambers of one helicopter and continued rolling from side to side across the flight deck, sustaining additional damage. As well, paint stores broke loose creating

a minor mess and flight deck stanchions were also bent beyond recognition (relatively minor damage compared to the fate of the heavily damaged Herman-Nelson heater).

Sunday, March 18

In warm southern weather, stores and gear were cleaned up and stowed, aircraft washed and the flight deck was cleared and readied for flight operations again.

Monday, March 19

With a heavy ground swell running and in excellent weather, the flight deck was scrubbed and chipped for re-painting.

Tuesday, March 20

Labrador berthed at Mayport Naval Air Station in north Florida in bright weather and a cool wind. With

no flying, the air detachment started chipping paint on the hangar in readiness for red-leading[70] and finish painting.

Wednesday, March 21

With high winds but beautiful clear Florida weather, the ship's crew worked a "Tropical Routine" on the hangar. One flight in 201 was conducted for flight-testing and local familiarization took place at 1245 by FitzGerald with Vipond as crew.

Thursday, March 22

The winds of the previous day had abated and high cirrus clouds moved in. The crew worked painting the ship in the morning. Captain Pullen was flown in 201 by FitzGerald to Jacksonville Beach at 1620 for a little sightseeing.

Friday, March 23

Excellent weather continued allowing the inside of the hangar to be washed. One return flight in 201 to a location 20 miles to the north was conducted at 1650 by FitzGerald with P.O. Cribb as crew.

Saturday, March 24

Excellent painting weather continued, resulting in two-thirds of the hangar being scraped and red-leaded. A single flight in 201 was flown

by Webster with Reade as crew, leaving *Labrador* at 1645 in the afternoon for St. Augustine.

Sunday, March 25

In excellent but slightly windy weather, a single flight of approximately two hours was flown in 201 by FitzGerald with Russel and Vipond as crew.

Monday, March 26

The weather this day was flyable but with smoky visibility, allowing two short transfer trips at 1410 to the beach and back in 201 piloted by FitzGerald with Greenwood and Ashby as crew. Painting of the hanger's port side was completed.

Tuesday, March 27

Although the weather remained clear, no flying was conducted due to Detachment personnel being employed in spray painting the interior of the hangar.

Wednesday, March 28

Since painting employed most personnel, no flying was conducted, resulting in the hangar being finished except for touch-ups of the odd spots. Repair of flight deck stanchions damaged by the Herman Nelson heater was also initiated.

Thursday, March 29

Clear weather again facilitated flight deck maintenance, with painting of the stanchions being completed and the safety nets being replaced.

Mayport to New York City

Friday, March 30

In the late morning, flight deck netting [71] was secured except for sections not yet fitted with stanchions. Weather was again excellent with fair winds as *Labrador* slipped her lines and proceeded to sea at 1300 hours. One photography flight in 201 was flown at 1410 by FitzGerald as well as a familiarization trip for the Captain while *Labrador* was secured for sea.

Saturday, March 31

Air personnel spent the day touching up the flight deck as well as painting and cleaning aircraft floats.

Sunday, April 1

Excellent weather facilitated the securing of flight deck safety nets on the starboard side, consequently no flying was conducted as floats on the aircraft were being re-marked.

Monday, April 2

One flight was piloted by FitzGerald with Shuer and Vales as crew in smoky but light winds to photograph New York harbour and Manhattan Island as the ship entered harbour at 0900.

Tuesday, April 3

In reduced morning visibility of 2 – 3 miles due to cloud and smog, FitzGerald piloted one flight around Manhattan Island with Smith as crew.

Wednesday, April 4

Fog cancelled flying, allowing crew members to scrub down the flight deck.

Thursday, April 5

In bright, slightly gusty weather, FitzGerald flew 201 with Petty Officer Patterson to the Idlewild airfield

area at 0840. On the return flight, stickiness was noticed in the lateral irreversible[72] and upon landing onboard *Labrador*, the aircraft was declared unserviceable. The maintenance crew determined that the irreversible had lost its hydraulic fluid requiring the seals to be repacked.

New York to Halifax

Friday, April 6

One flight in smoky but fair visibility by FitzGerald took place at 1000 to flight-test the repair to 201 which proved serviceable. Other short flights were made later with Lloyd and Captain Pullen as passengers.

News of nine Norwegian sealers in distress in the Denmark Straits was received. In the meantime,

Labrador slipped her lines at 1700 and in local vicinity. A Time Magazine photographer, Ben Martin, flown as a passenger to photograph the ship, was returned to shore on the East River jetty at 1700.

Saturday, April 7

There was no flying due to limited visibility in rain showers and gusty winds.

Sunday, April 8

Cruising in sunny and windy weather during the morning watch, *Labrador* was off Sambro Light Vessel[73] with the weather turning to cloudy and windy by 1240 in the afternoon. HTL-6 number 203, with Lt Grant Soutar, flew aboard with a new detachment addition, Able Seaman S.L. McLean. Ten minutes later, an HO4S-3 from HMCS *Shearwater* landed onboard with another new crew member, Able Seaman Atwell and a Herman Nelson heater to replace the one previously destroyed. Upon discharging its cargo and passenger, the HO4S-3 returned to HMCS *Shearwater* with freight for HMCS *Magnificent* and also carrying *Labrador's* mail. It returned again with more gear and then returned to *Shearwater* with the HTL pilot and more mail. LCdr Bays, Detachment Commander, flew a HUP number 246 onboard with a civilian passenger, Mr. McKenzie. All transfer flights were completed at 1355. Flight deck gear was secured for sea and *Labrador* proceeded for the Denmark Straits at 15 knots.

Monday, April 9

With the ship heading north east off Cape Race, no flying took place due to wind and fog.

Tuesday, April 10

High winds and sea state prohibited flying, while 201 was unserviceable with a broken helicoil.[74] A cylinder from a spare engine was used to replace the unserviceable part on 201.

Wednesday, April 11

At 1100, one ice reconnaissance flight was flown in HUP 246 by Bays with FitzGerald as co-pilot and Vales as crew under an overcast sky and

in strong winds, but it had to be cut short due to poor radio communications (no ice was found). Another flight in 246 was launched in the afternoon at 1400 with the same crew, but was cancelled within a few minutes due to fog and rain. *Labrador* then received word that the ship with Norwegian sealers in distress had been freed of ice, therefore *Labrador* changed course for the Strait of Belle Isle, planning to arrive at Halifax after April 16.

HMCS Wallaceburg – In the Towing Notch. Photo Source: DND Via Karl Gagnon Collection

Thursday, April 12

Both the HUP flown by Bays with Webster as co-pilot and Bell 203 with FitzGerald and Barkman as crew flew in the morning at 0900 and 0915 in light winds and overcast skies. On return to the ship, both aircraft were washed down with fresh water to remove salt residue.

Friday, April 13

With *Labrador* off Pictou[75] harbour in beautiful flying weather, one *Labrador* officer was flown to HMCS *Wallaceburg,*[76] an Algerine-class minesweeper trapped in ice alongside in Pictou. This officer was transferred to the ship using the helicopter`s hoist. *Labrador* then took

HMCS *Wallaceburg* in tow through heavy ice while a photographer was flown in the local area to capture the event on film.

To facilitate communication between the two ships, two small radio sets were transferred to *Wallaceburg* by helicopter hoist. The commanding officer of *Wallaceburg* was also flown to *Labrador* and returned that morning.

This busy day of flying resulted in 8.6 hours of flying which was more than half of the hours flown by the detachment in March. The Bell 201 was still unserviceable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Webster	McIntyre	Prim. Ice Recce	0900
203	Bays	Capt Pullen, Bethune, Beauchamp	Prim. Ice Recce	915
246	FitzGerald	Ashby, Vales, Pullen	Trans & Photo	1105
203	Webster	Shuer	Prim Ice Recce	1115
203	Bays	Shuer, Cribb, Tait	Prim Ice Recce	1300
246	FitzGerald	Richards, Shuer, Vales	Misc Seq	1410
246	Webster	Atwell	Misc Photo	1530

Saturday, April 14

Labrador and *Wallaceburg* sailed northward from Picton in company under a low ceiling with fog in the late afternoon. An ice reconnaissance flight was flown by Bays in 203 at 0840 with Vales as crew. At 1500,

with the ship between Cape North and St. Paul's Island, FitzGerald flew 203 with MacIntyre and Captain Pullen for primary ice reconnaissance. The wreck of the ship *Kismet II*[77] was sighted off Cape of St. Lawrence. 201 was signed off as serviceable after a one and quarter hour run.

Sunday, April 15

Labrador proceeded south to Halifax along the Eastern shore of Nova Scotia in bright weather and moderate winds. Captain Pullen was flown in 246 on one flight in the afternoon while Bays with McKenzie as crew flew a transport and test flight at 1400 in 203.

Monday, April 16

Labrador arrived at Sambro Light Vessel at 0800 in rain and fog. The lone HUP with Bays in command and McKenzie as crew and the two Bells, with Webster flying 203 with MacLean as crew and 201 piloted by FitzGerald with Cribb as crew, disembarked between 0830 and 0900 and flew in formation to CANAS. The helicopter detachment personnel disembarked until July 3 or until just before *Labrador* commenced its next cruise.

Summer & Fall 1956 Arctic Cruise

Between 16 April and 5 July, *Labrador's* ship's company prepared her for a planned three month Arctic trip - her third since being launched in 1954. The makeup of her officer corp, civilian scientific staff and helicopter detachment for the 1956 Arctic trip is outlined below.

Key Members of the Ship's Company

Captain
Captain Thomas C. Pullen CD, RCN

Executive Officer
Cdr Charles A. "Tony" Law DSC, CD, RCN

Engineering Officer
Cdr (E) D.H. Fairney CD, RCN

Naval Architect
Cdr Edward S. Mitchell,[78] RCN

Operations Officer
LCdr Orfeur J. Cavanaugh CD, RCN

Ship's Doctor
Surg LCdr D.A. Maciver[79] MB, CHB, CD, RCN

Ship's Hydrographer
Mr. Sidney VanDyke (Civilian)

Underwater Diving Unit Bravo Officer in Charge
LCdr B. F. Ackerman, RCN

Helicopter Detachment Officer in Charge
Lt (P) John A. MacNeil CD, RCN (Absent from photo below)

Helicopter Detachment Second in Charge
Hudson, RCN (Absent from photo below)

Helicopter Detachment Pilot & Ship's Officer
LCdr Ian Webster, RCN

Helicopter Detachment Maintenance
Chief Petty Officer Lou Turner, RCN

Helicopter Detachment Maintenance
Petty Officer Hap Brownwell

Chief Scientist Atlantic Oceanographic Group
Dr. N.J. Ca mpbell

Formation of HU-21 Squadron Helicopter Detachment 2

On June 28, 1956, *Labrador's* air detachment was formed with personnel from HU-21 Squadron, a helicopter utility squadron based at HMCS *Shearwater*, the RCN's east coast airfield. HU-21 Detachment Two included three pilots: Lt (P) John A. MacNeil as the officer in charge, S/Lt (P) Glyn C. FitzGerald, RCN(R) as second in command and LCdr (P) Ian Webster to help with flying duties.

A cadre of aviation maintenance technicians supervised by Chief Petty Officer Lou Turner was also embarked to maintain detachment aircraft onboard *Labrador*. These were divided into two watches, one under Leading Seaman John Cribb and the other under AB Brownhill. Everyone in the air detachment would turn to in the morning to

complete whatever work was required and then half of the detachment would have the rest of the day off, on a rotating basis.

To maintain this small fleet of aircraft in Arctic conditions required a dedicated maintenance crew of eight under the management of Chief Petty Officer Lou Turner. His crew of one Petty Officer and seven ratings were trained in helicopter airframe, aero engine and electronics maintenance; they kept the Detachment aircraft serviceable under often difficult working condition in an unheated open hangar.

HMCS Labrador - Commissioned Officers & Scientific Staff - 1956 Arctic Cruise, Photo Source: DND Via Lt (P) J. A. MacNeil Collection

Diving Unit "Bravo" Formation

A clearance diving unit,[80] designated Diving Unit "Bravo" and led by LCdr Ben Ackerman, also embarked onboard *Labrador* in Halifax for the 1956 trip north. It consisted of approximately six or seven diving personnel including: Chief Petty Officer Norm Mitts, Petty Officer Harry R. Thompson, PO MacArthur and Able Seaman Clearance Divers (ABCD) A. W. "Wally" Green, Arthur F. Beaumont and Leading Seaman Stan Stephenson.[81] This diving unit travelled north onboard *Labrador,* but once arriving in the North, they were disembarked to begin diving

operations from various shore locations. This detached unit lived in camps set up onshore by the Foundation Company of Canada, who also provided all their domestic needs and meals.

The main role of the diving unit was to prepare landing beaches at many points along the DEW Line route due to the complete lack of seaport facilities in the North, the lack of runways and the impracticability of transporting by air the vast amounts of material required for DEW Line construction. With beaches cleared in advance of the cargo carrying convoys escorted by *Labrador* and American icebreakers, heavy loads and large numbers of personnel could be carried ashore by landing craft and other support vessels.

RCN divers excelled in their work, pioneering cold water diving, and underwater search and survey techniques. The divers wore Pirelli rubber dry suits over special cold-water diving underwear[82] developed by Canada's National Research Council and used the latest equipment such as CABA or compressed air breathing apparatus made by companies like US Divers. RCN divers were able to clear boulders, ice and other underwater obstructions and mark the cleared landing areas. This numbingly cold work allowed landing craft and other support vessels to safely land heavy equipment, personnel and various materials required for DEW Line construction and support on previously unusable beaches.

For the underwater search and survey work, a "towed diver" technique was developed which utilized a small 10 HP motor boat with a long pole rigged across it midship. At each end of this pole, a rope trailed in the water with a weight at the end from which two clearance divers would be towed through the water at about 5 knots so they could quickly cover large areas of sea bed and identify and map obstructions to be removed. When divers spotted an obstruction, they would pop to the surface and signal the boat. A crewman in the boat would then throw a weighted yellow float overboard to mark the location of the obstruction requiring demolition.

The explosives used for this clearance work were a combination of the Canadian-made ammonia nitrate-based explosive called "Nitrone", manufactured by Canadian Industries Limited, as well as British PE3A and American C3 plastic explosive. Nitrone was preferred for this work

as it had a lower detonation rate which resulted in less fragmentation of obstructions like large boulders, was packaged conveniently so as to facilitate application and was resistant to water and freezing. C3 became too brittle and hard to work with in the ice and the cold[83] conditions encountered.

L to R: LCdr Ben Ackerman & ABCD Wally Green, Photo Source: Wally Green

Once all of the obstructions were identified, the diving team's next job was to place the explosive charges to blow up the obstructions. Explosive charges were made up in tin cans which were threaded at each end so that they could be screwed together to form the size of charge required to demolish each specific obstruction. The charges, along with a detonator and connected to a fuse which in turn was attached to a small cork floating on the surface, were then lowered over the side of the support boat. After all the divers were out of the water, one of the support boat crewman would then join all of the fuses together and connect them into an electric circuit, which was then used to detonate the explosives from shore.[84]

Once all beach obstructions were cleared and the landing zone prepared, markers were set up to ensure the safe navigation in and out of the beach by landing craft.

All explosives were carried from Halifax by *Labrador* and sent ashore by landing craft. Once Arctic operations were completed, all of the remaining plastic explosive material was detonated, as it was impractical to transport it back to Halifax.

Although *Labrador* was usually in the vicinity of beach clearing operations, the diving unit was transported from site to site by a Douglas C-47A aircraft known as "Rose of the Arctic". This aircraft (Canadian registration CF-IQR / Manufacturer Serial Number 11876) was owned and operated by Don McVicar's World Wide Airways, one of the many civilian companies under contract to the DEW Line operation.

Once Diving Unit "Bravo" completed their work in the North, they were flown south in a Douglas DC-4 to Mont Joli, Québec and from there travelled by train back to their home base in Halifax.

In the course of this entire diving operation, not one accident or injury was sustained by the diving unit. The RCN's Underwater Demolition Units became so proficient at their work that they were requested by the U.S. military and attached to the U.S. Navy ships, which continued to support arctic DEW Line operations even after HMCS *Labrador* was transferred to the Canadian Coast Guard in 1957. In doing so, they were commended by both Canadian and American military authorities for their exemplary cold-water diving work. It is particularly unfortunate that these Canadian RCN diving teams have quite often been mistakenly identified as U.S. Navy teams in many of the accounts concerning their extensive beach clearing operations during construction of the Dew Line.

1956 Arctic Cruise - Detachment Two Operations

Prior to departure from the Halifax navy dockyard, all aircraft assigned to *Labrador's* helicopter detachment were flown aboard in the afternoon of June 28 and the flight deck was secured for sea by evening.

Friday, June 29

This day, "in routines"[85] for the ship's company were completed and a make-and-mend declared.

Saturday, June 30 – Monday, July 2

Over this long week-end, one member of the detachment remained onboard at all times.

July 1956 Operations

Tuesday, July 3

After celebrating Dominion Day in 1956, *Labrador's* crew of wenty-one officers, 210 men and nine civilians embarked to prepare the ship for departure. With the flight deck secured, *Labrador* slipped her lines and proceeded to sea for what was to be four months of Arctic operations.

HU-21 Squadron dispatched an HTL-4 and a Sikorsky HO4S to salute

the ship as it left the approaches of Halifax harbour.

The first leg of what would be a four months voyage covering 5,000 miles of Arctic ocean was to St. John`s, Newfoundland in order to refuel for the Arctic portion of the trip. *Labrador's* officers would also meet with US Naval and military personnel about the forthcoming Arctic operations in support of the DEW Line sea lift and convoy escort duties. *Labrador* initially would have to traverse the rolling swells of the open Atlantic Ocean on the way to St. John's.

Wednesday, July 4

The day dawned with a bright sky and calm seas.

All aircraft were flown during the day, allowing the helicopter pilots to maintain flight proficiency. At the same time, the ship's radar plotters were able to practice VHF communication with the aircraft and provide shipborne radar homing guidance for the flight crews.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	MacNeil	Kowalski	Misc. Seq.	1030
201	FitzGerald	Foster	Misc. Seq.	1040
245	FitzGerald	Kowalski	Misc. Seq.	1350
201	FitzGerald	Webster	Misc. Seq.	1455
200	MacNeil	Capt Pullen	Misc. Seq.	1400

Thursday, July 5

Fog prevented flight operations until late afternoon when two flights were made to again practice homing skills and also aerial photography. Approaching St. John's, whales and then the first icebergs were sighted and tracked by helicopter 200. The HUP 245, which was being flown at 1000 by Webster with Galley as crew, developed an electric inverter problem. FitzGerald meanwhile flew ``Misc. Seq.`` in 201 with Foster as

crew. By 1330, Labrador was secured alongside in St. John's for a one day stay.

Friday, July 6th

The electric inverter in 245 was still unserviceable and with fog and rain present in the area, there was no flying until afternoon when the weather cleared. Meanwhile, the ship was opened to visits by the citizens of St. John's who were invited to inspect the aircraft of Detachment 2. The ship's company was warmly received by the city during this brief stay.

While in St. John's, detachment personnel began the decoration of their flight deck with the cartoon-like image of a mascot called Buzz-Bear, which was designed by Petty Officer Ken Cann. His design was based on the image of a polar bear sprouting a set of angel-like wings and wearing a peaked naval officer's cap.

Meanwhile, Labrador's senior officers and scientific personnel attended a conference with U.S. naval and military personnel concerning their respective roles during the pending Arctic voyage.

Saturday, July 7

Weather in the St. John's area cleared on Saturday morning, but was worse at sea. Labrador remained in harbour in order to receive another spare battery for the HUP via air express and to allow final repair of the HUP's inverter by the maintenance crew. After lunch, Labrador's crew readied for sea and slipped her lines at 1400, while 200, with MacNeil at the controls and Galley as photographer, got airborne to take photographs. The ship's course was set for Resolution Island via her namesake waters: the Labrador Sea.

Sunday, July 8

With fog all day preventing flight operations, the helicopter maintenance crew worked to resolve electrical problems with 245 and by evening had it serviceable again.

Monday, July 9

Intermittent fog continued to inhibit flight operations, but 245 was successfully test-flown by MacNeil with McDougall as crew to verify the completed electrical repairs. Application of non-skid paint to the hangar

deck was also completed, resulting in a successful day for air detachment personnel.

Tuesday, July 10

By late morning, the ship was off the northern tip of Labrador's Torngat Mountains and although the weather had cleared somewhat since yesterday, it had now started to cloud over again.

By afternoon, fog had developed. With time on their hands, Detachment personnel completed the decoration of their flight deck with the Buzz Bear mascot image.

While the Detachment ratings finished painting the flight deck, Detachment pilots prepared for flights to Monumental, Lady Franklin and Brevoort Islands on the Southeast tip of Baffin Island. During these activities, *Labrador* encountered the first sea ice of the trip at 1800.

Note: Brevoort Island was named by Charles Francis Hall after "his steadfast friend" Mr. James Carson Brevoort of Brooklyn N.Y., president of the Long Island Historical Society.[86]

Wednesday, July 11

Reaching Hudson Strait, *Labrador* powered through light and heavy ice which contributed to the foggy and damp atmospheric conditions, preventing flight operations. Detachment personnel used this time to load one of the HTLs with radar reflectors in preparation for Op Order #1.

Thursday, July 12

The weather had still not improved to allow flight operations, so a make-and-mend was declared, providing the opportunity for those who were interested to do some skeet shooting from the flight deck.

After two days of oceanographic work in Hudson Strait, *Labrador* proceeded to the vicinity of Brevoort Island to survey and prepare charts of the Brevoort harbour approaches and inner harbour, which was charted by *Pogo*. *Labrador's* divers meanwhile were involved in clearing the Brevoort beach of ice and obstructions to facilitate off-loading of weather station resupply materials.

Friday, July 13

In the afternoon, weather conditions allowed the HUP to be flown on Misc. Seq. by MacNeil with LCdr Kelly as crew. 201 was flown at 1410 by FitzGerald with Van Norjwick as crew for ice reconnaissance, aerial photography and local flying practice, resulting in a total of three hours of flight time. Several large icebergs were sighted and investigated. Samples of gravel were retrieved from one iceberg for analysis by Dr. Campbell, one of the scientists onboard for the trip.

Saturday, July 14

Foggy weather in the morning off Brevoort Island prevented flying, but clearing weather in the afternoon allowed one flight of the HUP to photograph Lady Franklin and the Monumental Islands located in the approaches to Brevoort Island. Further flights to Brevoort harbour were made from the ship to transfer personnel, while the HTL-4's were used for ice reconnaissance in the approaches to Brevoort harbour. Here the ship encountered a variety of ice pack conditions from loose slushy ice to tight-packed floes frozen hard, and with blue ice up to 15 feet thick.

By 2100 that evening, the ship had stopped in Brevoort harbour under beautiful clear skies after taking nine hours to power her way through the pack ice.

It was here that Captain Pullen decided to name a very prominent headland (at left in the photo) “Pullen Point”. In his words: “We have named the very prominent headland on the western arm of the harbour "Pullen Point" after Captain T.C. Pullen, RN, who, as master of HMS North Star in Sir Edward Belcher's expedition in search of Franklin, wintered in Erebus Bay, Beechey Island, 1852-1854. I feel that, as his namesake, I have a right to submit this to the Canadian Board of Geographical Names for their consideration although it will have to be done through the Dominion Hydrographer. The other prominent headland we are calling "Labrador" for obvious reasons.”[87]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	FitzGerald	Galley	Prim. Photo	1500
200	Webster	Pilger	Prim. Ice Recce.	1530
201	MacNeil	Bolton, Rousseau	Harbour Recce.	1530
245	MacNeil	Kelly	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	1730
201	FitzGerald	McDougall	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	1815

Sunday, July 15

Taking advantage of the clear weather at 0430, the HUP was launched, piloted by Webster with Galley as crew, carrying gear belonging to the hydrographic, diving parties and other ship's personnel into Brevoort harbour.

Without the work of navy divers - who were early cold water diving pioneers - and the work of hydrographic personnel, it would not have been possible to safely use any of the beaches that were selected for the use of seaborne landing parties. These operations continued throughout the day supported by the two HTL-4's.

One HTL-4 with Lt MacNeil and Mike Bolton was engaged in erecting radar stations started on the on the western shore of the harbour erecting hydrographic stations. FitzGerald and LCdr Cavanaugh did likewise on the eastern side in the other HTL-4. By using the helicopters, what would have taken days saw all radar stations erected by noon, allowing navigational sights to be taken in the afternoon using the newly erected reflectors. Terrain in the area provided all pilots with ample practice in cliff landing techniques, while personnel transfers using the HUP continued into the evening hours. Since the weather remained stable due to a

temperature inversion, these operations continued into Monday with HUP personnel transfers and HTL photo flights.

Arctic Engine Change of HUP Aircraft Onboard Labrador. Photo Source: DND Via Lt (P) J.A.MacNeil Collection

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Galley	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0440
200	FitzGerald	Cavanaugh	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0500
201	MacNeil	Bolton & Schreuer	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0500
245	Webster	Crowther	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1400
245	Webster	Cribb	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1540

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Kowalski	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	2000

Monday, July 16

The weather was still good, but winds increased in the afternoon, becoming stronger than usual. Ship personnel and supplies were flown to new sites inside the harbour selected for beacons, which were to be erected later in the day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	MacNeil	McDougal	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0700
200	Webster	Galley & Reade	Prim. Photo	0800
200	FitzGerald	Campbell	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0915
201	MacNeil	Capt Pullen	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1040
200	FitzGerald	Brown	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1130
201	FitzGerald	Mitchell	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1400
200	Webster	Shrever	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1430
201	FitzGerald	Cdr Law	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1545

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	MacNeil	Butler	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1600

Tuesday, July 17

Excellent weather continued, but again with winds increasing in the afternoon. Transfers of personnel and equipment continued throughout the day to the radar beacon sites, which were again completed later in the day. A strong vibration problem experienced by 201 was corrected by the aircraft maintenance personnel, and the aircraft was flight-tested in the evening.

The erection of radar beacons involved transporting the reflectors, tools and work parties ashore, where all hands - including the pilots - turned to the work: using rock drills, installing guy wire anchors, assembling the reflector to the mast, raising the beacon and attaching guy wires

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Cdr MacLean	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0705
200	FitzGerald	Ackerman	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	0945
201	Webster	Foster	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1030
201	FitzGerald	Shipwrights	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1245
200	Webster	Turner, Cann	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1330
245	FitzGerald	Leblanc, Brownell	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1450

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Webster	Kowalski	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1700
201	MacNeil	McDougall	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1705
201	MacNeil	Turner	Prim. Tran. Brevoort	1845
201	MacNeil	Turner	Misc. Air Test	1920
201	MacNeil	Turner, McDougal, Enslowe	Misc. Air Test	2140

Wednesday, July 18

A work party was transported ashore in the early morning to give the new beacons a coat of paint, while another HTL transported the hydrographer to complete his work. Throughout the morning, weather conditions deteriorated, with rain and fog by the afternoon

An attempt to mark rocks at the harbour entrance with gallon jugs of orange paint proved unsuccessful, although the helicopter crew claimed to have deadly accurate paint bomb aiming skills! All hydrographic beacons were recovered by HTL. The HUP was used to fly the Captain and Commander ashore in the late afternoon to say *au revoir* to crew who were remaining ashore to man a temporary camp. At 1630, *Labrador* proceeded to sea again and stopped in an ice field for the night.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Hinder	Prim. Trans. & Bombing	0810
200	MacNeil	Foster	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	0830

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	McDougall	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	0955
201	FitzGerald	Hunt	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	1200
201	FitzGerald	McDougall, Cdr Law	Prim. Trans. Brevoort	1315
245	Webster	Capt Pullen	Prim. Trans. Brevoort & Ice Recce.	1330

Thursday, July 19

With the soundings, charting and beach clearing completed, the ship departed Brevoort for Resolution Island on the morning watch, in a fog which persisted all day and prevented flight operations.

Mrs. Bessie Parsons, Inuit Boy & LCdr Maciver, Photo Source: DND LAB 1619

Friday, July 20

With rain and ten-mile visibility, the HUP flown by FitzGerald with Kowalski as crew was used at 0800 to fly charts, navigational data, food and magazines to Resolution Island, where they were met by local radio operators and a few of the Inuit families from the island. A USN icebreaker, USS *Edisto,* was to pick up these charts and photographs in about a week's time and use them to escort a cargo ship into the vicinity.

Onboard *Labrador*, a minor inspection was initiated on the HUP.

By 2140, both HTL's were able to launch, carrying the ship's doctor and a photographer to Lake Harbour on Baffin Island where Inuit patients were to be evaluated. 200 was flown by FitzGerald with Galley as crew.

201 was about to launch and make a routine medical visit with the ship's Doctor when *Labrador* received an urgent call for medical assistance from Mrs. Bessie Parsons, a registered nurse located at Lake Harbour and the wife of local RCMP Constable Bill Parsons of Owen Sound and Toronto. Flown to Lake Harbour by Lt MacNeil, Surg LCdr Maciver, found one small boy to be ill, so the local families were thankful for the medical attention. The helicopter crews also met the two RCMP officers and their families who manned this remote outpost.

Also, a local Hudson Bay Company store (#W8, with an ample stock of fine Inuit carvings, provided an excellent source of authentic souvenirs.

These purchases took place this same day with Hudson Bay Store Manager Gordon Rennie; it was published in daily newspapers across Canada. Lt MacNeil purchased most of the items on display.

Most of these carvings were made from a fine, jade-like soapstone which is now apparently somewhat rare; the author has been told by Inuit art collectors that these objects are now quite valuable and an excellent investment considering what was paid for these artifacts!

A crate of eggs along with other provisions was left for the HBC store manager, with the HTL-4 crew returning to the ship by 0100 hours on Saturday morning. The ship departed the vicinity of Lake Harbour for Coral Harbour.

Saturday, July 21

Inspection of the HUP continued throughout the day with the engine being removed. An ice recce was proposed, then cancelled in the evening.

Sunday, July 22

An ice recce was conducted at 1425 in 200 with Lt MacNeil as pilot and LCdr Douglas as observer. Meanwhile, the HUP's minor inspection, which took just over two days, was completed and the aircraft was test-flown at 1945 by pilot MacNeil with Brownell as crew and declared serviceable. Meanwhile, *Labrador* was on route for Ivujivik, the most northerly settlement in the Province of Québec.

Monday, July 23

Arriving at Ivujivik in the morning and with no other commitments, the ship's company had a make-and-mend in the afternoon. Consequently, no flying was conducted.

Tuesday, July 24

Next stop was Coral Harbour on Southhampton Island in windy and rainy weather. However, arrival of the first mail in over three weeks heightened spirits. The HUP, piloted by MacNeil with Kowalski as crew, was used to fly visitors and a jug of acid ashore at 1350. Here the ship picked up stores and mail before sailing for Cape Donovan and then Cape Enauolik, where an Electronic Position Indicator (EPI)[88] station left in 1955 was to be retrieved.

Wednesday, July 25

By morning, the ship was navigating through ice into Foxe Basin off Cape Enauolik. Due to the heavier ice that was to be encountered, an ice recce flight was launched at 0905 by FitzGerald piloting 200 with LCdr Markham as the observer.

At 1530, the ship was 12 miles from the EPI station at Enauolik. Chief Turner, seaman Bouchard and *Labrador's* shipwrights were flown ashore by pilot MacNeil in the HUP to deconstruct the station for transport back to the ship.

Commander and Kowalski to the Rescue! Photo Source: DND Via Lt (P) J.A.MacNeil Collection

One HTL, flown by FitzGerald with Bouchard as crew, was also pressed into this transfer service at 1645. At 1805, FitzGerald in 200 was forced to make an emergency water landing three miles from the ship on the way to Enauolik when both engine fan belts were lost in flight. *Labrador* reached the disabled machine and lowered a Newfoundland dory with mechanic AB Kowalski onboard and none other than the

Commander rowing to reach the helicopter. Kowalski was then able to replace the missing fan belts. All of this was observed from "Goofers" stations[89] while everyone with a camera documented the event from the foc'sle. Soon after, FitzGerald was able to lift off the water and return to *Labrador* with no damage other than to his pilot's pride. Transfers continued at 1830 with 201 flown by Webster with Foster as crew, and later at 2015 by 245, now flown by the rescued FitzGerald, until the last transfer was completed at 2230. In all, cargo included radio masts, tent, stoves, tables, lumber, generators, plywood and many other items. *Labrador* then proceeded westward across the strait towards Coral Harbour.

Thursday, July 26

This day dawned in heavy fog with the ship breaking ice on a westerly course towards Coral Harbour. Since no flying could be accomplished, a make-and-mend was exercised.

Friday, July 27

Poor weather conditions continued into Friday with rain and fog all day, and by noon Coral Harbour was raised by radio. While no flying was accomplished, a morning flight by MacNeil in the HUP at 1700 tested its ability to carry radar reflectors and poles, with satisfactory results.

Commander "Peter" E.G. Savage, DSO, DSC, MID, Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm. Photo Source: Commander E.G. Savage

Saturday, July 28

Weather this day was no better than the previous two days and by late afternoon the ship was off Cape Fisher, where by 2030 the dismantled EPI station was transported ashore by the *Labrador's* LCVP.

Sunday, July 29

By Sunday, the weather had not improved, with more rain and fog. A 0830 flight by MacNeil piloting the HUP with Chief Turner as crew was forced to abort a Coral Harbour flight

due to the low cloud ceilings in the Cape Fisher Mountains, but in late afternoon at 1545 another attempt was successful.

Commander "Peter" E.G. Savage[90] of the Royal Navy was flown back onboard the ship, along with the ship's mail. Cdr Savage was there to observe and evaluate the Arctic operations of the RCN. On arriving back onboard, Chief Turner learned through a message from Halifax that he was the proud papa of a baby boy, as *Labrador* transited Foxe Channel into Foxe Basin enroute to Hall Beach and Bray Island. *Labrador* was about to cross the Arctic Circle by July 31st.

Monday, July 30

By morning, the weather cleared as *Labrador* pushed her way through heavy ice 00 miles north of Cape Fisher. A flight test of 200 at 0910 proved the aircraft to be serviceable. Two ice recce's were also flown with 200 in the morning. One was flown at 1015 by FitzGerald with Pilger as crew and another at 1125 with Captain Pullen, which revealed a patch of light ice to the northeast. Another ice recce was flown in 200 by Webster with Markham as crew at 1750 in the dog watches[91] as the ship was beset for two hours in ice.

Tuesday, July 31

This day dawned in clear and cool weather with the ship at the same position as the previous day. One ice recce was flown at 0845 by Webster with Cdr Savage as crew using 200, and a hydrographer was flown to an island whose position and contour were doubtful. This resulted in the expiration of 200's flight time, requiring a minor inspection to be started in the late morning.

201 with MacNeil at the controls and Cdr Savage RN as observer did another ice recce at 1355 in the afternoon, while Detachment personnel started to reapply non-skid paint to the flight deck. A final ice recce was flown by MacNeil with Pilger as observer in 201 at 2100 hrs.

Labrador, continuing on course for the main DEW line base at Hall Beach,began to approach the Arctic Circle, which she would cross the following day with due ceremony.

August 1956 Operations

Wednesday, August 1

On this day at 0205 hours, *Labrador* crossed the Arctic Circle. The photo below captured the moment with the usual ceremony to initiate those crossing this geographic point for the first time.

Bright weather with light winds brought in the day, allowing one ice recce flight at 0815 in 201 flown by FitzGerald with Cribb as observer. FitzGerald launched again at 1135 in 201 with Markham as observer in the early morning. Webster took over 201 for a flight at 1445 with Cdr Savage as observer for another ice recce while *Labrador* powered through light 1-4/10th ice coverage. MacNeil launched at 1735 with McDougal in 200 to flight-test the aircraft after its minor inspection was completed. MacNeil again flew 200 on an ice recce at 2135 with Pilger as observer.

Detachment personnel also completed the re-application of non-skid paint to the flight deck and LS Cann's Buzz Bear roundel was finished, while yellow lines and landing circles were applied, thus creating the brightest area of the ship.

Captain Pullen described this day as follows: "It has to be experienced to be appreciated. Another day of struggling! At 0205 crossed the Arctic Circle. At 0400 open water was reached and I fell into a deep sleep without knowing that was the reason.

A good day's run ... then at 1600 we were back in heavy pack. Six engines on the line from 1700 on the 1st to 0300 on the 2nd at which time open water was reached distant from Site 30 about 32 miles. A great relief, we have certainly bucked our way through some very heavy ice. The Captain of the C.D. Howe, sitting comfortably off Coral Harbour, is reputed to have said that because ice conditions were so bad this year the sealift ships would never get through and that *Labrador* would not make it either. Well, here we are! Silly old man."[92]

Thursday, August 2

In bright weather with foggy intervals, *Labrador* transited north through the Foxe Basin area parallel to Melville Peninsula en-route to Hall Beach – Site 30. On arrival at Hall Beach, the HUP and one Bell were pressed into service all day to conduct many transfer trips between ship and shore.

Arctic Circle Crossing Ceremony L to R: Cdr Fairney, Cdr Law, LCdr Macivor. Photo Source: DND Via Lt (P) J.A.MacNeil Collection

Friday, August 3

This day dawned with fog and rain. The HUP continued with personnel and equipment transfers all day. One Bell took over in the evening, providing an Arctic taxi service ashore and back. One photo flight was conducted over the beach area in late afternoon when the weather cleared.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	FitzGerald	Johnson, Cdr(E) Little, Douglas Capt, Cdr(E), Cdr, Cann	Prim. Tran. Hall	1030
245	FitzGerald	Rousseau	Prim. Tran. Hall	1350
245	FitzGerald	Chestney, Galley, Kellberg	Prim. Tran. Hall & Photo	1510

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	FitzGerald	Connolly, Galley	Prim. Tran. Hall	1630
201	Webster	Galley	Prim. Tran. Hall	1945
201	Webster	O'Dell	Prim. Tran. Hall	2200

Note: As a major staging area for the construction of the Distant Early Warning system, Hall Beach and its associated landing strip were beehives of activity during the summer season. Local geology, with permafrost soil, proved challenging in creating both a suitable beachhead for the transport of material from cargo ships escorted into the area by Labrador and a suitable landing strip for heavily loaded aircraft. Many aircraft were damaged when sinking into soft ground and in some cases were abandoned at the side of the airstrip.

Personnel accommodation at Hall Beach was a mix of permanent buildings, Quonset Huts and temporary accommodations for the influx of construction workers during the summer construction season.

By 2200 hours on August 3rd, operations at Hall Beach were completed and *Labrador* headed northeast to to the area of Site 31 located on Rowley Island. Once in the vicinity of Rowley Island, helicopter detachment operations were carried out from both the ship ["Embarked" in the logs following] and from a shore base ["Disembarked" following].

Saturday, August 4 - Embarked

On arrival off Rowley Island the next morning, both Bells were detached to support hydrographic work on the island. The HUP piloted by Webster with Galley as crew was dispatched at 1000 to transport some of the detachment gear to a campsite ashore. A request was also issued to conduct a photo survey of the beach landing area and once that was completed by Webster in 245 with a Mr. Carron, a site engineer from

the Foundation Co. and a colleague, they were later flown out to the ship at 1430 for lunch with Captain Pullen.

During the morning, a seaman by the name of Applejohn had been injured when the loading ramp of *Labrador's* LCVP fell open and caused several fractures of his legs. Consequently, the ship returned to Foxe Basin in order to land the injured sailor. The HUP, again flown by Webster, was dispatched to Foxe harbour at 2245 so the ship's doctor could make arrangements for air evacuation of the patient to Halifax.

Saturday, August 4 – Disembarked

At 0815, 201 piloted by MacNeil with Turner as observer departed on an ice recce mission and continued in clear weather to Site 31 on Rowley Island.

200 was flown off at 0915 to the site by FitzGerald with McDougall as crew.

MacNeil took over 200 at 1000 hours and made two solo trips to Site 31 with material for the shore base.

Two pilots, three maintenance personnel and two hydrographers met the site officials to tour the site. 201 experienced electrical problems making it unserviceable for half of the day.

At 1520, FitzGerald flew one hydrographer, Van Dyck, in 200 to the site of navigational beacons named "John & LUG", which had been placed during *Labrador's* 1955 voyage. LUG was re-erected and four new beacons were also installed.

Prefabricated accommodation huts had been erected by this time, so Chief Turner, Kowalski and MacDougal were assigned to one, with MacNeil, FitzGerald, Williams and Van Dyck billeted in the other hut. These luxurious accommodations were furnished with space heaters, sleeping bags, air mattresses, potable water, outdoor plumbing, no radios but excellent food in "great quantities" and "for an astronomical fee", courtesy of the Foundation Co. This site provided an excellent location for hydrographical work.

FitzGerald and Turner completed the day with one more flight in 200.

Sunday, August 5 – Embarked

In the early hours of August 5th, Webster flying 245 with MacLean as crew and Applejohn (the patient injured in the landing craft accident),

flew ashore to Foxe at 0130 and transferred Applejohn to a Maritime Central Airways DC-4 for the medivac flight which departed immediately for Mont Joli, Que. This was the end of a long period of flight operations for the flight and flight deck crews, who finally stood down for some well-earned rest.

L to R: Lt (P) MacNeil, Williams (?), Van Dyck (Hydrographer), SLt (P) FitzGerald Photo Source: DND Via Lt (P) J.A.MacNeil Collection

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Applejohn, MacLean	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0130
245	Webster	Cann, Cribb	Prim. Trans. N. Ooglit	1350
245	Webster	Cann, Cribb	Prim. Trans. N. Ooglit	1545

Beacon assembly and erection work continued in the afternoon at a site on North Ooglit Island (Site 31) and the first of the large beacons was set up with assistance of the HUP. This involved four trips by Webster,

with Cann and Cribb as crew, to transport the required beacon bits and pieces ashore along with the manpower to erect them, and to return personnel to the ship. With the ship located nine miles offshore, the elapsed time for this operation was six hours, with the HUP flying three of the six hours and the Bells the remainder. The work party were pleased with this effort, but felt that mission time for the next beacon installation could be further reduced now that the construction party was experienced, and by having the ship closer inshore to reduce transit time between ship and shore the next time.

Sunday, August 5 – Disembarked

With dull weather in the morning turning to clear in the afternoon, 200 piloted by FitzGerald was airborne by 0830 to support further deployment of hydrographical beacons. In all, ten beacons were erected during the day. 201 went unserviceable at start-up but was repaired and able to fly by noon, when Williams was flown by Lt MacNeil to inspect beacons which had been already set up. Pilots had difficulty finding the beacons due to the flat featureless terrain making navigation difficult, combined with heat waves distorting the landscape and impairing visual navigation.

Pilots and work crews enjoyed the huge lunches prepared by the Foundation Company[93] cooks - and which they found impossible to finish! LCdr Ackerman[94] and his divers arrived on site late in the day to clear the landing beach for use by the LCVP.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Site 31	0835
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. Site 31	1330
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Site 31	1530
201	MacNeil	Turner	Prim. Trans. Site 31	2000

Monday, August 6 – Embarked

With *Labrador* off Foxe in the morning, Captain Rousseau was flown ashore at 0915 to make an inspection of other sites in the area. The ship's company were expecting mail but none had arrived, which was a major disappointment. *Labrador* then departed for Manning Island (another Foxe Basin island) to support installation of another beacon. This time, with the ship four or five miles closer to shore, beacon installation was accomplished in four hours instead of six "with a Pusser's picnic[95] thrown in".

Manning Island was home to a large colony of birds (mostly Terns), all of whom managed to avoid contact with the helicopters' rotor blades. In the afternoon, *Labrador* set course for South Ooglit Island to erect another beacon which this time was accomplished using the ship's motorboats. With the ship's engineering officer as 'gang boss", this task was completed in the record time of three hours.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Russeau	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0915
245	Webster	P.O. Van Nortwick (USN), Galley, Cribb	Prim. Trans. Manning	1030
245	Webster	None	Prim. Trans. Manning	1425

Monday, August 6 – Disembarked

With clear flying weather all day, 200 supported erection of additional beacons and also took two sets of observations – one as far as the north end of Rowley Island and 25 miles from camp. 201 continued with observations, but heat waves radiating off the ground called a halt to observation flights in the afternoon, highlighting the need to conduct these observations earlier in the day.

With an auxiliary power unit (APU) borrowed from the Foundation Company, cold early morning starts of the helicopters were possible

while saving aircraft batteries. Batteries were also recharged overnight in Chief Turner's cabin. This arrangement allowed work to progress very satisfactorily.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0835
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyke	Prim. Trans. 31	0830
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	1300

Tuesday, August 7 – Embarked

With the ship off Foxe again, the HUP took off at 0900 to pick up Mr. Brevig plus two personnel from an EPI party returning from Site 32. By 1430, the ship was ten miles south of Tangle Island and Mr. Bolton was flown there to select another beacon site. This beacon was erected by a shore party which landed using *Labrador's* LCVP.

By the time the HUP returned, the ship was on its way to the next site. At Tern Island, conditions were favourable for beacon work and the whole operation took two hours in total, with one hour of flight time facilitated by having the ship as close as possible and the work being performed clear of meal hours. The LCVP was recovered at 2300, by which time visibility was down to less than half a mile.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Cribb	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0900
245	Webster	Bolton, Bouchard	Prim. Trans. Tangle	1430

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Bolton, Cann	Prim. Tran. Tern Island	1600

Tuesday, August 7 – Disembarked

Weather was cloudy and windy, but both Bells proceeded with observation flights mostly focused on the northern end of the island. By rising at 0330 for flight operations and getting airborne by 0445, the problem with air navigation and visibility distortion from heat waves was largely overcome and operations were finished by noon. Both aircraft performed trouble-free.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. 31	0445
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0500

Wednesday, August 8th – Embarked

Under the control of LCdr Webster and with Bolton and Cann onboard, the HUP took off at 0940 in good weather to survey beacon sites. Two sites were selected and markers placed by parties landed in boats at one beacon site on Pursuit Point and the other one at Atka Head on Rowley Island.

Webster landed a party at 1100 with the HUP and at 1315 with Cann as crew. Two beacons were erected in less than four hours at Cape Bushman and Cape Lindenwald on Koch Island. In deteriorating flying conditions and with visibility down to one half mile in light rain, the aircraft finally returned to the ship. The last boat was recovered by 2000, with a humorous offer of a search by helicopter being made. It was politely turned down.

Wednesday, August 8 – Disembarked

One HTL-4 was dispatched in cloud and intermittent rain to set up more beacons. Now becoming a well-oiled operation, five beacons were set up by 1800 hours. Hindered by poor visibility, the second Bell flew a couple of transfer trips between the ship and shore. One flight brought recording tapes to the Marconi station staff and another more "bunting" for beacons, while the return trip transported Arctic Char[96] to the ship. Three sets of observations were taken to the north of the ship and two beacons that had been blown over were repaired. In the evening, 200 flew to the beach area to tie in the divers' base-lines [97] with the hydrographic beacons.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0745
200	FitzGerald		Prim. Trans. *Labrador*	0800
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. 31	1000
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. 31	1240
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. 31	1900

Thursday, August 9th – Embarked

Since rain, fog and heavy ice hampered operations, a day of rest was in order and a "Sunday routine" was declared at 1030, while the ship proceeded to Foxe in order to collect much sought-after mail. Arriving at 2300, aircraft were not required for transport.

Thursday, August 9th – Disembarked

In clear weather, 200 flew south to finish erecting beacons, returning by noon. 200`s generator needed replacement, leaving it unserviceable

for the remainder of the day. Heat waves again prevented flying in the afternoon.

Six bags of mail arrived and awaited the ship`s return. At an auxiliary airfield eight miles away, a C-124 Globemaster transport had landed and was thoroughly inspected by Det. 2 personnel.

201, having undergone a progressive minor inspection during the day, was test-flown when completed in the afternoon and found serviceable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0800
201	MacNeil	Kowalski	Misc. Air Test	1930

Friday, August 10th – Embarked

With more ship's mail arriving at Foxe during the night, the HUP was sent ashore at 0700 to collect it; at the same time, *Labrador* proceeded to Rowley Island. At 0930, the HUP was sent ashore to Rowley Island where six more bags of mail were awaiting transfer to the ship as well as a replacement generator for the unserviceable Bell. In the afternoon, a beacon was erected at Bartlett Light on Rowley and with fog moving in, erection of another took place at Guernsey Point. The HUP delivered mail plus odds and ends to the detachment ashore.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Bouchard	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0705
245	Webster	Brownell, Bolton	Prim. Trans. Rowley	0930

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
245	Webster	Cann, Martin. Bolton	Prim. Trans. Rowley	1130
245	Webster	Rav	Prim. Trans. Rowley	1345
245	Webster	Maciver, Cribb	Prim. Trans. Rowley	1520

Friday, August 10th – Disembarked

201 proceeded with observations to the South at 0400 and was back by noon in clearing but still cloudy weather. The HUP had arrived by noon with the generator for 200, which was made serviceable again later in the afternoon and was able to complete observations in the northern half of the island. Meanwhile, the site chef and some fish were ferried onboard 201 to the ship and back - only at the expense of the chef`s bar time onboard!

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0515
200	FitzGerald	McDougal	Misc. Air Test	1110
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. 31	1845
201	MacNeil	Talbot	Prim. Trans. 31	1900

Saturday, August 11th – Embarked

While attempting a take-off from the ship in the morning, Webster struck the underside of the HUP on the deck edge, as the deck handling steering arm was still attached to the tailwheel of the aircraft. Since this accident caused airframe damage that was too significant to be repaired onboard, it brought a disappointing loss of operational capability to the Detachment.

At 1335 in the afternoon, FitzGerald in 200 with Bolton as crew, completed four trips to Rowley and Koch Island transporting supplies.

Saturday, August 11th – Disembarked

At 0400 in cloudy weather, 201 was prepared for launch to complete observations on the southern half of the island, while 200 was used to transport Major Treacy, USAF, from the site to the airstrip where his C-124 Globemaster was parked.

In the late afternoon, 200 returned to the ship, which was located in Labrador Channel. More transfer trips were completed for hydrographic work and reflector beacon work on Koch and Rowley Islands, while Chief Turner assessed the damaged HUP. Some excitement in 201 occurred when the oil temperature caused a forced landing and shutdown. On inspection, the transmission was found to be cool, which indicated that an unserviceable oil temp gauge was the problem. The engine was restarted and the aircraft returned to the ship to have the oil temperature gauge serviced. 201 returned to the site by 1800 while the spark plugs were changed on 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	0445
200	FitzgGerald	Maj. Treacy	Prim. Trans. 31	1030
200	FitzgGerald	Turner	Prim. Trans. Lab.	1140

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzgGerald	Turner	Prim. Trans. Lab.	1700

Sunday, August 12 - Embarked

Labrador's crew carried out a routine of part-ship duties,[98] as all aircraft were unserviceable.

Sunday August 12 – Disembarked

Poor weather with cloud, fog and rain provided a day of relaxation for Detachment personnel.

Monday, August 13 – Disembarked

Another day of poor weather with heavy patches of fog prevented flying.

Tuesday, August 14 – Disembarked

Weather throughout the day was the same as Sunday and Monday, but by evening the skies began clearing.

Wednesday, August 15 – Disembarked

In spite of a clearing trend the previous day, continuing poor weather required all aircraft to be secured for the high wind conditions that persisted.

Thursday, August 16 – Disembarked

Morning broke into an overcast, rainy and foggy day. At 1500, MacNeil flew 200 to *Labrador* for an estimated 48 hour stay, as he was to transport Rear-Admiral Rayner,[99] Chief of Naval Personnel, onboard. In the evening, 201 was flown by FitzGerald with Williams as crew to Site 31 in the south for observations and to identify beacon locations on aerial photos. Two beacons were found to have blown down and were righted.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	None	Prim. Trans. Lab.	1430
201	FitzGerald	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	1830

Friday, August 17 – Embarked

Weather this day, which like all days dictated daily operations, was overcast but with clear visibility and moderate winds. A successful flight by MacNeil to Foxe (which was located to the North) took place in 201 during the morning. One new beacon was erected and observed. At Sadleq Point, lock nuts were placed on the bottle screws of this radar reflector. Other beacons were pin-pointed on aerial photos and beacon recovery was started, while 10 gallons of avgas were being cached at Sadleq Point. Another flight took place in the afternoon to pinpoint and recover beacons.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Bouchard	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0830
200	MacNeil	None	Prim.Trans. Foxe	1050
200	MacNeil	Bouchard	Prim.Trans. Foxe	1345
200	MacNeil	None	Prim.Trans. Foxe	2300

Friday, August 17 – Disembarked

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim.Trans. 31	0815
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim.Trans. 31	1600

Saturday, August 18 – Embarked

RADM H. S. Rayner was flown aboard for a three day visit from Foxe at 0545 and was in the afternoon given a sightseeing photo flight around the vicinity.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	RADM. Rayner, Cdr A.O. Soloman, CD, Swithinback	Prim. Trans. Foxe	0515
200	Webster	Cavanaugh	Prim. Ice Recce	1320
200	MacNeil	None	Prim.Trans. 31	1710

Saturday, August 18 - Disembarked

Skies this day were overcast, but visibility was clear with light winds. In the morning, another 25 gallons of avgas were transported to the cache. More observations were taken to the north end of the island and in the afternoon more beacons were located and recovered, with 200 returning onboard in the evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck, Turner	Prim.Trans. 31	0815
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim.Trans. 31	1340

Sunday, August 19 – Disembarked

An early start was prevented by fog and rain in the morning, but weather cleared by noon, with 200 taking off for the North end of Rowley Island. 201 was held up with flight control difficulties which were soon corrected.

200 was recalled to the ship to stand by for transportation of the Admiral. However, by about 1400, the helicopter was released to continue with hydrographic work on Rowley and Koch Islands, and by mid-afternoon was also joined by 201 on Koch. Heat waves in the afternoon again interfered with observations between the two islands, so a baseline was measured on Koch.

Finding a walrus carcass on Bushman Rock, its fine pair of tusks were "delicately" removed using a five pound hammer.

As *Labrador* steamed through Labrador Channel towards Site 31, she recovered both HTL's, as by 2200 darkness was descending. Observations were discontinued; however, a baseline was obtained. Both aircraft then crossed Sadleq Point, recovering two cans of avgas from the cache to the ship and then returning to Site 31 by 2300. At midnight, both aircraft arrived onboard with the hydrographers and some personal gear, with the Chief Petty Officer and two hands to be recovered later. Site 31 personnel were officially embarked again after two weeks of enjoyable and successful work and play "amid a fine group of men, excellent fishing and interesting country".

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. 31	1130

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim.Trans. 31	1130
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. Lab.	2300
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Lab.	2300

Monday, August 20 – Embarked

In fair weather off Foxe Island, one HTL-4 flew Cdr Soloman, the Admiral`s aide, to arrange for the Admiral's departure from site 31. Early in the afternoon, another flight was launched to take photos of the beach landing area. At 1600, the Admiral and Cdr Soloman, along with their baggage, were flown ashore, where they boarded a DC-4 bound for Mont Joli, Québec.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Cdr Solomon	Prim.Trans. Foxe	1000
200	FitzGerald	Galley, Bouchard	Misc. Photo	1300
200	FitzGerald	Solomon	Prim.Trans. Foxe	1530
201	MacNeil	RADM. Rayner	Prim. Trans. Foxe	1535

Tuesday, August 21 - Embarked

At dawn in the Labrador Channel, weather conditions were fine and bright, allowing both HTL's to be launched at 0430. By 1000,

observations at radar reflectors on Koch and Rowley were finished. Late in the morning, one further flight was launched so the ship`s Doctor and Operation officer could reconnoiter a possible landing site on Rowley Island (where a suitable beach site with an adequate water supply had been found). Finding the harbour at Site 31 plugged with ice, the ship dispatched 200 to recover detachment equipment that had been left there. 201 also flew to Site 31 at 1930 as the ship proceeded south towards the site. Transfer of all equipment required a total of five trips, with all gear and personnel recovered by 2130.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Williams	Prim. Trans. Rowley Island	0430
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck, Douglas	Prim. Trans. Rowley Island	0445
200	FitzGerald	Dr. Mciver, LCdr Cavanaugh	Prim. Trans. Rowley Island	0910
200	MacNeil	Mr. Van Dyck	Prim.Trans. 31	1730
201	FitzGerald	Kowalski	Prim.Trans. 31	1930

Wednesday, August 22

With continued fine, bright weather, *Labrador* proceeded to Site 30 from Rowley Island to embark and disembark mail, which was transferred at 1600 by LCVP. No flying took place this day.

Thursday, August 23 Embarked

Labrador proceeded south to Foxe Basin in clear, sunny weather, conducting oceanographic stations along the way. One aerial photo

flight was conducted at 0900, but no flying for the rest of the day. A make-and-mend routine was ordered for the afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Van Nortwick	Prim. Photo.	0900

Wednesday, August 24

One morning flight in 200 took place, with another in the afternoon under sunny weather. 200 was now ready for its scheduled minor inspection (which was occurring only three weeks since the previous minor). The HUP was run up and the spark plugs changed on Bell 201, after which it was run-checked.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Webster	McDougall, Raw, Whittle	Sec. Seq.	0915
200	MacNeil	P.O. Whittle	Sec. Seq.	1345

Saturday, August 25

Under cloudy intervals, one ice recce was conducted in the morning and one in the afternoon. Captain's rounds were conducted, while the minor inspection on 200 continued with the removal of the rotor head and transmission.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Swithinback	Prim. Ice Recce.	0920
201	MacNeil	None	Prim. Ice Recce.	1325

Sunday, August 26

A Sunday routine was implemented in bright weather with cloudy intervals. Meanwhile, the helicopter detachment personnel continued working on 200's minor inspection.

Monday, August 27

Under cloudy intervals, one flight in the morning was launched to search for Trainor Rock off Nottingham Island, but without success. The minor inspection on 200 was completed shortly before noon, but poor weather in the afternoon caused a planned test flight to be postponed.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	LCdr Cavanaugh	Prim. Ice Recce.	0825

Tuesday, August 28

In bright morning sunshine, an HTL flight took Captain Pullen to a rendezvous with the USN icebreaker, USS *Edisto*[100] off Sea Horse Point. *Edisto* was escorting a convoy of nine ships carrying equipment for DEW Line construction. Captain Pullen brought maps to brief USN officers and the Captains of the convoy vessels on local navigational challenges.

CCGS Edward Cornwallis Photo Source: Canadian Coast Guard

Edisto was carrying seven bags of mail destined for *Labrador,* which were delivered on a return flight with the Captain.

A convoy was formed with *Edisto* leading four ships and *Labrador* leading another five: the *Soyce* (an AK or cargo ship), the *San Marcos* and *Fort Mandan* (both "Landing Ships, Dock" or LSD's), the *Peconic* (a

tanker) and the Canadian Department of Transport icebreaker *Edward Cornwallis.*[101]

In the morning, one additional helicopter flight was made to supply the five *Labrador* escorted ships with maps and photos of the Basin area. These were placed in two foot lengths of pipe and lowered skilfully down a line from the helicopter by Petty Officer Cribb to each ship. Flying in the afternoon was curtailed due to fog.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Capt Pullen	Prim. Trans. USS *Edisto*	0830
201	FitzGerald	Cribb	Prim. Trans. Convoy	1045

Wednesday, August 29

Bright weather was experienced *en route* to Site 30, with ice reconnaissance revealing little ice in the path of the convoy. The *Peconic* had difficulty keeping up in the ice conditions, so Captain Pullen ordered this ship to drop back to the end of the convoy line and placed *Cornwallis* ahead of it.

Flying involved several transfers throughout the day of personnel and mail to *Edisto* and mail to ships in the convoy. PO Cribb was again employed in dropping parcels to the quarterdecks of convoy ships throughout the day. *Edisto`s* Supply Officer was flown to *Labrador* for a visit and was later returned. 200 was test-flown in the morning and found serviceable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Swithinback	Prim. Trans. Foxe	1045
200	MacNeil	McDougall	Misc. Air Test	0845

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Galley	Prim. Photo Rowley & Trans	0955
200	FitzGerald	McDougall	Misc. Air Test	1045
201	FitzGerald	Cribb	Prim. Trans. Convoy	1345

Thursday, August 30

Clear weather off Site 30 in the morning facilitated dropping off three ships of the convoy at that location, and the USS *Boyce*[102] and USS *San Marcos* later in the morning at Site 31 for unloading of their cargo. One flight at 0940 by FitzGerald in 201 with Van Nortwick as crew delivered an outboard motor and some spare parts to LCdr Ackerman and his dive team at Site 31. Two photographers were also flown ashore.

Labrador proceeded to her namesake location "Labrador Channel" (which she had found and charted in 1954/55) and at 1130 hours, MacNeil in 201 with Cavanaugh as crew flew to Atka Head seeking a better site for the hydrographic party. Aircraft 200 was flown by FitzGerald to Site 31 where Mr. Perry of WECO was tasked to photograph the site to facilitate future landing operations. One photographer was then returned to the ship by 200, while 201 went unserviceable with an oil leak. Chief Kowalski was then shuttled ashore by 200 with tools to repair 201. Kowalski discovered that stripped threads on an engine tachometer bolt necessitated using a wooden plug as a temporary repair, thereby allowing the aircraft to be returned to the ship for a proper repair (which ultimately took a day and a half). By evening, the remaining photographer, Van Nortwick, was recovered from Site 31 at 1840 by MacNeil in 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Van Nortwick	Prim. Trans. 31	0930

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Cavanaugh		
		Kowalski, Turner	Prim. Trans. 31	1130
200	FitzGerald	Gally, Perry	Prim. Trans. 31	1255
200	MacNeil	P.O. Van Nortwick (USN)	Prim.Trans. 31	1840

Friday, August 31

Local weather was cloudy in the morning, changing to snow showers in the afternoon. Aircraft 200 flown by MacNeil was used at 0900 to transfer Van Nortwick and McLean to Site 31, and remained there. In the early afternoon, *Pogo*, one motor cutter and a LCVP were left at Atka for a two to three-week period. With snowfall increasing in the afternoon resulting in visibility of 100 yards, Lt MacNeil was stranded ashore at Site 31 ("without his fishing rod") under a two inch snowfall.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Van Nortwick, McLean	Prim.Trans	0900

September 1956 Operations

Saturday, September 1

In bright but windy weather, 200 piloted by MacNeil with Van Nortwick as crew, returned to the ship at 0830 and later conducted an ice recce with Swithinback as crew at 1150. 201 was re-assembled after an engine change; however, high winds prevented blade tracking[103] and test-flying of the aircraft. *Labrador* in the meantime proceeded southward from Site 31.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Van Nortwick	Prim.Trans. 31	0830
200	MacNeil	Swithinback	Prim.Ice Recce.	1150

Sunday, September 2

Bright windy weather continued while the ships company enjoyed a Sunday routine until 1800 hours. At 1910, 200, flown by MacNeil with Tait as crew, delivered movie films to the U.S. ships and returned with a fresh supply of new titles. 201 was still awaiting favourable conditions for a test flight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Tait	Prim.Trans. 31	1910

Monday, September 3

Flying was cancelled again due to unfavorable weather with high winds and rain.

Tuesday, September 4

With *Labrador* off Site 31 in fog, rain and high winds, 200 was flown by FitzGerald with Hunt as crew to Site 30 with mail and films to entertain the shore party. Outgoing mail was carried back to the ship on the return flight. By late afternoon, improving weather allowed 201 flown by MacNeil with Chief Turner as crew to be test-flown and declared serviceable.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Hunt	Prim.Trans. 30	0940

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Turner	Misc. Air Test	1710

Wednesday, September 5

In the morning in clear weather, two flights were dispatched in the Baird Peninsula area to scout sites for radar reflectors. Onshore, two healthy and annoyed polar bears were encountered when both LCVP's were dispatched from the ship with radar reflector erecting parties.

A flight to Longstaff (Site 33) was dispatched in the afternoon.

200 was launched in the evening to check on the Baird Peninsula radar reflector erecting crew (an officers-only team who were plagued by shallow water conditions). A herd of 21 caribou was encountered.

Experiencing an excessive magneto drop on run-up, 201 went unserviceable at this time. The officers beacon party was recovered during the morning watch on Thursday (the party light-heartedly had the nerve to suggest that the air department was the cause of their overnight hardship ashore).

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Rav	Prim. Trans. Baird	0750
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Baird	1005
200	MacNeil	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Site 33	1350
200	MacNeil	Bouchard	Prim Trans. Baird	1825

Thursday, September 6

Thursday dawned with the best weather to date with the ship positioned off Longstaff, resulting in several flights to ferry the Captain and others to various ships and sites in the area. Meanwhile, the ship's company enjoyed a make-and-mend routine. 201 was still unserviceable, but it was repaired by evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Webster	Van Nortwick, Pullen, McLean	Prim. Trans. 33	1430
200	Webster	Maj. Marshall	Prim. Trans. San Marco	1700
200	Webster	Law, Pullen	Prim. Trans. San Marco	1755
200	Webster	Law, Pullen	Prim. Trans. San Marco	1925

Friday, September 7

A flight was launched at 0755 in windy and overcast weather to Bray Island (Site 32) carrying Maj. Bigger, a hydrographer, ashore to triangulate some radar beacons. Another flight transferred one U.S. Army Major ashore from LSD *San Marcos*.

A VIP party consisting of Vice-Admiral J.M. Wells, USN, commander of the MSTS; Rear-Admiral R. Manson, USN, CTF6; Captain O.C.S. Robertson, RCN (Former Captain of *Labrador*); Captain Alfred G. Ward, USN; Commander Plummer, USN, the Captain of USS *Edisto;* and a civilian were flown aboard in the afternoon and later returned ashore after a high-level conference where it was agreed *Labrador* would survey the Gulf of Boothia, Prince Regent Inlet, Bellot Straight. Six other areas would be surveyed by *Labrador* by the time she returned to Halifax in mid-October.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Van Dyck, Maj. Bigger	Prim. Trans. Bray	0755
200	FitzGerald	Capt Ward, Kyle, Bouchard, VADM Will	Prim. Trans. Bray	1135
201	MacNeil	RADM Mason, Capt Robertson, Bouchard	Prim. Trans. Bray	1145
200	FitzGerald	Capt Plummer, Capt Ward	Prim. Trans. Bray	1645
201	MacNeil	Capt Robertson, Mr. Kyle	Prim. Trans. Bray	1650

Saturday, September 8

A medical evacuation flight was made to Site 32 at 0500 to pick up an American Master Sergeant who had been injured when a 1200 lb. box fell on him. A helicopter was used as no boats were able to get ashore. The patient was taken to *San Marcos* for medical treatment where it was determined that his injuries were not serious.

A flight to Site 32 in the afternoon carried a hydrographer and the operations officer with another flight in the evening to check on *Pogo* and also to observe ice conditions.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Rav	Prim. Trans. Bray	0520
201	FitzGerald	Van Dyck, Douglas	Prim. Trans. Bray	1455

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew	Duty	Time
200	Webster	Markham	Prim. Ice Recce.	1930

Sunday, September 9

With a Sunday routine, the air detachment had no flying commitments and could enjoy a day of clear weather.

Monday, September 10

Labrador's ship's company enjoyed a second day off due to a make-and-mend routine, also enjoyed by

the air detachment who had no flying commitments. Weather conditions were cool with moderate winds and snow flurries.

Tuesday, September 11

With no flying commitments, the maintenance crew was able to scrub down the flight deck in reasonably clear weather.

Wednesday, September 12

By evening, the ship was again off Hall Beach (Site 30) in clear and windy weather. A return flight at 1915 by 201 with MacNeil at the controls and Brownell as crew took outgoing mail ashore and brought back incoming mail for ship's personnel. Another flight transferred four people to USS Donner.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Brownall	Prim.Trans. Hall Beach	1915

Thursday, September 13

This was another bright weather day without flying commitments and little activity onboard.

Friday, September 14

After circumnavigating Spicer Island and discovering a channel between Spicer and Prince Charles Islands, the ship arrived off Hall Beach. Clear weather allowed both HTL-4 aircraft to have new "Royal Canadian Navy" markings painted on each side of the cab by the detachment maintenance crew.

Return flights were conducted all day between various ships including: USS *Edisto*, USS *San Marcos* and *Fort Mandan* (LSD-21)[104] with MacNeil and passenger PO Rav flying 3.9 hours.

Aircraft wreck sightseeing was a popular activity at Hall Beach where two badly damaged aircraft - an Avro York and a C-46 Commando - were rusting at the side of the airstrip.

Saturday, September 15

Several flights were made in clear weather to transfer various

personnel between *Edisto* and shore facilities at Hall Beach, while a "Saturday Routine" was carried out onboard ship. 201 was given a minor inspection by maintenance personnel resulting in a five hour service extension. In company with *Edisto*, *Labrador* left Site 30 this evening for Fury and Hecla Strait.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Brevic	Prim. Trans. Hall	0930
200	FitzGerald	Robinson, Kelly	Prim. Trans. Hall	1445
200	Webster	Brownell	Prim. Trans. Hall	1810
200	Webster	Brownell	Prim. Trans. Hall	1955

Sunday, September 16

Air detachment mechanics completed the minor inspection of 201. By early afternoon, the ship in company with *Edisto* had passed through the eastern end of Fury and Hecla Strait, where oceanographic and current studies were carried out and radar beacons erected. A test flight was flown on 201 and it was signed off as serviceable, allowing a flight carrying a photographer to capture the ship's navigation through the narrow section of the Strait. Sister aircraft 200 also got airborne on a later flight piloted by MacNeil with Dr. Campbell onboard. With bright, clear and cold weather all afternoon, both aircraft continued flying activities, with 200 conducting an extensive reconnaissance of the area. *Edisto* was having a difficult passage through the Strait, so *Labrador* continued ahead and used the helicopters to set up more radar beacons to assist *Edisto* in her passage through the Strait.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Shrener	Misc. Air Test	1430
201	FitzGerald	Shrener	Prim. Photo	1450
200	MacNeil	Dr. Campbell	Prim Recce Fury & Hecla	1500
201	FitzGerald	VanNortwick	Prim. Photo	1615

Monday, September 17

At 1020 hours in perfect, no wind conditions, and with the ship approximately 15 miles off Crown Prince Frederic Island, 200 departed the ship with a hydrographer who was to pick a site suitable for another radar reflector installation on this island. 201 then followed twenty minutes later with the radar reflector and more gear.

The chosen site was a three hundred foot high hill and required three round trip flights per aircraft to carry the five people and gear required to install the reflector. Both aircraft remained at the site while the shore

party of seven people successfully erected the beacon tower, which only took an hour and fifteen minutes to accomplish. MacNeil in 200 with passengers P.O. Campbell and P.O. Rau was able to conduct an ice recce

in the early afternoon while returning gear and personnel to the ship. 201 flown by FitzGerald was used to do photography work. One further ice recce by MacNeil concluded a very successful day.

HMCS *Labrador* was the first steel hulled ship to make the east to west passage through Fury and Hecla Strait - a tricky navigation feat given the rocky sea mounts in this strait. One set are depicted in the drawing below to describe the treacherous underwater conditions encountered in this area. Captain Pullen proudly displays a map of the strait produced by one of the ship's company. The water depth beneath *Labrador's* hull between Hall Beach and Rowley Island was only ten feet and south of Manning Island only seven feet. In all her Arctic voyages, *Labrador* never once touched bottom.

Tuesday, September 18

In clear weather, *Labrador* rendezvoused with *Edisto* off the western entrance to Fury and Hecla Strait. *Edisto* had lost her starboard screw on Monday evening. An ice recce flight was launched as *Labrador* closed on *Edisto* to assist her through heavy ice for about fifty miles until she was able to set course back to Site 30.

HTL-4 at Inuit Summer Camp. Photo Source: Lt (P) J.A. MacNeil

Wednesday, September19

At 0800 hours in clear weather, *Labrador* sailed into the Foxe area again; a flight transferred personnel and a 150 lb. rock drill between *Edisto* and *Labrador,* landing back aboard at 0840. *Labrador* then executed a 180 degree turn and headed back to complete her third transit of Fury and Hecla Strait. MacNeil in 200 with passenger Bouchard conducted a reconnaissance flight of Fury & Hecla Strait, followed by a photographic flight flown by FitzGerald in the late afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Whitman	Prim. Trans. USS *Edisto*	0800
200	MacNeil	Bouchard	Prim Ice Rec.Fury & Hecla	1430
201	FitzGerald	Galley, VanNortwick	Prim. Photo	1545

Thursday, September 20

In the morning, the ship was nearly stranded in heavy, hard ice south east of Crown Point on her way into the Gulf of Boothia to survey Bellot Strait using *Pogo.* To assist in the navigation of the ship through this ice pack, two ice reconnaissance flights were completed with MacNeil piloting 200 and passenger Bouchard onboard. The ship's navigator spent another 4.7 hours during the afternoon in one aircraft as he guided the *Labrador* through the heavy ice, making good trough approximately 25 miles into open water by 1900 hours.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Pilger	Prim. Ice Recce.	0740

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Pilger	Prim. Ice Recce.	1030
200	FitzGerald	Maclean	Prim. Ice Recce.	1345
201	FitzGerald	Maclean	Prim. Ice Recce.	1430
201	Webster	Maclean	Prim. Ice Recce.	1800

Friday, September 21

Snow, wind and low visibility resulted in a make-and-mend routine and no flying for the air detachment.

Saturday, September 22

In cold foggy weather off Bellot Strait, a Saturday sea routine was observed, again with no flying.[105]

Sunday, September 23

A Sunday sea routine was observed, again resulting in no flights for the detachment.

Monday, September 24

High winds, rough seas and low visibility greeted the ship in Lancaster Sound. Sloppy sea conditions produced sea sickness among the ship's company and prevented flying due to heavy rolling and pitching of the ship.

Capt Pullen with Fury & Hecla Chart. Photo Source: DND

Tuesday, September 25

By this date, *Labrador* was back in Bellot Strait under clear weather but with winds in the area gusting up to 40 knots. Piloting 200, FitzGerald was launched with Commander Law as passenger. They flew from east to west through the strait, landing on Pemmican Rock at the western end of Franklin Strait. Meanwhile, MacNeil in 201 with P. O. Galley as crew flew a photo flight in and around the eastern end of Bellot. The Captain was also flown later by FitzGerald in 200 to view the area, as conditions in the area were intolerable and soundings had to be discontinued which was fortunate as the waters in the area were treacherous.[106]

LCVP "Albert" got stuck aground and Bell 200 was used to drop a kedge[107] anchor astern of her to facilitate recovery to deeper water. Proceeding north into Prince Regent Inlet, the ship departed Bellot in the late afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Cdr Law	Prim. Recce Bellot St.	0845
201	MacNeil	Galley	Prim. Recce Bellot St.	1030
200	FitzGerald	Capt Pullen	Prim. Recce Bellot St.	1120

Wednesday, September 26

In bright sunshine, *Labrador* arrived off Erebus Bay on Devon Island, a historically significant site where the Franklin expedition had wintered circa 1846. Flying a recce into the harbour area, FitzGerald and Pilger in 200 found the Bay relatively free of navigation obstacles. Thereafter, both aircraft were pressed into service conducting tourist flights throughout the area, allowing personnel to see the Franklin historical sites. MacNeil flying 201 gave Captain Pullen a tour of the Franklin sites. This location was historically significant for the Pullen family as one of the RN deposit ships, HMS *North Star*, had been stationed there for two

winters as part of the search for the Franklin Expedition. The commanding officer of *North Star* was Commander W. J. S. Pullen, RN and his sailing master and brother was T. C. Pullen - both grand-uncles of Captain Tom Pullen of *Labrador* and his brother Rear-Admiral H. F. Pullen, RCN.

These historical sites included the outline of Franklin's house, Franklin's cairn atop Beechy Island, and the well preserved remains of a rescue ship's cabin dating from 1853. Lt MacNeil searched this cairn and found inside a brass pipe[108] with screw caps on both ends. Stamped on the pipe was "RCMP St. Roch 21 Aug. 1944" and the names of her crew. As it was too cold to study the papers found inside this artefact, Pullen and MacNeil took it back for further study in the comfort of the ship. The papers were mostly copies of original papers, with the earliest dated 1906 by Bernier of the CGS[109]*Arctic.* Captain Pullen writing in his memoirs [110] about this find stated: "That and Larsen's papers were found to be the most interesting. I left a document (in the pipe) and we returned (ashore) and stowed it carefully back in its original place (the cairn atop Beechy Island)."

Also discovered were five well-marked graves with headboards intact. One very sick walrus on an offshore ice flow, two musk-oxen and a school of small whales were threatened into photographic submission by the Captain's .38 pistol. Full use was made of the helicopters in spite of high winds in the area, with the final flight rescuing five individuals who had gone astray from the shore party tourism group. This completed a pleasant day for all.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Pilger	Prim. Ice Recce. Erebus	1245
200	FitzGerald	Galley	Prim. Photo Erebus	1345
201	MacNeil	Capt Pullen	Prim. Trans Erebus	1430

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Webster	Schrever	Prim. Photo Erebus	1530
201	MacNeil	Schrever	Prim. Trans Erebus	1630
200	Webster	Van Nortwick	Prim. Photo Erebus	1725
201	FitzGerald	Martel +3	Prim. Trans. Erebus	1745

Thursday, September 27

In bright weather and high winds, *Labrador* arrived in the morning off RCAF station Resolute on Cornwallis Island. Both aircraft were required to transfer personnel and mail between ship and shore. Another flight with MacNeil in Bell 200 transporting Cdr Law was launched in the afternoon resulting in visits to both the RCAF station and a local Inuit village.

In the afternoon, the ship began the first leg of its southbound voyage home. An evening flight piloted by MacNeil in 201 with Somerset as passenger was necessary as the ship passed Erebus Bay to collect some material that had been left in the cairn on Wednesday. A five hour flight service extension was flown off 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Cdr Law	Prim. Trans. Resolute	1030
201	FitzGerald	Maciver	Prim. Trans. Resolute	1050

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	FitzGerald	Bolton	Prim. Trans. Resolute	1330
201	Webster	Galley	Prim. Trans. Resolute	1715
201	MacNeil	Somerset	Prim. Trans. Erebus	2030

Friday, September 28

In clear weather and with the ship in Lancaster Sound, FitzGerald flew one flight in the afternoon with a photographer onboard to capture *Labrador* alongside an iceberg. The seventh onboard minor aircraft overhaul was started this day on aircraft 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Galley, Van Nortwick	Prim. Photo	1615

Saturday, September 29

Reaching Arctic Bay off Baffin Island in the morning of a cloudy day, FitzGerald flew the ship's doctor ashore to see if any Department of Transport personnel stationed there or the local Inuit inhabitants required medical assistance. One Inuit boy was examined and another patient was flown from a point about seven miles west of the Bay for doctor to evaluate; both were found to be reasonably healthy.

During the day, several people were flown to the ship and back ashore including Chief Brown who was required ashore to repair a radio. With the minor inspection completed on 200, it was test-run, checked for serviceability, check-tightened [111] and test-flown by FitzGerald; he deemed the aircraft to be serviceable - except for the fuel gauge and direction indicator which were soon repaired.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	FitzGerald	Dr. Maciver	Prim. Trans. Arctic Bay	0920
201	Webster	Van Nortwick	Prim. Photo	1350
200	FitzGerald	Foster	Misc. Test	1500
200	FitzGerald	McDougall	Prim. Trans.	1520

Sunday, September 30

This day found the ship underway to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island in more cloudy weather; by evening the skies had cleared. A Sunday routine was in effect so no flying took place.

October 1956 Operations

Monday, October 1

During the night of September 30th and into the morning, rough weather was experienced with some personnel sleeping on the flight deck to alleviate sea sickness. Shortly after noon, as the ship sailed into Pond Inlet on Baffin Island, the two Bells, one piloted by FitzGerald and the other by LCdr Webster, launched to explore the southwest side of the Island, while the other aircraft transferred personnel ashore as this was the last opportunity for sight-seeing by ship's company personnel. Although winds were fairly high in the afternoon, Father Dufort, the Roman Catholic Priest, Corporal Johnson of the RCMP and Hudson Bay Company employees were flown ashore. At 1830, the ship began the long journey home, initially heading east and then south.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Webster	Dr. Maciver	Prim. Trans. Pond Inlet	1330

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	None	Prim. Trans. Pond Inlet	1430
201	FitzGerald	None	Prim. Trans. Pond Inlet	1545
201	FitzGerald	None	Prim. Trans. Pond Inlet	1815

Tuesday, October 2

Ship southbound; no flying activity.

Wednesday, October 3

No flying but oceanographic work continued with the ship now southbound along the Northwest coast of Baffin Island on her way to Brevoort Island.

Thursday, October 4

While continuing to the South, preparations for Admiral's Rounds commenced; oceanographic work continued, but no flying was required.

Friday, October 5

Same as for Oct. 4th.

Saturday, October 6

Same as for Oct. 4th.

Sunday, October 7

Flight deck work took place in reasonable weather, but with no flying required.

Monday, October 8 to Tuesday October 9

With the ship still southbound through the Strait of Belle Isle, cleanup for Admiral's Rounds continued with landfall at Bay of Islands, Newfoundland. Here she anchored briefly to square away the ship before sailing on to Stephenville, Newfoundland for a planned inspection of the ship by Admiral Bidwell, Flag Officer Atlantic Coast.

Wednesday, October 10

Labrador remained in Bay of Islands while the ship's company turned to painting the ship and cleaning up. The air detachment washed down the helicopter hangar, painted the flight deck and Air Maintenance Control Office, etc. The image of Buzz Bear on the flight deck was repainted and the aircraft cleaned up. No flying was required.

Thursday, October 11

Labrador rendezvoused off the Labrador coast with the USS *Fort Mandan,* one of the military ships in the convoy which *Labrador* had escorted north to Foxe Basin. *Mandan* had intercepted a distress call from the Canadian motor vessel *Lady Cecil,* which in high winds and poor visibility was in danger of running aground on the rugged and wild Labrador coast. [112] *Labrador* then took over towing the ship to Cornerbrook, arriving in the afternoon and then proceeding to Stephenville. No flying was required.

Friday, October 12

During the middle watch (mid-night to 0400), *Labrador* arrived at Stephenville. By 0830, both air detachment Bells, one piloted by FitzGerald and the other by Webster, were needed to fly three people ashore and pick up the ship's mail. Landing in the middle of Stephenville to collect the mail, school children besieged both aircraft.

Both aircraft were standing by at Harmon Field when at 1100 hours, Rear Admiral R.E.S. Bidwell CBE, CD, RCN (Flag Officer Atlantic Coast) and his Flag Lt arrived. As soon as the two guests and their baggage was secured, both helicopters departed for *Labrador* arriving at 1130. The weather this day was bright with high winds.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	RAdm. Bidwell	Prim. Trans. Harmon	0800
201	FitzGerald	Geddes	Prim. Trans. Harmon	0810
200	MacNeil	Brownnell	Ferry to Shearwater	1220

Saturday, October 13

In bright weather during the morning off Halifax harbour approaches, Admiral Bidwell conducted an inspection of the ship and ship's company. At 1230, a flypast of the ship took place utilizing both HTL-4 aircraft which then turned towards Royal Canadian Naval Air Station (RCNAS) Shearwater, arriving and being greeted by the families of their crew shortly after 1300 after a fifteen-minute flight. By 1445, the ship was tied up alongside.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	Brownnell	Ferry to Shearwater	1220
201	FitzGerald	Cribb	Ferry to Shearwater	1230

Sunday, October 14 to Thursday, October 14

Since this date was Thanksgiving week-end, a long week-end routine was in effect. Arrangements were made to transfer the damaged HUP to *Shearwater* for repairs and the flight deck was secured for harbour routine.

Summary of Accomplishments - Summer/Fall 1956

Labrador had been at sea for 102 days and steamed 18,606 miles, with more than 12,000 miles in uncharted waters. In addition to her primary DEW Line resupply operations, *Labrador's* ship's company and civilian scientific staff prepared many new nautical charts for the Arctic, completed 12,000 miles of hydrographic surveys, took thousands of photographs, radar images and soundings. This work created a rich scientific record to further chart and understand Canada's Arctic domain.[113]

Captain Pullen took his 269-foot, 6,490-ton naval icebreaker, his crew of 240 and complement of scientists, and filled 30 weeks at sea with a vast array of accomplishments. Consider these historic deeds of the man and his ship's company:[114]

- Pioneered a safer easier-to-navigate channel into Frobisher Bay - the Pike-Resor channel now used by all shipping.

- Made the first east-to-west transit of Fury and Hecla Strait, which connects Foxe Basin to the Gulf of Boothia, between Baffin Island and the Melville Peninsula. The name Labrador Narrows was bestowed on the narrowest section of the strait so that its successful navigation by *Labrador* might be recognized and remembered.

- Rescued the USN icebreaker *Edisto,* which had lost a propeller from the pack ice in the Gulf of Boothia.

- Found an escape route for ships which might be trapped by ice in the western Arctic and for big ships traversing the Northwest Passage, by proving the existence of a deep-draft channel through Bellot Strait. The 20 mile-long strait separates the northernmost tip of this continent from Somerset Island immediately north. In the process, *Labrador's* sounding boat "*Pogo*" found the submarine pinnacle Magpie Rock, which Captain Pullen named at the suggestion of his navigator, and on which both Larsen's *St. Roch* (1942) and Mcclintock's *Fox* (1858) had nearly come to grief.

- Led three U.S. Coast Guard ships through Bellot Strait, enabling them to complete the first American transit of the Northwest Passage.

- Made the first circumnavigation of Somerset Island and also the first transit of Peel Sound on the West side of Somerset since Amundsen's

Gjoa (1903); Franklin's ships *Erebus* and *Terror* (1847) had traversed Peel Sound as well.

- Probed Wellington and Queens channels into Penny Strait off Grinnell Peninsula at the northwest corner of Devon Island, the most northerly such sortie in this channel since the Belcher expedition more than a century before.

- Logged over 12,000 miles in uncharted waters taking soundings all the way; took hundreds of photographs and radar images which made possible the creation of six large-scale and 11 small-scale Arctic charts and sailing instructions as a result of the ship's hydrographic work.

- Undertook the most extensive oceanographic program ever conducted in Canadian waters including 200 oceanographic stations, 263 bathy thermograph casts, 1,536 salinity samples, 923 oxygen analyses, 486 phosphate determinations and 72 bottom samples.[115]

- Made the first survey of winter ice conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In 1956, Captain Pullen commanded the first ship to navigate the length and breadth of the Gulf in winter, conduct oceanographic and hydrographic survey work, and to enter the port of Québec; these efforts led to the Gulf being recognized as navigable year-round.

HU-21 Detachment 2 flew a total of 324.0 hours during this cruise.

So ends the account of flight operations onboard HMCS *Labrador* for 1956. And there was more to come in 1957. On completion of his duties as OIC for HU-21, Detachment 2 onboard *Labrador*, Lt. MacNeil was assigned on 10 November to relieve LCdr Bays as project officer for flight trials being conducted onboard the Prestonian-class frigate HMCS *Buckingham.* This ship had been fitted with an experimental flight deck in order to evaluate the deployment of larger anti-submarine helicopters such as the Sikorsky HO4S for use at sea in detecting submarines using a dunking sonar to compliment those installed onboard sub hunting ships.

MacNeil's experience in flying HTL-4 and HUP-3 helicopters from *Labrador's* flight deck would prove valuable to this project but also

revealed new problems provided by the challenging and sometimes dangerous conditions encountered when flying a larger helicopter to and from a pitching, rolling ship in the open ocean.

Several important conclusions resulted from these trials. First, was the discovery that piston powered helicopters of this type were underpowered for the flying demands of shipboard operations from small flight decks and which had no second engine redundancy. Second, it was recognized that some method of centring the helicopter over the touch-down area of the flight deck, as well as a safe and quick means of securing the aircraft to the flight deck on landing, was required. Third, it was also determined that a hangar would be required in which to conduct routine aircraft maintenance and protect the aircraft from saltwater spray and corrosion.

Sikorsky HO4S Landing Onboard HMCS Buckingham Photo
Source: DND via A Baltzer

All of these conclusions were addressed in the future design of flight decks, hangars and helicopter support facilities to be built into the next generation of RCN sub hunting ships and also led to the development of the helicopter "Haul-down and Rapid Securing Device (HHRSD)" to be commonly called the "Bear Trap" because of its bear trap like design. A Canadian invention, the Bear Trap was designed to facilitate the landing of heavy helicopters on the heaving decks of destroyers in all but the worst weather conditions, safely secure them to the ship's deck and then tow them into the ships hangar - all in a semi-automated sequence. HHRSD systems were first installed on the newly created DDH (Destroyer Helicopter) class of RCN destroyers, which were steam powered St. Laurent class DDEs (Destroyer Escorts) converted to include a helicopter hangar and flight deck designed to accommodate the new CHSS-2 Sikorsky Sea King helicopter - which significantly increased the RCN's anti-submarine capabilities.

The HHRSD system consisted of a track embedded in the flight deck's centreline running from the flight deck into the hangar. A sled containing a powerful set of hydraulic jaws ran in this track by means

of a cable and pulley system located in the track. To prevent the tail of the Sea Kings from swinging or skidding on a wet deck, another track running perpendicular to the main track along the aft edge of the flight deck was designed to capture the aircraft's tail and align it with the centreline track.

Helicopter recovery to the ships began with the aircraft hovering over the flight deck of the ship. The helicopter would first lower a messenger cable to a flight deck crew member, who would first ground it to release any static electricity and then connect it to the Bear Trap. The messenger cable would then pull a heavier cable into a fitting in the keel of the helicopter. A winch operator housed in a special deck level compartment would then apply positive tension on the cable, which pulled the helicopter to the deck and which also helped to centre the aircraft over the Bear Trap. When the helicopter touched down on the deck, a set of jaws in the Bear Trap captured a vertical pin extending

Sikorsky HO4S Landing Onboard HMCS Buckingham. Photo Source: DND

down from the keel of the Sea King, thereby locking the aircraft to the Bear Trap. After the helicopter had shut down and folded its blades and tail section, the Bear Trap sled conveyed the helicopter into the hangar

while still secured by the jaws of the Bear Trap. This procedure was reversed to launch an aircraft.

Developed by Indal Technologies, in co-operation with the Canadian government for the US Navy, the HHRSD became the "Recovery Assist & Traversing System" (RAST) - perhaps a more complete term, as "traversing" refers to the fact that the system also conveys helicopters into their hangars after first securing them to the deck by means of the Bear Trap. Some 211 RAST systems have been sold around the world. Another version, the Aircraft Ship Integrated Secure and Traverse (ASIST) system, was trialled aboard HMCS Ottawa and led to the export of some 60 ASIST systems to other navies.[116]

Initial Sea King HHRSD trials took place from the converted DDH HMCS Assiniboine. HMCS Ottawa and follow-on vessels of this class and future RCN ships classes would also incorporate the HHRSD systems to support anti-submarine helicopter operations. [Incidentally, the author served on HMCS Ottawa in 1966 after its conversion to a DDH and before the HHRSD was installed or a Sea King was assigned to the ship.]

MacNeil would serve again onboard *Labrador* and continue flying helicopters and fixed wing for RCN until he was offered a position with Pratt & Whitney Canada as their first Canadian test pilot. See Appendix One for further details of his career.

1957 Operations

Heading into her final year of operations as an RCN vessel, *Labrador* and her crew swung into a now familiar routine, beginning with a trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica to paint the ship and complete all maintenance required for her third season in the Canadian Arctic. However, before heading to the Arctic again, she would make a "show the flag and the ship" cruise to England, Norway and Denmark.

First & Second Quarter 1957

While Helicopter Utility Squadrons 21 Detachment 2 was embarked on board HMCS *Labrador* from February until June 1957, the activities of the detachment were summarized in operational reports prepared by the detachment officer-in-charge (OIC) each month rather than in the log book format for previous years. The following information has been extracted from these reports and edited for easier understanding by the reader.

Key Members of the Ship's Company

On January 3, 1957, HU-21 Detachment 2/*Labrador* was formed at HMCS *Shearwater* in preparation for *Labrador's* trip south to Jamaica.

The Detachment consisted of:

- Lt (P) Robert "Bob" Thomas Murray, OIC[117]
- P1AT4 Abbie Brownell
- LSEM George Koch
- LSAT "Kipper" Stevenson
- LS Rice
- AB Ackerman

The helicopter detachment OIC, Lt (P) Murray, had joined the RCN Reserves from Sea Cadets in 1948 and completed his sea training on HMCS *Swansea, Haida, Huron and Magnificent*. Lt Murray became an RCN pilot in 1953, serving in RN and RCN both in shore-based squadrons and afloat in the aircraft carriers HMS *Illustrious*, HMCS *Magnificent* and later *Bonaventure.*[118] Much of the information in this chapter was provided by Murray personally and from a paper he wrote

on the history of the RCN's Piasecki HUP's for the Canada Aviation and Space Museum.

The Detachment aircraft initially consisted of one Piasecki HUP-3, S/N 247.

1957 Operations - Caribbean Trip

Friday, January 4

The HUP, S/N 247 was flown aboard by Lt Murray with LSEM George Koch as a passenger.

Monday, January 7

Labrador sailed for Montego Bay, Jamaica, to conduct a short self-work period and to paint the ship under more favourable weather conditions than those found in Halifax at this time of year. While transiting through the Bermuda area, HMCS *Labrador* encountered a severe storm which caused the ship to roll through 105 degrees. While Murray hung onto the ship's binnacle as one of the officers of the watch, his air detachment crew worked around the clock to ensure that the helicopter tie-downs were secure and that HUP 247 was riding comfortably.

Tuesday, January 15

The ship arrived in Montego Bay on January 15 where HUP 247 was then flown ashore to the Montego Bay Airport to establish radio communications between the ship and the airfield. Each morning, HUP 247 was flown ashore to the Montego Bay Airport to keep it from being covered with a white mist being blown around from the paint sprayers being used aboard ship.

While in Montego Bay, the Airport Manager requested that HUP 247 be made available to support their off-field Search and Rescue (SAR) organization, as they only had one small outboard motor boat in the lagoon alongside the main runway and nothing for use in the open ocean. This was accommodated as a good will gesture.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch	Misc Test & Seq	-
247	Murray	Koch, Robertson	Prim Trans	-

Friday, January 18

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Capt T.C. Pullen, CO *Labrador*, Cdr Law, Koch	Prim Recce	-

Saturday, January 19

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch, Ackerman, Bell	Prim Trans - *Labrador* to Montego Bay	-
247	Murray	Koch	Prim Trans - Montego Bay to *Labrador*	-

Monday, January 21

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch, Stevenson	Prim Trans to Montego Bay	-

Tuesday, January 22

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch, Brownell, Rice	Prim Trans to Montego Bay	-

Wednesday, January 23

HUP 247 airlifted Surgeon Lieutenant Commander (Surg LCdr) Donald "Mac the Knife" Maciver and a seaman who was suffering from an inflamed appendix to hospital in Montego Bay.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Bouchard, Brownell, Rice	Prim Trans	-
247	Murray	Koch, Brownell	Prim Trans	-
247	Murray	Koch, Brownell, Bouchard	Prim Trans	-
247	Murray	McIvor, Brownell	Prim S & R	-

Friday, January 25

Surg LCdr Maciver performed a successful appendectomy on the seaman who was flown back aboard HMCS *Labrador* for recovery and repatriation to Canada.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch	Prim S & R, Photo	-

Saturday, January 26

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Koch, Davis	Prim Trans to Montego Bay	-

247	Murray	Brownell, Koch, Mitchell	Prim Trans to *Labrador*	-

Wednesday, January 23 to Monday, February 11

The return voyage of *Labrador* to Halifax was uneventful except for a damaged rotor blade on HUP 247 that had to be replaced onboard ship.

Monday, February 11

HUP 247 was flown ashore solo by Murray to its home squadron at HMCS *Shearwater's* HU-21 Squadron.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	None	Prim Trans to *Shearwater*	-

Wednesday, February 13

Murray conducted flight training to prepare Oliphant to join the detachment as a Bell HTL-4 pilot.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	Murray	Lt (P) Oliphant	LP-25	-

Friday, February 15

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
204	Murray	LCdr Bartlett	LP-28	-
204	Murray	LCdr Welsh	Seq Halifax to *Labrador*	-

204	Murray	LCdr Welsh	Seq *Labrador* to Shearwater	-

CNAS is the acronym for Canadian Naval Air Station *Shearwater* and XF is the acronym for Halifax.

Tuesday, February 19

The detachment was reformed again at *Shearwater* this day with LCdr Hal Welsh as OIC, three other officers and the required maintenance personnel.

Wednesday, February 20

One HUP-3 and two HTL-4 helicopters joined *Labrador* to be used for survey operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River. Three other pilots, including the author's father, Lt (P) John A. MacNeil, were included with Detachment personnel and ancillary equipment being transported to the ship by road in the morning and the helicopters flown aboard in the afternoon.

The afternoon of the first day of sea was spent checking the pilots out in deck landing procedures and Detachment crew in direction duties[119] and deck handling of the helicopters.

LCdr (P) Bruce Vibert and Oliphant, two of the pilots selected for the 1957 Arctic Summer Cruise, completed flight deck checkouts on the HUP and HTL-4, and carried out ice reconnaissance flights and personnel transfer exercises.

One and a half days of flying were lost due to weather, while only minor serviceability issues were encountered with the aircraft. A magneto drop on HTL-201 necessitated a spark plug change. This aircraft also displayed low oil pressure - probably due to the use of light oil in a tired engine which had only 55 hours before required a major overhaul.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	None	XF - *Labrador*	-

201	MacNeil	Lt Oliphant	*Labrador* - Flight Deck Checkout	-

Thursday, February 21

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Lt Oliphant	*Labrador* - Flight Deck Checkout	-
201	MacNeil	LCDR Vibert	*Labrador* - Flight Deck Checkout	-
201	MacNeil	LCDR Welsh	*Labrador* - Flight Deck Checkout	-

Friday, February 22

Lt (P) John Angus "MacBagpipes" MacNeil, flying 247, transported AB Weeds from the ship near St. Paul's Island to the Sydney Airport, for compassionate leave.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	MacNeil	LCDR Markham	Ice Rece	-
200	MacNeil	Mr. Irons	Prim Trans *Labrador* - Sydney Airport return	-

247	MacNeil	AB Weeds	Prim Trans Sydney Airport	-
200	MacNeil	Dr. Lauzier	Ice Rece	-
200	MacNeil	LCDR Vibert	Unit Check	-

Saturday February 23

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	MacNeil	AB Woods	*Labrador - Sydney - Lab.*	-

Monday, February 25

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	LS Rice	Air Test	-
223	Murray	Service, Dark	Seq	-

Tuesday, February 26

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	MacNeil	Lt Oliphant	Familiarization	-
200	MacNeil	Capt Pullen	Reconnaisance	-
201	MacNeil	P1 Brownhell	Air Test	-

Thursday, February 28

When in the St. Lawrence River area, MacNeil, with crewmen P1AT4 John Hughes and LS "Kipper" Stevens, made two personnel transfers to Ancienne-Lorette, west of Québec City, the site of No. 8 Air Observer School (AOS) during WWII.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	Cdr Law	Prim Trans	-
247	MacNeil	P1 Hughes, LS Stevens	Prim Trans *Labrador* to Ancienne Lorette	-
201	MacNeil	LS Stevens	Prim Trans Ancienne Lorette to *Labrador*	-
247	MacNeil	P1 Hughes	Prim Trans Ancienne Lorette to *Labrador*	-
222	Murray	None	Misc. & Seq	-

Air detachment summary for February 1957

For the period from the February 20 to 28, the detachment flew a total of 47 hours. The HUP flew 11.9 hours and 35.1 hours were flown in the Bells. Of these, 37.5 hours were flown on ice reconnaissance, personnel transfers and photography, and the other 7.4 hours were flown on training and proficiency flying, with the remaining 2.1 on flight tests. Key activities included transferring personnel to Sydney, Nova Scotia. As well, a seaman on compassionate leave was flown from the ship near St. Paul's Island to the Sydney airport. One person was flown ashore at Mont Joli, Québec on February 27 and the ship's mail was picked up at

this time. The health of the detachment was reported to be good and morale high.

March 1957 - European Cruise

Friday, March 1

HU-21 Det 2/*Labrador* was reformed this day consisting of two pilots:

- Lt (P) Robert "Bob" Thomas Murray, OIC
- Lt (P) "Larry" Zbitnew

Five maintenance men:

- P1AT4 Abbie Brownell
- P1AT4 John Hughes
- LSEA George Koch
- LSRA Ken Cann
- ABAF Gord Patterson

Two helicopters:

- HUP-3 S/N 247
- Bell HTL-4 S/N 200

Monday, March 4

All helicopters were flown ashore to HMCS *Shearwater,* the home squadron of HU-21.

For the period from 8 March to 31 March 1957, the detachment officer in charge was Lt (P) R.T. Murray, who reported the following:

Monday, March 4

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
201	MacNeil	LS Stevens	*Labrador - XF*	-

Friday, March 8

The ship sailed for a "show the flag and ship" cruise to England, Norway and Denmark. High winds, rough seas and an unstable flight deck

precluded flying for all but two days of the ship's transit to England. Lt Zbitnew conducted a compass swing on HTL-4 S/N 200 and flew it onboard *Labrador* from Shearwater, while the Detachment OIC, Lt Murray flew the HUP-3 S/N 247 onboard with LS Can and PO Hughes as passengers.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Zbitnew	None	Compass swing & CNAS to *Labrador*	
247	Murray	LS Cann, PO Hughes	CNAS to *Labrador*	

Sunday, March 17

Murray with Zbitnew as co-pilot conducted an air test on Bell 200 and local landing practice.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Murray	Zbitnew	Landing Practice	-

Monday, March 18

Labrador arrived in Portsmouth, England for its 12-day visit. Both helicopters were used to transfer personnel from *Labrador* to various Royal Naval (RN) Shore Establishments and RN Air Stations around Portsmouth, including a flight to HMS *Dolphin* for an official courtesy call by *Labrador's* commanding officer.

Tuesday, March 19

HUP 247, flown by Murray, was used to transport Cdr C.A. "Tony" Law, DCS, CD, RCN *Labrador's* Executive Officer, to Plymouth, for an hour's visit with HMCS *Bonaventure's* commanding officer, Captain H.V.W. Groos. Being Canada's newest aircraft carrier, *Bonaventure* was

preparing for flying trials in the English Channel. While moving up the English Channel, *Bonaventure* joined in company with *Labrador,* giving the ship's personnel an opportunity to visit via helicopter. Zbitnew made two solo flights in Bell 200, with the first a return flight to *Bonaventure* and the second from *Labrador* to HMS *Vernon.*[120]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Cdr Law	HMCS *Bonaventure*	-
200	Zbitnew	None	HMCS *Bonaventure* - return	-
200	Zbitnew	None	*Labrador* - HMS *Vernon*	-

Thursday, March 21

Zbitnew in Bell 200 picked up PO Hughes from HMS *Vernon* and returned him to *Labrador*.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Zbitnew	PO Hughes	*Labrador* - HMS *Vernon* & return	-

Tuesday, March 26

Zbitnew in Bell 200 flew PO Hughes to RNAS *Ford* (an RN shore base at the time) and returned him to *Labrador*. Meanwhile, Murray in HUP 247 flew LCdr Burns and Hughes from *Labrador* to Lee (Royal Naval Air Station Lee-on-Solent, aka HMS *Daedalus*) and returned to the ship. A second flight by Murray in 247 with Burns and LS Cann was made to RNAS *Ford*.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Zbitnew	PO Hughes	RNAS *Ford* & return	-
247	Murray	Burns, LS Cann	RNAS *Ford* & return	-

Thursday, March 28

Murray in 247 flew Captain Pullen, Padre Bell and Hughes from *Labrador* to Hasler-Lee and return. Murray made a second flight in 247 with Padre Bell, Hughes, Cann, LS Koch to Lee and return.

Zbitnew meanwhile made two trips in Bell 201, first with Hughes for some local flying and the second trip with Hughes from *Labrador* to Lee and return.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Capt Pullen, Hughes	Hasler-Lee & return	-
247	Murray	Padre Bell, Hughes, Cann, LS Kosh	Hasler-Lee & return	-
201	Zbitnew	Hughes	Local Seq.	-
201	Zbitnew	Hughes	Lee & return	-

Friday, March 29

HUP-247, flown by Murray, was scrambled to help in the search for the pilots of two Westland Wyvern aircraft which were missing from RNAS *Thorney Island*. Thick fog prevented the HUP reaching the search area, so the mission was aborted and the helicopter returned to the icebreaker.

Wreckage of the Wyverns, which had been involved in a mid-air collision, was located later in the day and the search was called off. At noon, Captain Pullen, CO of *Labrador,* was flown to HMCS *Bonaventure* for lunch and a tour with her CO, Captain Groos.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	PO Brownhill, LS Cann	SAR	-
247	Murray	Capt Pullen, LS Cann	*Labrador* - *Bonaventure* & return	-

Saturday, March 30

The ship sailed for Oslo, Norway and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Murray made one local flight in 247 with and Zbitnew as co-pilot and Cann as crew. Zbitnew then made a local flight into 247 with Murray as copilot and a second flight with Hughes and Cann as passengers.

While in Oslo, HUP 247 was the "star of the show" at a party given by the ship's company for children from a local orphanage. For entertainment, the children were dressed in flying helmets and "Mae Wests",[121] and given a turn sitting in the aircraft cockpit and handling the flying controls. A good time was had by all!

Oslo city officials also rolled out the red carpet for *Labrador's* crew and provided opportunities to see ships used by famous Norwegian explorers such as the *Fram*, Fridtjof Nansen's polar ship, Thor Heyerdahl's famous raft, the *Kon-Tiki,* as well as Viking ships and artifacts.

The only flying of note that took place was a flight to give the Captain and the Canadian Ambassador to Denmark a bird's eye view of Oslo and Copenhagen on April 11. On April 13, Zbitnew flew to the Royal Danish Air Force base at Værløse to view their helicopter training program.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Zbitnew, Cann	Prim Seq,	-
247	Zbitnew	Murray	*Labrador* Seq.	-
247	Zbitnew	Hughes, Cann	*Labrador* Seq.	-

Air Detachment Summary for March 1957

In total, 23.9 hours were flown during this period. The detachment was embarked during the morning of March 8 and consisted of two pilots and five maintenance personnel. Aircraft included one HUP-3 and one Bell HTL-4.

April 1957 - European Cruise

For the first week of April, the ship was alongside in Oslo, Norway. Flights for proficiency maintenance was the only flying carried out during this week.

The second week was spent in Copenhagen, Denmark.

While in Copenhagen, *Labrador* was open to the public for a hectic four days and welcomed over 8000 visitors for tours of the ship!

Tuesday, April 2

Murray flew Cdr Kirkpatrick and Patterson from *Labrador* to Forneabu Air Base in Oslo.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Cdr Kirkpatrick, Pattterson	*Labrador - Fornebu*	-

Wednesday, April 3

Zbitnew made two flights this day, one in 247 solo from *Labrador* to Fornebu Air Base in Oslo and a second local flight with Captain Pullen in Bell 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	None	*Fornebu Air Base*	-
200	Zbitnew	Capt Pullen	*Labrador* Local	-

Monday, April 8

Zbitnew conducted a local test flight on Bell 200.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
200	Zbitnew	None	*Labrador* Test Flight	-

Tuesday, April 9

Zbitnew made a solo flight in 247 from *Labrador* to Kastrup airport in Copenhagen.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	None	*Labrador* - Kastrup Air Base & Return	-

Thursday, April 11

HUP 247, flown by Zbitnew, was used for a “bird's eye" view of Oslo and Copenhagen by Captain Pullen and the Canadian Ambassador to Denmark.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Cant. Pullen, Canadian Ambassador	*Labrador* - Oslo, Copenhagen & Return	-

Friday, April 12

Murray flew Captain Pullen into Copenhagen in HUP 247.

Saturday, April 13

Zbitnew flew HUP 247 with Dr. Maciver as passenger to the Royal Danish Air Base *Værløse* to observe their helicopter training program.

Sunday, April 14

The ship then departed for Portsmouth, England and Halifax via the Kiel Canal.

Monday, April 15

Zbitnew made one local and a test flight in Bell 200 while Murray also test-flew Bell 200 and made a local flight in 247.

Wednesday, April 17

Zbitnew made another local test flight in Bell 200 and a cargo hoisting flight in HUP 247.

Thursday, April 18

During the morning, Murray with crewman P1AT4 Brownell flew HUP 247 to HMS *Vernon* to pick up Dr. C.W.M Swithinbank[122] for the return passage to Canada.

Monday, April 22 and Tuesday, April 23

HUP 247 was at "standby alert" to transfer a sick seaman from the USCG Cutter *Mackinaw,* but due to wind and rough seas, this was not accomplished.

Wednesday, April 24

Off the East coast of Newfoundland, Zbitnew flew Bell 200 on an ice recce.

Friday, April 26

Both helicopters were flown ashore in the afternoon and the detachment disembarked to *Shearwater*. Zbitnew, with Hughes as passenger, flew Bell 200 to *Shearwater* for the ship's passage to Halifax while Murray flew HUP-3 S/N 247 ashore to HMCS *Shearwater*/HU-21 where the helicopter remained until June 21.

Air Detachment Summary for April 1957

For the period from April 1 to April 26, 1957, Lt Murray remained officer in charge of the detachment and reported that a total of 12 hours were flown during this period.

Again the helicopters suffered from prolonged exposure to salt water spray. The HTL with its non-waterproof cover fared reasonably well, but the HUP had to be continuously washed down with fresh water in order to help prevent salt water corrosion. It is felt that when helicopters are required to be transported over distances of rough open water in ships of this class that the after end of the hanger and the aircraft should be protected by either a canvas or plastic cover.

The health of the detachment was reported to be good and morale remained high.

Third Quarter 1957

Ship's Officers

The photograph below captures Captain T. C. "Tom" Pullen and the ship's officers assigned to *Labrador* for the 1957 Arctic cruise and was taken at the end of the voyage in October of 1957.

1957 Third Quarter Objectives

The objectives associated with the summer of 1957 Arctic operations were to:

- escort merchant ships supplying the DEW Line sites;
- survey harbours and clear beach approaches to land construction and other material;
- conduct oceanographic, hydrographic and other scientific research; and
- investigate the possibility of a Northwest Passage for large ships.

Helicopter Utility Squadron 21, Detachment 2

Detachment 2 was embarked onboard HMCS *Labrador* on June 21 with one HUP, one HTL-4, and one HTL-6, three officers and six men.

Detachment Officers

- LCdr (P) B."Bruce" F. Vibert as officer in charge
- Lt (P) L. "Larry" T. Zbitnew
- Lt D."Dave" A. Oliphant

Maintenance Personnel

- C2AT4 Joe Malone & Staff:
- P1AT4 John Hughes
- P2EA George Koch
- P2RA Ken Cann
- LSAR Gil Turgeon
- LSAR Carl Snelgrove
- ABAF Gord Patterson
- ABAF Laval Gagnon

Ships Officers 1957 Third Quarter Cruise

Aircraft

- Bell HTL-4 S/N 202
- Bell HTL-6 S/N 205
- Piasecki HUP-3 S/N 247

June 1957 - Arctic Cruise Operations

Friday, June 21

The two Bells (Zbitnew in 202) and HUP were flown onboard in the morning when a make-and-mend was declared.

Saturday, June 22

A Saturday routine was observed, so no flying took place this day.

Sunday, June 23

A Saturday routine was observed, so no flying took place this day.

Monday, June 24

Bell 205 was flown ashore to *Shearwater* for a compass swing and returned onboard by noon when a make-and-mend was declared.

Tuesday, June 25

No flying took place as the weather was overcast and below limits in the morning. The ship slipped her lines and proceeded to sea by 1100; the cruise had begun! At 1545, the Captain had the ship's company assembled on the quarter deck where he briefed them on the upcoming voyage.

Modification work was begun on the HUP.

Wednesday, June 26

En route to St. John's, Newfoundland, each pilot had a trip in a Bell in the morning. Zbitnew in Bell 202 and Turgeon as passenger conducted a radio check and deck landings.

No flying took place in the afternoon.

The air detachment maintenance crew checked the fan belts on both of the Bells, checked emergency gear and conducted a boat drill.

Thursday, June 27

Labrador entered St. John's harbour at 0400 to pick up a USN party which included Commander Focht, USN and CPO Macdonald, USN, who were assigned to *Labrador* for public relations duties. *Labrador* then cleared the harbour by 1100 en route to Hampton Inlet for a rendezvous with the USN icebreaker, USS *Edisto* (AG 89) where she was to transfer the USN Public Information Team to *Edisto*.

Labrador's stay in St. John's was shortened as the USCGS icebreaker *Eastwind* was forced to return to Boston due to damage to her main engines. With *Eastwind* now unavailable, *Labrador* was tasked to assume her responsibilities escorting the American tankers USS *Kankakee* and *Memphis* to Goose Bay. *Edisto* soon arrived to take over responsibility for the tanker *Memphis*.

Fog was encountered throughout the day, but cleared in the evening.

The Captain conducted a lecture on icebreaking at 1615. LCdr Markham gave a lecture on the formation of ice at 2100.

Friday, June 28

Still en route to Hamilton Inlet in fog in the morning, HUP 247's engine was run up and the oil diluted.[123]

A discussion was held in the wardroom, led by the Captain, concerning the upcoming Operation "Belt Load" and *Labrador's* role. In his address, he stated that the 1957 operations would be similar to the 1956 expedition and would include the escorting of merchant ships supplying the mid-Canada line, McGill fence and Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, surveying harbours, clearing beach approaches, conducting oceanographic and other scientific research, and investigating the possibility of a "Northwest Passage" for large ships.

All aircraft were airborne in the afternoon, conducting proficiency flying exercises and one ice recce. Zbitnew flew HUP 247 with LCdr Vibert as copilot to practice local flying and deck landings. All aircraft returned on board. Zbitnew flew a photo flight with Miller as passenger in Bell HTL-6 S/N 205.

Saturday, June 29

Labrador was still en route to Hamilton Inlet in company with the tankers *Kankakee* and *Memphis* and the USCG icebreaker *Edisto*.

Flying took place in the morning with fog developing intermittently in the afternoon, and the day was spent clearing a path through the ice for the two tankers.

Another lecture was conducted at 1100, this time by Chief McDonald, USN, on journalism.

The ships were clear of ice by 1730 when the HUP made five trips to *Edisto,* transferring the U.S. Public Information Team together with their baggage and equipment to the American icebreaker.

The HUP, flown by Zbitnew with the ship's meteorologist LCdr Bill Markham and PO Hughes, carried out ice recce flights to locate a safe passage through the ice into Hamilton Inlet for the two tankers. Zbitnew flew a second ice recce with Lt Dave Oliphant as copilot and Markham as ice observer.

The HUP also made five flights to USS *Edisto* to transfer personnel and equipment including Leading Seaman Cann who was to obtain radio set crystals for the 140.58 kilocycle frequency so the ships could communicate with each other. LCdrs Ackerman and Douglas were also transferred ashore.

Sunday, June 30

Labrador was en route to La Scie, Newfoundland, where the ship stopped in ice overnight and was underway again at 0500.

No flying took place during the day due to weather; however, the air maintenance team was able to correct several maintenance issues on the aircraft and also complete modification number 3/70/80/31 on the HUP. The average serviceability for aircraft during this period was 75%.

After violent rotor head and fuselage vibrations had been previously experienced on 205, it was determined that the rotor head brake block had fractured, creating momentary friction between the block and the drum. Further investigation determined that the rotor brake drum assembly had been carelessly assembled by the manufacturer. A total of 10.6 hours were flown during this period.

July 1957

Monday, July 1

En route to Fox Harbour, the ship stopped at St. Anthony, NL, and found the harbour plugged with ice, so it continued on to La Scie, arriving at 1930. Fog was encountered throughout the day with scattered showers ,but acceptable for the Bells to be test-flown in the evening.

Zbitnew conducted a test flight on Bell 205 with Hughes onboard.

Navigating in thick fog, *Labradors* bridge crew suddenly saw an iceberg appear out of the fog that had not been spotted on the ship's radar, requiring *Labrador's* engines to be thrown into a full emergency stop - barely avoiding a collision.

One trip was made ashore to St. Anthony in the Bell, which found the harbour to be icebound, so *Labrador* continued on to La Scie to commence a week of sounding work and beach surveys for use in future supply operations.

Tuesday, July 2

Arriving at La Scie, NL, the two Bells were employed at 0600 by the hydrographic team.

Also, one Bell was used for runs ashore, with the ship underway at 1130 and proceeding to St. Anthony.

Labrador arrived off St. Anthony by 1600 when one Bell and the HUP flown by Zbitnew (LCdr Ackerman, OIC of Diving Unit Bravo, and Little as passengers) were used for transfer of beach reconnaissance personnel ashore. The aircraft returned onboard by 1900 with the beach reconnaissance party, and the ship again proceeded underway to Fox Harbour.

Wednesday, July 3

Labrador arrived off Fox Harbour at 0900 with the Bells employed in hydrographic work upon arrival. The weather was overcast with drizzle throughout the morning. Bell 202's pilot was unable to restart the aircraft on the beach; numerous unsuccessful attempts were made until finally the spark plugs were changed resulting in a successful startup and flight back onboard.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Hughes	Prim. Trans. Fox	-
205	Zbitnew	Malone	Prim. Trans. Fox	-

One motorboat, the hydrographic launch *Pogo* and one LCVP were employed by the beach party for transfer of personnel between the ship and shore. The ship departed Fox Harbour at 1630 and continued north enroute to Spotted Island, NL and another radar station.

Thursday, July 4

The weather this day was overcast with some fog patches. Both Bells were airborne by 0630 with the hydrographic team and their equipment but were unable to complete their task due to fog and unserviceable equipment. One Bell ashore on Spotted Island was employed as a radio link between the diving team and the ship. It was also used to transfer Captain Little of the U.S. Army to the radar site. All aircraft and LCVP were back onboard by 0930 and the ship then proceeded to Cartwright, a USAF manned radar station. *Labrador* arrived there by 1550.

The HUP 247 and the Bells were employed transferring the diving team, hydrographers, photographer and an American Army officer ashore to Cartwright. Aircraft were secured for sea by 1900 with the ship proceeding to Cartwright.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Van Dyck	Prim. Trans. Spotted Isle	-
202	Zbitnew	Bolton	Prim. Trans. Cartwright	-

Friday, July 5

With the ship en route to Cartwright in fog and a low overcast which persisted throughout the day, no flying was required. Cartwright work was completed and the ship proceeded north to Saglek Bay, NL,[124] with short stops at Cape Makkovik and Hopedale, NL.

Saturday, July 6

En route to Cape Makkovik on the coast of *Labrador* in low overcast and fog, no flying was required. The stops at Cape Makkovik and Hopedale were completed.

Sunday, July 7

With the ship en route to Saglek Bay, the aircraft were ground-run this morning to check their serviceability. Church services were held at 1030, with the remainder of the day declared a Sunday routine. Fog in the morning improved to overcast skies once the ship was clear of the ice at 1300. No flying was required.

Monday, July 8

The ship proceeded clear of ice into Saglek Bay where the LCVP the was lowered at 0900 and loaded with a beach reconnaissance party and their gear.

The sky was overcast with a broken layer at 400 to 600 feet. The tops of mountains in the vicinity are over 3000 feet.

The two Bells were used for local proficiency flying in the morning, with the HUP and one Bell used for transfers and proficiency flying in the afternoon.

A recreation party was transferred ashore to play baseball against the Americans of the 924th Aircraft Control & Warning Squadron[125] and who manned the local radar station. For those not playing baseball, fishing and hiking were arranged.

Note: The mission of the 924th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron was to conduct Air Defence operations within their assigned area of responsibility, to support the Melville NORAD Control Centre as a surveillance station in the air defence system, to operate and maintain the air strip at Saglek Bay, NL and provide logistic support to the communications relay complex at this site.

The underwater diving team set and detonated two charges at the beach landing area. The ship was underway again by 1700 and proceeding to Resolution Island with an ice reconnaissance in the Bell required at 2000.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Patterson	Prim. Trans. Saglek	-
205	Zbitnew	Patterson	Prim. Trans. Saglek	-
247	Zbitnew	Koch	Prim. Trans. Saglek	-

Tuesday, July 9

With the ship en route to Resolution Island in the entrance to Hudson Strait, fog and low overcast skies were encountered, so no flying took place.

The two Bells were launched at 1400 for transfer of personnel to and from Resolution Island. Two trips were made in very unpredictable wind conditions; however, a motorboat was required to complete the

remaining transfers as the winds were too high to continue flying. The sun finally broke through at 2130 for the first time in nine days.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Markham	Ice Recce	-
247	Zbitnew	Turgeon	Local & Form	-
205	Zbitnew	Nypro	Hydrography	-

Wednesday, July 10

Labrador was en route to Lake Harbour and ran into heavy ice at 0800. An ice recce was launched in the Bell as the ship turned around. All aircraft were airborne by 1000 for photographs and formation flying. The ship was headed back towards Resolution Island.

Two Bells were employed in hydrographic work, with one returning unserviceable due to the tail rotor drive shaft bearing becoming loose. Later in the afternoon, both Bells were caught away from the ship in the fog and required direction-finding using the ship's radar for guidance to make it back on board. One hydrographer had to be left ashore due to the fog, but he was recovered in the evening after the fog lifted somewhat.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	None	Hydrography	-

Thursday, July 11

Entering Frobisher Bay, heavy ice was encountered with fog, which proved intermittent throughout the day.

One ice recce was flown at noon and all of the Bells were loaded with survival gear for a forthcoming sojourn ashore.

In the evening, the ship had made its way out of ice and was en route to Resolution Island.

Friday, July 12

The ship arrived off Resolution Island's "Yellow Beach" at noon where the two Bells flew Zbitnew and four air maintenance men ashore with orders to assist in hydrographic survey requirements. The aircraft used the USAF radar station on Cape Warwick, located at an elevation of 1200 feet on the eastern side of Resolution Island, as their shore base.

The air detachment's gear was sent to shore in the LCVP, which then returned with the diving team.

Disembarked

Due to inclement weather, the Bells were secured temporarily at Yellow Beach until they could be flown up to the radar station, while the six detachment personnel moved into quarters at the radar base and settled into the station's routine. The aircraft later returned to the ship with the first mail to arrive for the ship's company.

Embarked

In the meantime, HMCS *Labrador* sailed in fog for Narsaq, Greenland, with LCdr Vibert and the HUP remaining onboard, as it was still undergoing a routine 100 hour maintenance inspection.

Saturday, July 13

Disembarked

The Bells were initially flown up from Yellow Beach at 0930 and later were airborne at 1100, with hydrographic work being carried out in the southern part of the island.

Embarked

The ship was still encumbered by fog, while the inspection on the HUP continued.

Sunday, July 14

Disembarked

The Bells were airborne at 0400 and completed their survey at the south end of the island by 1000. They were airborne again at 1430 and completed a survey of the North Channel by 1930. After two days of intensive flying from 0400 until 1930 each day, hydrographic operations had been completed on the southern end of the island and in the North Channel. Later in the evening, the USAF authorities

requested assistance to search for a missing airman, so both Bells were employed in the search that continued into the next day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Bolton	Hydrography	-
205	Zbitnew	Bolton	Hydrography	-
205	Zbitnew	None	Search & Rescue	-
205	Zbitnew	Turgeon	Search & Rescue	-

Embarked

The ship was still encumbered by fog and was also rolling in a very heavy swell.

Monday, July 15

Disembarked

The aerial search for the missing American airman continued, but unfortunately when located by Oliphant in one of the Bells, the airman was found to be fatally injured, resting about 200 feet from the foot of a precipice down which he had fallen. Recovery of the body was effected by Oliphant in one of the Bells, which was used to lift the body down a steep slope secured at the end of a hand line and then through the water to the waiting boat. This operation was successfully completed at 2345.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Bolton	Search & Rescue	-

Embarked

The ship arrived at Narsaq, Greenland to pick up a VIP party for passage to Godthaab, Greenland, including:

- Mr. H.F. Feaver, Canadian ambassador to Denmark, and Mrs. Feaver;
- Professor Niels Bohr, an Atomic Physicist, and Mrs. Bohr;
- Ambassador Henrik Kaufman, Danish Ambassador to the United States;
- Mr. Eske Brun, permanent undersecretary to Greenland;
- Miss Gunver Hirschprung, secretary to Mr. Brun;
- Commander Norman Svend V. Rosenving, Danish Council, Boston;
- Mr. Christian L. Thompson of the Danish atomic commission;
- Major-General Eric Ross Musson, Danish air attaché to the United States and Canada.

This large party required some effort on part of the crew to accommodate in the crew's quarters below decks.

LCdr Vibert, in the HUP, flew the ship's mail the 30 miles to Tunugdliarfik (now spelled Tunulliarfik) Fjord where Narsarssuak (now spelled Narsarsuaq) Air Base/Bluie West 1[126] airfield was located (and still is operating as an airport).

Tuesday, July 16

With fine flying weather but no requirement to do so, the air maintenance team used the opportunity to conduct minor inspections on both of the Bells.

Embarked

The ship arrived at Grønnedal, Greenland's Danish Naval Base at the time, where the ship and crew were given a warm reception. There was no flying due to the recreation activities taking place ashore.

The VIP party disembarked here and *Labrador* sailed for Godthaab, the capital of Greenland, at 0400.

Wednesday, July 17

Disembarked

The air branch crew were still all engaged on the minor inspections of both Bells; again, no flying was required in weather that remained clear.

Embarked

The ship arrived at Godthaab at 1900 and landed her passengers with much ceremony. No flying took place after that due to high winds.

Thursday, July 18

Disembarked

The minor inspections were completed on both Bells; however, the winds were still too strong for the aircraft to be test-flown.

Embarked

The HUP was flown on a photographic run around Godthaab while the ship was opened to visitors.

Friday, July 19

Disembarked

Poor weather continued throughout the day with high winds and fog in the afternoon followed by precipitation in the evening; consequently, no flying took place.

Embarked

Labrador sailed for Resolution Island to recover the helicopters and the hydrographic teams, encountering very rough seas in Davis Strait that prevented flying for the next three days.

While *Labrador* had been in Greenland, one of her helicopters had been successful in finding the body of a radar station employee who, against regulations, had gone mountain climbing.

Saturday, July 20

Disembarked

The ship transmitted a message to the detachment team ashore indicating a delay of one day. An attempt was made in the evening to reach Yellow Beach by helicopter but was canceled due to heavy fog.

Embarked

The ship was still en route to Resolution Island in very rough weather with no flying possible.

Sunday, July 21

The ship arrived at Resolution Island but the shore crew were unable to fly the two Bells on board due to the fog, but they were flown down the hill by 1930 and were found to be serviceable when in-flight. The ship meanwhile was standing out to sea.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Zbitnew	None	Ferry	-

Monday, July 22

Disembarked

One aircraft was airborne at 1030 off Yellow Beach under a 200 foot fog bank and was onboard by 1130.

The other Bell followed with personnel, but their gear had to be picked up and returned to the ship by the LCVP.

The ship then sailed for New Harbour on Baffin Island.

Embarked

HUP 247 was flown ashore by Vibert to the Resolution Island site where it became fogged-in for several hours. The fog lifted sufficiently in the late afternoon to allow all helicopters to be flown - they had found a hole in the fog and by racing at sea level under the fog, they made it back onboard.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	None	Resolution Island to *Labrador*	-

Tuesday, July 23

The ship was en route to Ney Harbour on the southeast coast of Baffin Island.

Bell 202 was flight-tested and found serviceable, while 205 was unserviceable do to a lean fuel mixture problem. The HUP was used at noon for ice reconnaissance and transfers of personnel to and from Ney Harbour and in the afternoon, three external sling loads of stores and equipment were transferred to Ney Harbour. On completion of these trips, HUP 247 was declared unserviceable due to a problem with flight control rigging.

The stores which *Labrador* had landed by air were for Dr. and Mrs. McLaren, who were conducting Arctic cod research for the Fisheries Research Board of Canada. They were brought on board from their research station in the fiord at Ney Harbour, and were treated to a mess dinner.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Koch	Test Flight	-
247	Zbitnew	Apps & Malone	Trans (3) Slings	-
205	Zbitnew	Dr. & Mrs. McLaren	Trans Ney Harbour	-

Wednesday, July 24

The HUP was still unserviceable due to rigging of the flight controls, which required adjustment. Detachment personnel were also working on 205 to correct the fuel mixture problem. Both Bells were used for the transfer of personnel and their gear at Frobisher Bay from 1830 onward.

Commodore H. L. Quinn, RCN was flown aboard to observe icebreaking and scientific work for a few days.[127]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
205	Zbitnew	Markham	Test Flight	-

205	Zbitnew	5 Passengers	Trans (3) Slings	-
202	Zbitnew	CDRE Quinn	Trans Frobisher Bay	-

Note: "Trans (3) Slings" refers to three loads slung under the aircraft.

Thursday, July 25

At Frobisher, both Bells were used for transferring personnel ashore commencing at 0930, with the ship underway at 1430. No flying was required for the remainder of the day as the ship proceeded towards Resolution Island.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
202	Zbitnew	Turgeon	Trans Frobisher Bay	-
202	Zbitnew	Markham	Ice Recce	-

Friday, July 26

Maintenance work was still proceeding on the HUP; Bells 202 and 205 were airborne at noon for hydrographic work in York Sound, Frobisher Bay.

Unexpectedly, both Bell helicopters crashed in severe turbulence atop Peter Point, a 2400 foot mountain adjacent to the 2710 foot Grinnell Glacier, stranding the two pilots, Vibert in 202 and Zbitnew in 205 and two civilian hydrographers, Sidney Van Dyck and Stewart Dunbrack.

The HUP was airborne for a test and reconnaissance flight in high winds that afternoon. One flight in the evening was made to drop food for Vibert, Zbitnew, Van Dyck and Dunbrack. Leading Seaman Cann, flying in the HUP as crewman, did the drop.

The following is an account written by Mr. Van Dyck, one of the passengers involved in the crash of *Labrador's* two Bells (HTL-4, S/N 202 and the HTL-6, S/N 205) on Peter Point, York Sound, Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island where their stripped airframes remain to this day.

"I was first introduced to the Bell helicopter in 1956 during Arctic survey operations aboard *Labrador*. These little yellow machines with the characteristic plastic bubble cockpit could carry two passengers and made possible much of the hydrographic survey work carried out in the Arctic by *Labrador*.

“Early Friday morning, it must have been 6:30 or 7:00 o'clock, while operating in Frobisher Bay, we were getting ready to take some hydrographic measurements which would involve my flying to the top of Peter Point, a 2,400 foot mountain in York Sound. The weather at sea level was perfect, hardly a breath of air, which was the reason for the early start. I had never liked wearing a "crash helmet", which were available on the flight deck, and I had got away with it because I was a civilian on a naval vessel. This morning, CPO Joseph (Joe) Malone pressured me once again to wear a helmet and, just to be good to him, I put one on.

"The pilot for this flight was LCdr B.F. (Bruce) Vibert, DSC, OIC of the Detachment. After take-off and once we had acquired sufficient altitude he headed direct for the mountain top and went straight in for a landing without the usual reconnaissance to find the best spot to land. We came in fast and made a very hard touch down on a bit of a slope. The helicopter, Bell HTL-4 202, rolled over onto the passenger side. Amongst a lot of noise of rotors shredding themselves against the rocks I was thrown forwards and hit the bubble in spite of the safety harness. Things happen rather quickly as one must always expect the worst which was, of course, the possibility that the helicopter might explode. The noise stopped as quickly as it had begun and I climbed out of the hole in the bubble that I had broken with the helmet on my head, LCdr Vibert climbed out of his side door which was facing skyward. We put some distance between our selves and the helicopter and waited for what might happen. Nothing did so we returned to the helicopter to see what might be done next. The radio was still operational so LCdr Vibert made contact with the ship to report the crash. By now it became clear that our landing problems had been made much worse by the strong downdrafts at the site caused by the nearby Grinnel Glacier.

"A second helicopter, Bell HTL-6 205, flown by Lt L.T. (Larry) Zbitnew, which was heading for another hydrographic site was diverted to see if

he could be of any help. He arrived not long afterwards and made a safe landing beside the wrecked Bell. By now the gusting downdrafts had become worse so Lt Zbitnew decided to leave his civilian passenger, Stu Dunbrack, and all expendable gear and return to the ship. He almost made it. On lifting off he was caught in a gust and his tail rotor slammed into the ground leaving him stranded. Now there were four of us. We had some emergency rations and were not too concerned even though the only other helicopter aboard *HMCS Labrador*, Piasecki HUP 247, was undergoing maintenance at that time.[128]

"Surely we could find a way to climb down the mountain. Three sides turned out to go 2400 feet straight down to the water with the fourth side, after a close look, remaining a very dicey possibility. This close look included a brief attempt to get over a sliding rubble field. I meant to give it a try. With a quarter inch rope tied to my belt I ventured a few steps across this rubble to what appeared to be a more solid ledge. When I looked back, I saw the person holding the other end of the rope in his hands could not possibly hold me if I started slipping. I made it back to more stable ground and counted myself lucky. Time wore on and by mid-afternoon the gusting winds were getting worse. Work onboard *Labrador* to make HUP 247 serviceable was proceeding at a good pace and a test flight was scheduled for late afternoon. At the same time a mountain rescue team was organized aboard *Labrador* in case the HUP could not be made serviceable. There was no chance in these increased wind conditions that the HUP pilot, Lt D.A. "Dave" Oliphant with crewman LS Charles Cann, could get close enough to effect a rescue so it was planned to drop some food and water to us in the early evening.[129] The food was no problem, but the water was in jerry cans wrapped in mattresses that burst on impact. A second flight was made at 0430 Saturday morning and this time they dropped us a lot of ice cubes in a sack. Our water problems were solved.[130]

"The decision was made to try and to pick us up at first light the next day. That was the time of least air movement from Grinnel Glacier and therefore, hopefully, the time of least gustiness on our perch. The time came to prepare for the night. We had four sleeping bags which were carried in the helicopters in case of such an emergency. We managed to build a shelter or small lean-to using the aluminum poles from the survey stations we carried and covered them with the cut up rubber floats from the helicopters. It was not a class accommodation but quite acceptable for a one night stand.[131]

“We called *Labrador* at 0730 to report the winds had decreased. HUP 247, flown by Lt Dave Oliphant got airborne and flew to the mountain top.[132] He hovered a few feet above the ground and the first two of us, the last ones to arrive, clambered aboard and were returned to the *Labrador*. Within half an hour he was back. The winds were starting to gust again but Lt (P) Oliphant was determined to rescue us. I will never forget his calm resolve and astute manoeuvring to once again get into a hovering position so we could climb aboard. He succeeded and safely returned us to the ship by 0830.

"Once aboard *Labrador* we were handed over to the ship‘s doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant Commander D.A.(Don) Maciver, who gave us a good debriefing and a medical check-up. He gave each of us a sleeping pill and told us to go to bed. I had never before taken a sleeping pill so had no idea how long it would take to knock me out. Being cautious, I got a glass of water, put it on the sink beside the bed, crawled under the blanket, took the pill with the water and quickly sat the glass back on the sink. I was tired and in about 15 minutes was sound asleep.”

Epilogue

In October 1957, an attempt was made to recover both helicopters. On October 3, 1957, *Labrador* arrived at Peter Point in the late afternoon, but due to the lateness of arrival and moderate winds it was not possible to fly that day.

USAF CH-21B; Photo Source: National Museum of the USAF

An American H-21 helicopter arrived onboard and the crew from this aircraft and one that had been forced down at Uyka Flats were given shelter for the night.

Early the following morning, the H-21 cleared *Labrador’s* flight deck allowing the salvage operation to commence. Four helicopter detachment personnel under PO Hughes were landed on Peter Point by *Labrador’s* helicopters to strip the two damaged aircraft for easy transfer to the ship in pieces. After two hours on the mountain top, the work party had to be removed due to high winds, which were making further salvage work dangerous. Both of *Labrador’s* helicopters were used to extract these men and experienced

strong updrafts to a height of five hundred feet in the process. With winds forecast to be high for the rest of the day, *Labrador* departed for Frobisher Bay and the following day departed for the trip home to Halifax, as the forecast of high winds would have prevented further attempts to recover more of the two damaged aircraft.

Saturday, July 27

Before the rescue, the HUP and crew had been standing by at 0400. One food drop was made at 0430. A call was received from the mountain at 0715, reported that winds were decreasing. The HUP was airborne and all of the crash survivors were transferred back to *Labrador* by 0830. The two Bell aircraft 202 and 205 were left at Peter Point along with several other pieces of gear.] With the rescue operation successfully concluded, *Labrador* departed York Sound later in the morning en route to Frobisher Bay to disembark Commodore Quinn and drop off mail. No flying took place for the remainder of the day.

Sunday, July 28

Labrador arrived off Frobisher Bay at 0830 and the HUP was airborne at 0930 to transfer Commodore Quinn and the ship's mail ashore. Major Van Dore, USAF, Commanding Officer of the Resolution Island Radar Site, was returned onboard *Labrador* for passage to his home base. With the ship underway for Resolution Island at 1130, no flying took place for the remainder of the day.

Monday, July 29

En route to Resolution Island, Major Van Dore was taken ashore by LCVP and 500 pounds of mail was picked up at 1330. The ship left Resolution Island at 1600 for Brevoort Island. No flying took place due to overcast skies and fog at 300 feet.

Tuesday, July 30

Labrador arrived at Brevoort Island at noon hour to assist four American ships (the USN icebreaker USS *Edisto*, the MSTS cargo vessel USNS *Lt James E. Robinson* [T-AKV-3] and two dock landing ships, the USS *San Marcos* and USS *Rushmore*) on the DEW Line re-supply operations, which arrived at 2000 to commence unloading operations.

The HUP was airborne and found to be unserviceable due to a vibration accompanied by a 15 lb. loss in the aft transmission's oil pressure. Investigation by the Detachment CPO found metal particles in the main

transmission oil sump. The OIC ordered the transmission fluid drained and refilled with fresh oil. On completion, the helicopter was test-flown, including an auto rotation and, on landing, the fluid was again checked and found to contain larger metal particles than before. The helicopter was declared unserviceable ("Aircraft On Ground") until a replacement transmission could be obtained. LCdr Vibert took a jar containing the metal particles to the bridge to inform the Captain that his last helicopter was unserviceable and could not fly until a replacement transmission could be obtained.

"The Captain went out to the bridge wing to assess the situation. On his return, he announced that he did not believe Bruce Vibert and would have LCdr Les Brown, the senior engineer, investigate. LCdr Vibert retired to his cabin to "consider his position"; he returned to the bridge and informed the Captain that since the Captain did not appear to have confidence in him, he should be relieved as OIC of the Detachment. The Captain accepted his request, effective 3rd August and appointed Lt Dave Oliphant as acting OIC until Vibert's replacement arrived aboard".[133] The loss of all helicopters so early in the cruise could have disastrous repercussions on future operations further north, i.e., navigating the Bellot Strait.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Malone, Hughes	Test Flight	-

Wednesday, July 31

In fine weather, USN officers Lt West and Lt J. G. Nelson were flown aboard in a Bell from the Dock

Landing Ship *San Marcos*. *Labrador* was secured alongside the USCSG icebreaker *Edisto* (which was also in company with LDS *Rushmore* and the cargo ship *Lieut. James E Robinson*) at 1400 and transferred 15 radar beacons onboard. *Pogo* meanwhile ran sounding lines in the harbour.

Air detachment summary for July 1957

LCdr Vibert reported that a total of 95.8 hours were flown during this period with five flying days being lost due to poor weather and another

four due to other causes. The average aircraft serviceability for the period had been 77.7%.

August 1957

Thursday, August 1

Hydrographic work was conducted during the day with *Pogo* running soundings in the harbour.

Although there was fine weather this day, no flying took place and the ship departed for Lady Franklin Island, returning in the afternoon.

Friday, August 2

Labrador proceeded to sea at 0300 escorting the USN ships *Lt James E. Robinson* and *San Marcus* through the ice. Recreation ashore for the ship's crew was organized in the afternoon at Brevoort Island.

Saturday, August 3

USS Edisto. Photo source: Lt (P) John A. MacNeil

At Brevoort Island, Lt (P) Oliphant and four air branch personnel were taken ashore in the afternoon.

The HUP was run with rotors engaged in accordance with a direct order to this effect from the Captain. Inspection after shutdown revealed even bigger metal particles in the transmission oil sump.

Labrador proceeded to sea at 1400 in company with the USN ships *Rushmore* and petrol carrier *Nodaway*. The Operation "Hell's Bells" to salvage the two Bells atop Peter Point once *Labrador* returned to York Sound, required 15 pairs of boots to equip the salvage party, which were transferred by highline from *Rushmore* to *Labrador*.[134]

Sunday, August 4

Labrador proceeded alone back to Frobisher Bay. No flying took place in the foggy weather and with the ship rolling and pitching in a slight swell. A Sunday routine was observed.

Monday, August 5

Arriving back at York Sound, a party of 18 men under Commander Law was landed to attempt the salvage of *Labrador's* wrecked helicopters on Peter point. Lt Oliphant, an air department representative, plus C2AT4 Malone and three detachment maintenance personnel were also included in the party.

The ship proceeded to a rendezvous in fog and rainy conditions with the USCGS Icebreaker *Eastwind* carrying replacement helicopters for *Labrador,* which *Eastwind* had picked up in Halifax on her way north. These machines included an RCN HUP-3 246 S/N 51-16622, and an HTL-5 S/N 129966 on loan from the USN for the summer operations as well as 1000 lbs. of spare aircraft parts.

Tuesday, August 6

With the ship off York Sound still in fog and rain, food and equipment were landed for a rain-sodden salvage party. The ship proceeded to Ney Harbour where the USN HTL-5 was flown for a personnel transfer.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
129966	Zbitnew	PO Hughes	Ney Harbour	-

***Labrador* headed for Frobisher Bay.**

Wednesday, August 7

Labrador arrived at Frobisher Bay in the morning where the HUP conducted personnel and mail runs between the ship and shore, and experienced a fine clear day for flying. *Labrador* remained in the area overnight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Hughes, Cann	Frobisher Bay Trans	-
246	Zbitnew	Cann, Gagnon	Frobisher Bay Trans	-

Tuesday, August 8

The HUP was inshore conducting passenger transfers and *Labrador* sailed for York Sound again.

Meanwhile, the USN HTL-5 was unserviceable with much backfiring and dipping of voltage on both of its magnetos.

Labrador arrived at York Sound in low cloud late this afternoon to find the place as it had been left. During the ship's absence, the salvage party claimed to have climbed within a few hundred feet of the summit of Peter Point, but poor visibility had stopped them there.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Cann, Gagnon	Frobisher Bay Trans	-

Friday, August 9

Labrador returned to York Sound to embark all but three of the 'Hell's Bells" salvage party.

The HUP carried out passenger runs between the ship and the shore party when the cloud base lifted to 300 feet and the salvage party was then returned on board.

Mr. Brevic, CPO Martin and Leading Seaman Snelgrove remained ashore to make another trip up to the top of Peter Point and continue salvaging equipment from the stranded helicopters.

Meanwhile the ship was to be employed in Frobisher Bay escorting ships through the ice and sounding the newfound "*Pogo Passage*".[135]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Cann, Gagnon	Frobisher Bay Trans	-

Saturday, August 10

Labrador rendezvoused with the USNS tankers *Tonti* (T-AOG 76)[136] and *Tamalpais* (T-AO-96)[137] to escort them from the Resolution Island area into Frobisher Bay.

An investigation into pilot experience, aircraft serviceability and air stores commenced and the Captain informed Commander Law, LCdr Brown, Lt Norton and Lt Oliphant that he would act as OIC of the air detachment until the arrival of Lt (P) R. T. Murray, who was to be in appointed as the new air detachment OIC.

Weather this day was overcast and mostly foggy, so no flying took place.

Sunday, August 11

Labrador was in Frobisher Bay, escorting the tankers *Tonti* and *Tamalpais* up the Bay.

When escorting ships through pack ice, *Labrador* would try to keep about half a cable length ahead of the ship immediately astern so that the ship being escorted could take advantage of the open water created by *Labrador* before the ice closed and blocked her path. The tanker following behind *Labrador,* the USNS *Tamalpais,* was a 22,000 ton tanker loaded with aviation fuel, giving her tremendous momentum when underway, but not easy to stop in a hurry. This provided *Labrador's* crew with an uneasy sight astern due to the possibility of a collision anytime *Labrador* was halted temporarily due to ice conditions.[138]

One ice reconnaissance was conducted at 1200 while the ship "*Rosebud*" came alongside in the afternoon.[139]

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Hughes, Markham	Ice Recce	-

Monday, August 12

In Frobisher Bay, one flight took place at 1900 to conduct an ice recce of the deep channel and Barnett Narrows. The ships had all passed through at 2015, arriving at Frobisher Bay this night.

Tuesday, August 13

Labrador and *Pogo* spent the afternoon conducting soundings of "Pogo Passage" and the ship returned to Frobisher Bay for the night.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Hughes	Trans Frobisher Bay	-

Wednesday, August 14

Labrador returned to Frobisher Bay. HUP 246 was employed throughout the day transferring fresh vegetables, baggage, stores, official dinner guests, the members of a Board of Inquiry convened to investigate the crash of the two Bells, the ships mail, and Lt Murray, who also arrived by air to replace LCdr Vibert (posted back to *Shearwater's* HU-21 Squadron) as the new air detachment OIC.

A new transmission for HUP 247 was also slung aboard by HUP 246.

Labrador's LCVP's transported onboard 30 USAF personnel plus baggage for the passage to the radar station on Resolution Island.

Labrador also refuelled from the Fleet Oiler *Tamalpais* before departing for Resolution Island.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Cann	Trans Frobisher Bay	-
246	Zbitnew	Hughes	Trans Frobisher Bay	-

Thursday, August 15

Labrador departed Frobisher Bay at 0200 en route to Resolution Island via York Sound under overcast skies to pick up the three remaining members of the "Hells Bells" salvage party who had been attempting to salvage as much equipment as possible from the two Peter Point crashed aircraft.

Aircraft 200 and 300 recovered the remaining salvage party members from the shore camps and also the recovered shotguns, sunglasses and two helmets.

The Board of Inquiry commenced their deliberations into the loss of the two Bells.

One of *Labrador's* LCVP transported the 30 USAF personnel to the radar station ashore by the evening.

No further flying took place this day.

Friday, August 16

With the ship en route to Resolute Bay on Cornwallis Island in Barrel Strait, the Board of Inquiry continued their deliberations, resulting in no flying while the ship crossed the Arctic Circle at 2100.

Saturday, August 17

This morning was taken up by activities celebrating the crossing of the Arctic Circle as work continued on the Bell and on 247. One ice recce was flown in the afternoon.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Gagnon, Markham	Prim Ice Recce	-

Sunday, August 18

With the ship en route to Resolute Bay, the engine on 247 was run up in the morning without the driveshaft connected to the transmission.

The ship's company observed a Sunday routine.

Monday, August 19

As *Labrador* entered Lancaster Sound, the HUP's transmission was installed. No flying took place in the morning and the ship arrived off Resolute Bay at 2200.

246 was airborne, conducting two trips to convey the Board of Inquiry and LCdr Vibert ashore to await transportation to *Shearwater.*

A Department of Transport Bell Model 47J landed onboard so their crew could have a look around *Labrador*.

Tuesday, August 20

Oceanographic work got underway with the ship in the Prince Regent inlet. The Bell's engine was run in the afternoon.

Wednesday, August 21

An ice recce was flown in the forenoon with the ship in Prince Regent Inlet, and the two HUPs were flown in the afternoon.

Fog and rain rolled in at 1500 with the ship anchored off Bellot for the night.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Snelgrove	Test Hover	-
246	Zbitnew	Snelgrove, Hunt	Local Seq	-
246	Murray	Hughes	Misc Test	-

Thursday, August 22

Operation "Bellot"[140] commenced with *Labrador* at the eastern end of Bellot Strait.

The first aircraft was airborne at 0650, continuously supporting hydrographic work and transferring personnel ashore to reopen Fort Ross, the uninhabited Hudson Bay Company (HBC) trading post. The fort was named after the explorer Sir John Ross, and was a HBC post until it was abandoned in 1948 in favour of Spence Bay, located about 150 NM to the South. The two wooden buildings, in remarkably good

condition, were reopened and occupied by a “tide watching party” in order to record the rise and fall of the tide. A cook, P2CK Joe Edison, and three members of the air department constituted the “party”.

Because of the strong currents in Bellot Strait and the real possibility that the ship could be pushed onto "Magpie Rock” at the eastern end of Bellot Strait, it was deemed prudent to establish a camp at Fort Ross with sufficient provisions and shelter to accommodate the ship's company.

A short break took place in the afternoon when the winds became too strong.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Markham	Hydrography Bellot	-
246	Zbitnew	Markham	Hydrography Bellot	-
247	Murray	Apps	Fort Ross	-

Friday, August 23

Hydrographic work continued at the Eastern end of Bellot Strait and personnel transfers were conducted. The ship’s hydrographic tender Pogo completed running sounding lines of Bellot Strait and the hydrographers, using the HUPs, finished setting up the leading marks in preparation for *Labrador's* first transit through the Strait.

Both HUPs were heavily employed throughout the day, however the Bell was still unserviceable since being flown at Ney Harbour.

High winds came up in the afternoon.

A fuel dump was established at Fort Ross by a Petty Officer and two men from the ship’s air department.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Norton	Hydrography Bellot	-
247	Murray	Snelgrove, Apps	Trans Bellot Strait	-
247	Murray	Norton	Trans Bellot Strait	-
247	Murray	Apps	Trans Bellot Strait	-

Saturday, August 24

When the ship got underway, one of the HUP aircraft was detailed to hover as a position marker above "Magpie Rock", the large underwater obstruction and greatest navigational hazard at the eastern end of the Strait. *Labrador* transited the strait in the morning. *[Note: See photo on pg. 23.]*

After the ship cleared Magpie, the HUPs were used for ice reconnaissance, photography and to check on the tide watching party that was camped, in tents, at the western end of the strait.

HUP 246 was flown after completion of a 50 hour inspection. One aircraft checked on the Western tide pole party and one ice recce was conducted later in the day.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Apps	Photo Bellot	-
246	Murray	Hyatt	Ice Recce	-

Sunday, August 25

Fog at the Western end of Franklin Strait precluded attempting hydrography in this area.

One ice reconnaissance of the Bellot Strait and a transfer from Fort Ross took place in the afternoon as the ship transited to the Eastern end of the Strait.

One HUP was employed in transferring gear for the Fort Ross beacon and the current parties.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Beacon Party	Trans Bellot	-
247	Zbitnew	Markham	Trans Bellot	-

Monday, August 26

Labrador spent the night in Prince Regent Inlet and conducted oceanographic work.

Both HUP's launched in the morning: one to the Western "tide pole party"[141] and HUP 246 ashore to Fort Ross where it was to be re-rigged.[142]

Fire destroyed the western "tide watching camp" on 26 August, so HUP 247 was dispatched with tents and provisions to re-establish the camp. Late in the evening, the ship sailed for Resolute Bay.

Captain Pullen was flown ashore for dinner at Fort Ross. Both HUP's were airborne at 2000 for hydrography work as *Labrador* set sail for Resolute Bay at 2300.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Hughes, Turgon	Fort Ross	-
246	Murray	Bolton, Kosh	Long Island Hydrography	-

247	Zbitnew	Beacon Party	Ice Recce and Trans	-

Tuesday, August 27

With *Labrador* proceeding up Prince Regent Sound and conducting oceanographic work, 247 was used to fly Captain Pullen on a survey of Fury Beach where some of the remains of HMS *Fury*, abandoned near this beach in July 1825, were found. When abandoned, much of its stores and three boats were cached on this beach.

HMS *Fury* was one of the ships of Captain W. E. Parry's third "Voyage of Discovery". Scattered around the beach were tin cans which probably had contained pemmican (dried meat), lengths of eight inch cable-laid hawsers, nails stamped with the military broad arrow, anchors and cannon. The Captain noted what was there and planned to return and collect some of the artifacts for the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax.

While on the beach, Murray captured a lemming, a five inch long vole-like mammal common to the Arctic and brought it back to the ship. A large glass tank containing sand, gravel and moss was prepared to house the lemming, now christened “Charlie”. He was then entered into Sick Bay records as an Able Seaman. Prior to the ships return to Halifax, Charlie was promoted to Leading Seaman and on arrival in home port, Charlie was granted shore leave to live for the next couple of years at the Halifax home of Cdr Dan Fairney, *Labrador’s* Engineering Officer.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Capt Pullen	Fury Beach	-

Wednesday, August 28

Oceanographic stations were conducted in the Wellington Channel in poor weather which continued all day with snow flurries.

The ship arrived at Resolute Bay in the evening and no flying took place this day due to the poor weather conditions.

Thursday, August 29

The ship departed Resolute Bay and proceeded down Peel Sound battling heavy ice and spent the day doing oceanographic work, returning to Resolute Bay at 1800.

The HUP was sent in to pick up LCdr Markham, two bags of cement and moss for Charlie. The HUP awaited the arrival of an RCAF "North Star" aircraft with mail for the ship which did not arrive due to a complete radio blackout from sunspot activity. With fog in the area, the HUP could not return on board until six hours later, landing after 2400 hours.

Friday, August 30

Labrador departed Resolute Bay at 0700 without receiving the mail that should have arrived and proceeded down Peel Sound to Bellot Strait, conducting oceanographic work along the way; no flying was required this day.

Saturday, August 31

At the West end of Bellot Strait, the weather in the area was foul: 300 foot ceiling, overcast with rain.

Airborne at 0800, 247 was employed checking on the tide watching camps at both ends of the strait and supporting the hydrographic and beacon parties.

Fog and zero visibility prevented the HUP returning to the ship, so they had to call on the ship/LCVP for help. The LCVP was sent ashore under radar guidance by the ship and, with the helicopter hovering over the LCVP again under guidance for the ship, made a radar-controlled approach to the stern of *Labrador* where the helicopter would land.

Once back onboard, the blade tracking maintenance to align the rotor blades on 246 was completed by air branch technicians.

Labrador was deployed in hydrographic work in weather that was still marginal with a 300 foot ceiling. *Labrador* transited the Strait at noon, with the HUP employed during the "dog watch" supporting a beacon party.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	None	Trans Bellot	-

246	Zbitnew	None	Test	-
247	Murray	Cavanaugh	Hydro Bellot	-

September 1957

Sunday, September 1

At the east end of Bellot Strait, the HUPs were employed during the morning setting up navigational markers and leading marks for hydrography work.

Padre George "Dinger" Bell was transferred to Fort Ross to conduct church services.

With the ship transiting to the western end of Bellot Strait, Zbitnew and PO Apps, flying 247 on a photographic mission, found some strange rock piles near Bell Island. These were later investigated by Cdr C.A. Law and found to be Inuit cairns.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Bell	Trans Fort Ross	-
247	Murray	Cavanagh	Hydro Beacons	-
247	Zbitnew	Apps	Trans Bellot & Photo	-
247	Zbitnew	Cdr Law	Trans Bellot	-

Monday, September 2

No flying took place during the day while the ship proceeded south in Franklin Strait for a rendezvous with three United States Coast Guard (USCG) ships.

Tuesday, September 3

Labrador arrived at the rendezvous point with the USCG Ice Tender *Storis* (WAG 38) and the Buoy Tenders *Spar* (W403) and *Bramble* (W392) to escort them through Bellot Strait.

These Coast Guard Ships were en route from California to Massachusetts and were to be the first American ships to transit the Northwest Passage. At the rendezvous, *Storis* came alongside for several hours as she had a medical emergency onboard that required help from *Labrador's* medical staff.

Air detachment officers were on duty as "officers of the watch" while the ship returned through Bellot Strait escorting the three USCGS ships in-line astern formation.

No flying took place this day.

Wednesday, September 4

During the night, *Labrador* transited the Western end of Bellot Strait escorting the USCG ships and rendezvoused with them at 0830 before splitting off from the convoy to resume her own oceanographic work.

One aircraft was employed in hydrographic work until the wind picked up to 38 knots, curtailing flight operations.

On arrival at the Western end of the strait, *Labrador* turned operation of the tide watching station over to the USCG while *Labrador* proceeded through the strait to the eastern end. An international incident then occurred when the Americans came ashore to operate the tide station and a fist fight developed between a tall *Labrador* seaman who was feeding some Arctic Foxes that had come to the campsite and became quite tame and one of the Americans. The Americans had come ashore with a shotgun and on seeing the Foxes they shot one. This infuriated the Canadian seaman who took it out on the American. The ship then received a frantic call from the shore party to return the Canadian to the ship and who on arrival back onboard insisted on seeing the Captain to explain his actions and lodge a complaint against the Americans. The Captain agreed that the Americans were in violation of Canadian hunting and firearms regulations which was then brought to the attention of the three USCG Captains.

This same evening, *Labrador* hosted a mess dinner which restored American/Canadian relations. Since the American ships did not carry

alcoholic beverages the USCG ship's officers thoroughly enjoyed their dinner and evening onboard *Labrador* which as with all RCN ships carried spirits for both the ships company and the officers wardroom.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Zbitnew	Bolton	Hydro - Bellot	-
246	Zbitnew	Markham	Hydro - Bellot	-

Thursday, September 5

The blade tracking of 247 was completed and aircraft was test-flown, so both aircraft were airborne in the morning, conducting hydrographic work and transferring personnel.

HUP 246 flown by Lt Oliphant failed to start after shut down at Fort Ross, so PO Hughes and PO Koch were flown ashore and determined that the starter drive shaft had sheered inside the engine casing, requiring an engine change to make 246 serviceable again.

The 1600 pound spare engine, which was carried onboard as part of the aviation stores, was brought ashore by LCVP and manhandled up the beach to the helicopter. Shear legs, made from 4x4 and 2x12 wooden shoring material, brought from the ship, were erected by Lt R. E. Dorkin, the ship's Boatswain, with the support of the Shipwright and a Boatswain's crew.

A maintenance crew consisting of Hughes, Koch, ABAF Gordon Patterson, and ABAF Laval Gagnon, under the supervision of *Labrador's* Air Engineer Officer, LCdr N.L. Brown, were brought ashore to change the engine.

As there was no shelter from the freezing rain and wind on the beach, a tarpaulin was erected over the engine bay and a Herman Nelson heater was brought ashore to provide a measure of warmth for the crew working on the engine, as well as a tent for crew shelter at night. Working under these adverse conditions, the engine change was completed in two days.

Meanwhile, HUP 247 was employed during the afternoon doing hydrographic work as *Labrador* steamed back to the western end of the

Strait. All ships [the three USCG vessels] were secured alongside for a mess dinner aboard with the *Labrador* in False Passage.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Bolton, Markham	Hydro - Bellot	-
247	Zbitnew	Bolton, Markham	Hydro - Bellot	-
247	Zbitnew	Bolton, Markham	Hydro - Bellot	-
247	Murray	Hughes, Koch	Trans Fort Ross	-

Friday, September 6

The LCVP was sent ahead through the Strait at 0900. One aircraft was employed in photography work as *Labrador* successfully escorted *Storis, Spar* and *Bramble* through Bellot Strait by noon.

Author's Note

The Captain was flown into Fort Ross, where he placed a message in a cairn that had been erected there to commemorate the engine change in *Labrador's* HUP 246.

Saturday, September 7

Due to fog, no flying took place all day, but the engine on the HTL-5 was test-run as the ship departed Bellot Strait down through the Gulf of Boothia.

Meanwhile, Murray and the air maintenance party were left at Fort Ross to complete the engine change on 246.

Sunday's September 8

Oceanographic stations were conducted in the Gulf of Boothia, but no flying took place due to a Sunday routine being in progress.

Monday, September 9

During the period of the engine change on 246, *Labrador* departed the area and sailed down the Gulf of Boothia to Thom Bay where Zbitnew

flew Captain Pullen, in 247, into the settlement of Victoria Harbour for a visit.

An LCVP was sent ashore to pick up an anchor and part of the engine from HMS *Victory* with *Labrador* returning to Bellot Strait in the evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Zbitnew	Capt Pullen	Trans Thom Bay	-

Tuesday, September 10

Labrador returned to Bellot Strait and Fort Ross where HUP 246 was test-flown by Murray and then flown onboard the ship, which was located at the eastern end of the Bellot Strait. The defective engine and other gear used ashore to effect the repair on this aircraft and all personnel were returned to the ship by LCVP, thus closing down the Fort Ross operation.

Aerial tide measurements were attempted by aircraft without success due to a low ceiling in the area; however, hydrographic work continued until dark with a Bell airborne at 2200 into Resolute to pick up the mail which had not arrived on time on August 30th.

The ship was unable to sail until the Bellot Strait survey was tied into the SHORAN[143] station ashore.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Hughes, Koch	Test Flight	-
247	Zbitnew	Apps	Photo Bellot	-
129466	Zbitnew	None	Test Flight	-
129466	Zbitnew	None	Test Flight	-

Wednesday, September 11

HUP 247 was airborne at 0800 to complete the hydrographic survey of Bellot Strait and have it tied into the SHORAN Station.

Labrador proceeded through Bellot Strait en route to Resolute Bay via Peel Sound, departing Bellot Strait by 1100. Meanwhile, an aircraft was sent into Resolute at 2200 to pick up the mail that had arrived on August 30 after *Labrador* had departed that location.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Hughes	Test Flight	-

Thursday, September 12

Padre Bell was transported ashore to Resolute to conduct church services for the community while SLt Delmonte, Stu Denar and a Miss Matthew were brought back aboard for lunch.

In fog and freezing drizzle, *Labrador* continued hydrographic operations between Griffith and Cornwallis Islands in the afternoon.

Zbitnew landed ashore at 1450 with a guest who was in transit back to *Shearwater*. Two flights were completed at 2200 and a HUP was used to pick up 300 lbs. of very welcome mail. Zbitnew was also flown ashore to catch air transportation back to home base at HMCS *Shearwater*.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
966	Murray	Koch	Test Flight	-
247	Murray	Van Dyke, Rorgeron	Hydro Resolute	-

Friday, September 13

No flying took place due to poor weather. *Labrador* proceeded up Wellington Channel, between Cornwallis and Devon Islands, carrying out hydrographic operations.

Saturday, September 14

Hydrographic work was conducted between Cape Anne and Griffith Island.

Tellurometers [144] used to measure distance electronically were inoperative.

No flying took place in the afternoon due to high winds.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Van Dyke, Rorgeron	Hydro Griffith	-

Sunday, September 15

No flying was required as *Labrador* proceeded North up the Wellington Channel conducting oceanographic work en route. A Sunday routine took place.

Monday, September 16

Labrador spent the night stopped in ice off Cape Sir John Franklin and in the morning turned South again towards Beechy Island, site of the Franklin expedition historical site. No flying took place this day.

Thursday, September 17

Labrador arrived off Beechy Island at 0900. Both HUPs were employed during the morning carrying out hydrography and transporting personnel ashore to inspect the wood cairn, which had been erected the previous year.

HUP 247, flown by Murray, was used to transport Captain Pullen ashore in search of cairns and to record the size of the muskox herd on Devon Island. The herd, when spotted and photographed, had four adults and five juveniles. Both HUPs were airborne transferring personnel and hydrographic parties ashore.

After a small arms party was landed by LCVP, the ship then departed Beechy Island for Fury Beach at 1700.

Wednesday, September 18

At 1100, the ship arrived at Fury Beach in high winds and poor visibility, resulting in no flying.

The LCVP was sent towards the beach but was back shortly with everyone drenched due to the poor weather, so the shore party was canceled and the ship returned to Lancaster Sound to conduct further oceanographic work.

HMCS Labrador Docking in Halifax: Photo Source: DND - LAB 4737 via LCdr R. T. Murray

Thursday, September 19

With the ship back at Fury Beach, both HUP's were used for personal transfers and for the recovery of historic artifacts found ashore. These included two anchors and a carronade from HMS *Fury* which went aground in 1824, thus the naming of this area as Fury Beach.[145]

Oliphant, flying HUP 247 and using the external sling, airlifted two anchors to the flight deck of the ship but was unable to lift the carronade or a third large anchor.

The ship's boats were unable to make the transit due to the half mile of ice between the ship and the beach, so the helicopters were employed in an attempt to put a line ashore. A steel wire rope was laid across a 1/2 mile of ice to the beach, but due to the movement of the inshore ice flows, this was not successful.

The two salvaged anchors and a length of cable-laid hawser, suitably mounted, were presented to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, where they were put on display.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	LCdr Markham	Ice Recce	-

246	Murray	Cdr Law, Kosh, O'Brian	Trans Fury Beach	-

Friday, September 20

Oceanography occupied the whole day in Lancaster Sound, consequently no flying took place. Murray conducted his first officer of the watch duties on the ship's bridge when icebreaking.

Labrador departed Prince Regent Inlet en route to Arctic Bay, in Admiralty Inlet off Baffin Island.

Saturday, September 21

Labrador arrived at Arctic Bay at 1100 and one aircraft was used for hydrography and to relay radio messages ashore. *Labrador* found that the new DOT operator of the Radio and Meteorological Station was unfamiliar with the electric generating equipment and was unable to run it. Engineering and electrical personnel were sent ashore to repair the generator and instruct the operator on how to keep it running. A HUP was used as a radio link between ship and shore while repairs were underway.

On completion of repairs to the shore station, *Labrador* sailed for Pond Inlet to check on that community. Strong winds curtailed flying operations, so all further activity was conducted by LCVP.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Hughes	Test	-
247	Murray	Van Dyke, Dunbrack	Hydro Arctic Bay	-

Sunday, September 22

The ship transited from Arctic Bay to Pond Inlet.

Guests including Roman Catholic priest, Father Jean Doufour, OMI, were transported aboard by LCVP, as the winds were gusting up to 28 knots,

preventing transfer by aircraft. The ship then departed Pond Inlet for Navy Board Inlet at 2100.

Monday, September 23

Strong winds and snow continued in the Baffin Bay area and in the eastern approaches to Lancaster Sound while en route to Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island.

The settlement was missed on the first approach, as it was hidden behind a huge iceberg and shrouded in fog. The ship conducted oceanography in overcast weather with snow and winds over 35 knots in the afternoon, consequently no flying took place this day.

Tuesday, September 24

Labrador arrived off Craig Harbour in the morning and continued up Grise Fiord, searching for the local Inuit settlement. Not finding it, the ship commenced a return to Jones Sound when the settlement was sighted. After checking on the inhabitants and finding all was well, the ship sailed for Thule, Greenland.

The weather was overcast, but cleared in the evening, with hydrography being conducted using the LCVP.

An RCMP officer was brought aboard for dinner and the ship departed for Grise Fiord at 2100 for oceanography in Baffin Bay and then on to Thule, Greenland for a resupply visit.

It was at Grise Fiord that the Captain received a message that *Labrador* was to be transferred to Department of Transport control. Needless to say, this had a demoralizing impact on the ship's officers and crew.

Labrador continued her oceanographic survey work on the way to Thule, Greenland and then through Baffin Bay and Davis Straight.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Patterson	Test	-
246	Murray	Cdr Law, Manning, Koch	Trans Thule	-

Wednesday, September 25

Labrador arrived off Thule, Greenland at 1630 and both HUPs were flown into Thule from a position about 20 nautical miles west of Parry Point, transferring personnel ashore.

Although flight plans were filed in accordance with published rules, they failed to be communicated to Thule which at that time was a very security conscious Strategic Air Command (SAC) Base. On landing at Thule, *Labrador* personnel were surrounded by Military Police, who were definitely not happy, and placed under close guard in the windowless operations centre until their flight plan problem was sorted out. Eventually everything was put right and the HUPs were flown back to HMCS *Labrador* and no further flying was allowed while the ship was in port.

The Captain was flown ashore to meet the Thule base commander and leave was granted to those off watch until 2359. Mail was received and brought onboard in the evening.

Thursday, September 26

Labrador departed Thule at 0530 and proceeded south in Baffin Bay en route for Clyde Inlet after landing the ship's outgoing mail by LCVP.

No flying took place during the day as the ship proceeded down Baffin Bay conducting oceanography en route.

Friday, September 27

The same ship's company routine as for the 26th was followed, except that a minor inspection was commenced on HUP 247.

Saturday, September 28

The same ship's company routine as the previous two days was followed, however a Saturday routine was officially declared.

Sunday, September 29

A Sunday routine was underway until 1300. HUP 247 flown by Oliphant was utilized at Clyde Inlet for ship-to-shore transfer flights. This aircraft was also used at Cape Christian to exchange RCMP personnel between Clyde Inlet and Cape Christian outposts. *Labrador* departed Clyde Inlet at 1700 and proceeded toward Cape Hooper.

Monday, September 30

Labrador was tied up alongside the USCGS icebreaker *Edisto* at Cape Hooper. The HTL-5 S/N 129966, on loan from the USN when the two Bells were lost on Peter Point in July, was transferred back to *Edisto*. Very little use was made of this helicopter, as it suffered from continual engine problems during the time it was on loan.

No further flying took place.

Air detachment summary for September 1957

In total, 85.4 hours were flown during this period, with only three days lost to weather and 11 to other causes. Aircraft serviceability for this month was 78.3%.

October 1957

Tuesday, October 1

Labrador continued into Cape Dyer where, in marginal weather, HUP 247 made two flights between the ship and the radar station at Cape Dyer to transfer personnel and collect mail. This weather, with low cloud and fog, forced the pilots to navigate using the main road running between the shore and the station on top of the hill.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
247	Murray	Cdr Law, Gagnon	Prim Trans	-
247	Murray	Gagnon, Hunt	Prim Trans	-

Wednesday, October 2

At 1200 in Pangnirtung, a community at the head of Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island, arrangements were made to marry the Anglican priest. This settlement was the site of a whaling station early in the twentieth century and supported an RCMP Post, Post Office, Church of England Mission, hospital and a Justice of the Peace (who was also a WWII Inuit Veteran).

Lt Murray recalls:

"On anchoring off the settlement, a person was sighted on the shore waving his hat to attract attention. Suspecting a problem, HUP 247 flown by Lt Oliphant was dispatched ashore to ascertain the nature of the problem. The person on the shore turned out to be the Chaplain of the Mission who was brought aboard ship. His problem was that he wished to marry one of the nurses at the mission hospital. He had asked that a minister be sent from Frobisher Bay to perform the wedding, as he wanted a religious rather than a civil ceremony. However, a minister was not available for some time and he mistakenly thought that the Captain of a naval vessel could perform a marriage ceremony.

“When he found out that we had a Protestant Chaplain aboard he asked if he would marry them. Again he was out of luck as a minister cannot perform marriages outside the province he is licensed in and, in the case of Padre Bell, it was Nova Scotia. A conference was held in the Wardroom to solve the impasse. It was decided that since we had a RCMP Constable aboard he could be flown ashore to issue the marriage license as the local RCMP detachment was away on patrol. Chaplain Bell would perform the religious ceremony up until the words "with the powers invested in me, etc.”, he would then step aside and the local justice of the peace would step in with the pronouncement. Cdr C. Anthony "Tony" Law, DSC was the best man and Captain T.C. Pullen gave the bride away. A ship’s photographer was sent ashore to record the event.

"The Bride and Brides Maid dresses had been made, the wedding cake and food for a reception had been prepared and kept in the freezer. HMCS *Labrador’s* Wardroom supplied a quantity of caned shrimp, crab, etc. as additional “delectables” for the reception.

"The church was full and the wedding ceremony was proceeding towards a conclusion when the two HUPs flown by Lt Murray and Lt Oliphant made a low pass over the chapel to salute the newly weds. The service came to an abrupt end when the guests streamed out of the chapel to see the fly past.

"The reception was well attended by ship's officers and the community. The two pilots were asked to remove their side arms before entering the hall as we were told it was not one of "those" types of wedding. The photographer was rushed back to the ship to develop his film and print copies for the wedding party. Additional copies were mailed to interested parties when we returned to Halifax."

Both HUPs were used to support the wedding operations.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Cdr Gagnon, Malone	Misc Test	-

Thursday, October 3

Labrador headed to York Sound to launch an operation at Peter Point in a final attempt to salvage the two HTLs that had crashed there on 26th of July, utilizing two American H-21 from Frobisher Bay.

Due to the late hour and moderate winds, the ship's aircraft were unable to fly, but with a good ceiling and visibility, a visual check from the ship was possible and ascertained the relative positions of the helicopters.

During the evening of October 3, a "PAN, PAN, PAN"[146] urgency call was received from the pair of USAF Piasecki H-21s, one of which was forced down on Yuka Flats with low oil pressure. *Labrador* answered the call and a detachment maintenance crew was sent ashore to assess and try to rectify the problem. The *Labrador* maintenance crew found that the H-21's engine oil was thick and dirty with the consistency of tar and appeared not to have been changed for a considerable time. The old oil was scooped out with a wooden stick, the oil system flushed with Varsol and replaced with fresh oil.

It was late in the evening when the oil change was completed and the H-21 was test run and declared serviceable, so it was decided that the aircrew should be brought aboard HMCS *Labrador* for the evening and flown back to their base in the morning.

At 1715, H-21 SN 34333 from Frobisher was flown aboard and the aircrew were fed and accommodated for the night.

A request sent to the H-21s operating base, requesting the use of these two aircraft to lift the two Canadian Bells off Peter Point, was turned down, even though the H-21 pilots were willing to help.

Friday, October 4

The serviceable H–21 took off at 0600 to join the second helicopter at Yuka Flats in winds that were beginning to increase. Both aircraft returned to their home base later in the morning.

The wind and visibility were ideal for an attempt to recover the Bells on Peter Point. A salvage party was flown to the crash site by HUP with the stipulation that, if the winds in York Sound rose to 10-15 knots, the salvage party would be removed from the mountain immediately. However, due to the deteriorating weather, the salvage crew on the hill only had one hour to recover the aircraft consoles and electrical gear from the wrecked Bells. In order to ensure that both HUPs would be immediately available, one was flown ashore to Yuka Flats while the other one remained aboard HMCS *Labrador,* with both in constant radio contact. The winds did, in fact, increase suddenly to 20-25 knots on the deck. The HUPs were quickly launched and the salvage crew, the helicopter consoles, radios and electrical gear they had removed were airlifted off the mountain. Both pilots, Murray and Oliphant, reported that the turbulence on top of the mountain was severe, with strong updrafts to a height of 500 feet above the mountaintop.

The USCGS icebreaker *Eastwind* came alongside *Labrador* and five beacons were transferred to the ship.

HMCS *Labrador* departed York Sound en route to Ney Harbour to pick up Dr. and Mrs. McLaren, who had spent the summer studying the Arctic cod. A HUP was sent to the McLaren's camp at the end of a long narrow fiord and again the turbulence in and out was severe. On completion of this task, the ship continued on to Resolute Bay.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Snelgrove, Cdr Gagnon	Prim Trans - Peter Point	-
246	Murray	Gagnon, Turgon	Prim Trans - Navy Harbour	-
246	Murray	Gagnon, Turgon	Hover Test	-

Saturday, October 5

Labrador arrived back in York Sound for one final attempt at salvaging the Bells, but strong winds and low ceilings prevented flying.

A mess dinner was held in the evening to honour Captain Pullen. No change in the weather was forecast for the immediate future, so the ship set sail at midnight heading south towards Halifax and home.

Sunday, October 6

No flying was required, with a Sunday routine in place.

Monday, October 7

No was flying required, so the air department conducted a cleanup.

Tuesday, October 8

Labrador dropped anchor off the Québec coast to complete some painting and sprucing up of the ship for its return to Halifax. No flying took place this day.

Wednesday, October 9

Labrador entered the Bay of Islands, Newfoundland to await the arrival of RAdm H. F. Pullen, OBE, CD, RCN, FOAC, brother of *Labrador's* Captain Pullen.

Both HUPs were flown to Corner Brook for supplies, especially fresh milk. Bob Murray recalls: "It was Wednesday when we arrived and landed on a playing field, in the centre of town. It wasn't long before the Chief of Police arrived to ask why we had landed there without permission. We told him we were from HMCS *Labrador*, just back from months in the Arctic and we had flown in to try and find some fresh milk, which we hadn't tasted in months. He informed us that it was Wednesday "Early Closing Day" but that he was friends with the owner of the local dairy and he would call him to see if he would open his establishment for us.

"The next thing we knew we were in the police car heading for the dairy. The owner was most gracious and gave us free run of the dairy, anything and all we wanted to drink - chocolate milk, skim milk, buttermilk - and then gave us enough milk to take back with us so that all the crew could have a glass."

The Admiral was brought aboard by *Pogo* at 1700 and a mess dinner was held in his honour, and the celebration of a successful voyage was held this evening.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Malone	*Labrador* to Corner Brook	-

Thursday, October 10

Labrador departed Bay of Islands, NL, en route to Halifax. No flying took place as the Admiral was conducting his inspection with the ship proceeding south.

Friday, October 11

Admiral's rounds of the air detachment took place and the ship's speed trials were also witnessed. The detachment aircraft were flown ashore at 1300 to *Shearwater* and the detachment was dissolved.

Aircraft	Pilot	Crew/Passengers	Duty	Time
246	Murray	Malone, Turgon	*Labrador* to CNAS	-

Air Detachment Summary for October 1957

In total, 17.8 hours were flown during this period and after having spent 109 days at sea and having steamed 18,500 miles, *Labrador* successfully completed its 1957 Arctic Summer Cruise.

HUP 247 required some maintenance, including corrosion control, from the large amount of salt spray that covered the helicopters when in rough weather. For the next six months, 247 was used primarily for training and utility duties.

As a result of his experience as the OIC of *Labrador's* helicopter detachment, Lt Murray made a recommendation of his own design to add a folding door to the open side of *Labrador's* hangar. This folding door idea came to Murray when observing the convertible tops used in

those days on baby carriages, so he created a design and drawing below which was submitted to Naval headquarters - and approved.

The shelter was a very simple and elegant design, to be constructed from 2 inch aluminum tubing and covered with a nylon fabric by the brand name "Fiberthin", which at the time was being used for gun covers onboard St. Laurent class destroyers. Fiberthin was a very strong and lightweight material compared with canvas, but would be reinforced by using nylon webbing between the aluminum tubes to take some of the stress and weight of the shelter.

This door would have several advantages. First, it would completely enclose the hangar, providing protection from all types of weather including snow, ice and hoar frost, all of which took considerable time and effort to remove from the aircraft before flight. Second, it also proved possible to heat this enclosed space by using the exhaust fans from number five and number six engines spaces on the ship, which would give air detachment maintenance personnel a warm area in which to conduct maintenance work. Finally, the partially heated shelter would alleviate the long warm-up periods which were required to heat the helicopter engines and cockpits when using the Herman Nelson heaters during cold weather operations.

A simple block and pulley arrangement would be used to open the door, which would fully enclose the aircraft when in the closed position. The loss of four or five feet from the flight deck by installing the shelter was not considered to be a hindrance to the operation of the helicopters. In fact, the HTLs could be operated from the deck with the shelter in the closed position.

While the design was approved, it was never implemented due to the decision resulting in the transfer of *Labrador* to the Canadian Coast Guard. However, it was adopted by other agencies for the same purpose.

Transfer of HMCS *Labrador* to the Canadian Coast Guard[147]

The decision to transfer *Labrador* to the newly formed Canadian Coast Guard was not a popular decision within the ranks of those who had served on the ship since her commissioning in 1954. *Labrador's* officers and crews had established a very high standard of professionalism and competence in icebreaker operations, Arctic oceanographic and

hydrographic surveying, scientific research support, Arctic convoy escorting and shipboard helicopter operations.

The decision to transfer *Labrador* was made by Naval staff as an economic measure in October 1956. However, a year later the board reversed its position and declined support of this recommendation. When the Department of Transport (DOT) later requested the use of *Labrador* for winter shipping operations in the Gulf St. Lawrence and to continue the Arctic summer resupply operations, it was also suggested by DOT that they would be happy to take over operation of the vessel if *Labrador* could not be made available on loan by the RCN. The final decision would be made by Admiral H. G. DeWolf, RCN, who recommended the transfer and which was approved effective 1 April 1958. The RCN not only lost an icebreaker on this date, but thousands of man-hours worth of Arctic expertise on the operation of ships in this hostile environment and the ability to provide seaborne protection of Canada's Arctic Ocean, natural resources and sovereignty.

Like all Canadian military decisions, this transfer had been a political football and widely discussed within Canadian society and military circles. There were those within the RCN who felt that *Labrador's* icebreaking role and lack of antisubmarine sonar or weapons was incompatible with the RCN's post-Second World War antisubmarine warfare role.

Therefore, on 18 November 1958, Commander Tony Law assumed command from Captain Pullen and delivered Labrador to Saint John, New Brunswick for a refit in preparation for her handoff to the Coast Guard. When Labrador departed Halifax harbour, six RCN helicopters provided an escort while Captain Pullen's brother, Rear-Admiral Pullen, took the salute.

HMCS *Labrador's* contributions to the opening of sea navigation in Canada's Arctic were monumental. From the leadership of her two Captains and their officers, to the dedication and skill of her crew, *Labrador* garnered the respect and commendation of its peers within the US.Navy, US Coast Guard, the scientific teams *Labrador* supported, the RCMP and the native communities scattered throughout the Arctic.

It is only now that the shortsightedness of the decision to transfer *Labrador* to the Coast Guard has become evident. The current Canadian government has finally realized the absolute need for a military

presence in Canada's Arctic waters to protect Canada's sovereignty, northern ocean and economic interests.

During her four years with the RCN, while operating in dangerous uncharted waters, *Labrador* had never run aground, lost or damaged a propeller nor had been seriously damaged by any other means, a testament to the skill of her Captains and crews, a fact which regrettably was lost with the decision to dispense with an RCN icebreaking capability. HMCS *Labrador's* transfer to DOT closed another all too brief chapter in Canadian military history.

Biographies

Key HMCS *Labrador* Officers - Summer of 1956 Arctic Cruise

Ship's Captain - Captain Thomas Charles Pullen[148]

Labrador's Captain, "Tom" Pullen was born in Oakville, Ontario in 1918 and became a naval cadet in 1936, following in the steps of sixteen family members going back to 1780 who have served in the Royal Navy. He trained as a Midshipman with the Royal Navy and was later commissioned as Acting Sub-Lieutenant in 1939. He served during the Second World War, rising to the rank of Acting Lieutenant Commander by 1944, and survived the sinking of HMCS *Ottawa*.

In 1945, Captain Pullen was confirmed as a Lieutenant Commander and placed in command of HMCS *Iroquois*. Later serving onboard the aircraft carrier HMCS *Magnificent*, he was assigned to the Staff of the Flag Officer Atlantic Coast and was promoted to Commander in 1951. After a number of shore and sea appointments including HMCS *Huron* in 1953 during the Korean conflict, Tom was promoted to Acting Captain in 1951 and then Captain of *Labrador* in 1956. Pullen's great-uncle, an early Arctic explorer, had preceded him 135 years earlier through the Beaufort Sea.

After commanding *Labrador,* he became the commanding officer of HMCS *Shearwater*. Leaving *Shearwater,* he moved on to several different senior staff positions. Captain Pullen resigned in 1965 to become a well known civilian ice pilot and Arctic navigator. One of his biggest challenges in that capacity involved the navigation of *Manhattan*, the Atlantic Richfield ice strengthened tanker, on her controversial voyage through the Canadian Arctic to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska in 1969.

As an Arctic navigation pioneer, Captain Pullen was awarded the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and an honorary degree from Royal Roads Military Collage. He died in Ottawa in 1990.

Executive Officer - Commander Charles Anthony "Tony" Law[149]

Commander Charles Anthony "Tony" Law, DSC, MID was born in England in 1916 and died on October 15, 1996 in Halifax.

Anthony Law grew up in Québec City and was destined to become one of the leading Canadian war artists of World War Two. His father's dad, a retired sea Captain and artist, taught him to paint in oils and Law went on to spend three years at Upper Canada College before being accepted by University of Ottawa where he studied art under Canadian Group of Seven artist Fred Varley.

In 1937, he joined the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps but in 1940 resigned his commission in the Army and transferred to the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve. He was on his way to England within a week. His military service was unique in that he was both a serving officer and a war artist. Having learned to sail in his youth, Law was assigned to serve on the Royal Navy's motor torpedo boats and as a Captain of a motor torpedo boat, he was mentioned in dispatches in 1942 and again in 1943 for his actions. In 1942, his boat was involved in the actions against the German battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in their infamous dash up the English Channel.

While waiting in 1943 for the RCN to introduce their own MTB's, Law received a temporary appointment as a Canadian war artist. Temporary assignments in 1943 to Scapa Flow, home of the British Fleet, provided the opportunity to paint some of the well know Canadian warships including HMCS *Haida, Chaudière, Huron,* and *Restigouche* while waiting for another sea command.

"On Feb. 14, 1945, while Law was absent, the 29th Flotilla was destroyed by fire in the harbour at Ostend, Belgium. Gasoline that had been discharged into the harbour ignited and the boats were engulfed in flames. Fuel tanks burst and ammunition exploded in a tremendous blast. Twenty-six Canadian and 35 British sailors lost their lives as did a number of civilians. After the loss of his ship and flotilla, Law was appointed an official war artist. He completed 29 large oil canvasses and 75 oil sketches. Although he did not witness the disaster at Ostend, his paintings speak volumes of the many frantic battles, flak-filled skies and skirmishes he did live through. Later, for his actions supporting the Normandy landings he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in Law was transferred to the permanent Navy and retired in 1966 as a

commander. Law was a man who knew and loved the sea and interpreted it in oil on canvas with passion and intensity."[150]

Throughout his wartime service, he managed to continue painting while involved in the hazardous job of commanding a motor torpedo boat with such skill and leadership that he would later lead to appointment as commander of the entire 29th Canadian Motor Torpedo Boat Flotilla.

One of Tony Law's Wartime Paintings Depicting an MTB Attack

After the war, Law was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy and continued to paint in the war artist program until its conclusion in 1946.

He continued a distinguished service in the RCN, being appointed Executive Officer of *Labrador* in 1956.

Law retired in 1966 as a commander and became artist in residence at Saint Mary's University in 1967.

A sailor, commander and war artist, Law loved the sea as reflected in his vivid painting. He passed away at his home on 14 October 1996.

Engineering Officer - Commander (E) D. H. Fairney CD, RCN[151]

Born in Cardiff Wales, Daniel Hugh Fairney trained as an engineer with James Howells of Cardiff, Wales. As a young man, he joined the Cunard White Star Line as a junior engineering officer and a member of the Royal Navy Reserves.

When war broke out in 1939, he was a member of the Royal Navy and in 1940 he was seconded to the Royal Canadian Navy. He served in both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and also took part in the D-Day Landings.

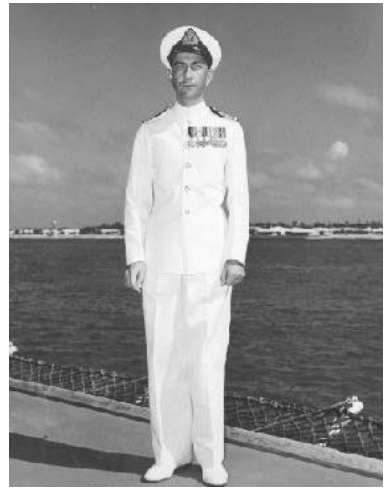
After the war, he continued serving with the navy, reaching the rank of Commander (E) and was decorated with the Canadian Defence Medal. He was later was appointed Director of the Auxiliary Fleet, charged with

overseeing all the patrol vessels, fireboats, tug boats, etc. used by the Royal Canadian Navy.

He retired to Chamcook, NB in 1981 and became the chairman of the steering committee on the feasibility of developing a local service district council, and then served as the Chamcook Local Service District Council's first Chairman. Daniel was also involved with the former Saint John Frigate Program as a consultant. Commander Fairney passed away 18 September, 2011.

Ship's Doctor - Surg LCdr Donald A. Maciver (MB ChB The University of Edinburgh) OMM, OStJ, CD, FRCS. [152]

Surgeon Commodore Donald Angus Maciver was born in Inverness Scotland in1920. He served in the RNVR, RCN and Canadian Armed Forces and was mentioned in dispatches for his actions as ship's doctor on HMS *Largs* during the D-Day Landings at Normandy France. While also on *Largs*, he was later involved in the liberation of Burma (now Myanmar).



Ship's Doctor - Surg LCdr Donald A. Maciver (MB ChB The University of Edinburgh) OMM, OStJ, CD, FRCS

In the RCN, Maciver served on HMCS *Québec* and HMCS *Labrador* in the Canadian Arctic followed by postings at HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax and at 3(F) Wing in Zweibrucken Germany.

Dr. Maciver was Chief of Surgery at the National Defence Medical Centre in Ottawa from 1964 until 1978 while additionally serving as an Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Ottawa medical school.

Following his military service, he was a general surgeon in Wallaceburg, ON from 1978 to 1986 followed by 13 years "in the sun" of Cyprus. "The Chief" (aka "Mac-the-Knife) passed away peacefully on Friday October 25th, 2013 at the West Park Healthcare Centre in Toronto.

Ship's Hydrographer - Sidney van Dyck[153]

Sidney van Dyck was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1927 and lived in Steinbach, MB until the age of eleven. In 1938, his family moved to Hamburg, Germany, where he continued his schooling until 1943. That year, his home was lost during an air raid and the family moved to West Prussia. Immediately after the war, he worked as interpreter for the Canadian Forestry Corps. and then had an opportunity to go back to school and obtain senior matriculation. Later he attended the University of Göttingen in Germany, majoring in mathematics and physics. In 1950, van Dyck returned to Canada and made Ottawa his home. For three years, he worked in the oil heating business and then joined the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

As an assistant hydrographer, he worked until 1959 on both ships and shore-parties from Manitoba to Newfoundland and from the Great Lakes to the Eastern Arctic. Projects included surveys required for the safe navigation of ships bringing supplies to build the DEW line in the arctic and for opening the St Lawrence Seaway. From 1958 onward, he was involved with training on the basic hydrography course. In 1960, he was appointed hydrographer-in-charge (HIC) of the St. Lawrence Seaway Survey.

In 1962, hydrography training became a full-time occupation for van Dyck.

In 1974, he was asked to design a course for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This course was for working level hydrographers of the Corps. The intent was to familiarize them with the new electronic surveying equipment introduced to the Corps. Van Dyck was asked to supervise and to instruct on this course both in the fall of 1974 and the spring of 1976 in Vicksburg, Miss.

After one year of French language training, he was transferred to the Nautical Geodesy Section in 1978. In 1986, when staff in the Canadian Hydrographic Service was reduced by 25%, he transferred to the Department of National Defence. There he worked in the Air Force on matters related to Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) until retiring from the Public Service in 1988.

Ship's Helicopter Detachment Officer-in-Charge - Lt (P) J.A. MacNeil[154]

MacNeil joined RCAF in August of 1941 as AC2 (Aero Engines). Selected as a Pilot Candidate, he was promoted to Leading Air-craftsman in April of 1942 and commenced Elementary Flying Training. He served as a flying instructor throughout most of the war in Mont Jolie, Québec. By July of 1944, he was Commissioned Pilot Officer and posted to No. 8 Operational Training Unit, Greenwood, N.S. for photo reconnaissance training on the Bolingbroke and Mosquito photo reconnaissance aircraft. On graduation in April 1945, he proceeded overseas to Bournemouth, England. MacNeil was flying en route to the Far East when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan and was subsequently posted back to the UK. He repatriated to Canada Sep 1945 and demobilized.

In a post-war civilian career beginning in January 1946, he founded, with partner George Johnston and later Wally Allen, Tantramar Air Services of Amherst, N.S., a small flying school, charter operation and aircraft distributor utilizing Aeronca Champ and Piper Cub J3 aircraft.

In February 1949, he accepted an RCAF Short Service Commission (SSC) and returned to the RCAF as a Flying Officer, appointed to the Air Navigation School (ANS), RCAF Station Summerside, PEI, as a Staff Pilot on Dakota IIINs and Lancaster aircraft. Promoted to Flight Lieutenant in July of 1952, he was appointed to No 2 Personnel Selection Unit (PSU) at RCAF Station, London, Ont. where he was responsible for selecting officer candidates for RCAF commissions. He was also involved in proficiency flying on Harvards and Expeditors. His RCAF SSC was completed December of 1953 and he left the service.

In July of 1954, MacNeil was accepted on a Short Service Appointment (SSA) with the Royal Canadian Navy as Lieutenant (P). The RCN at this time were in need of pilots to fly the increasing number of helicopters they were operating.

During his naval career, John MacNeil flew both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. He also took part in a number of pioneering aviation exploits, including his appointment to HMCS *Labrador* as Officer-in-Charge of HU-21 Squadron's Detachment 2 on the three-month Arctic deployment described in this book.

After this cruise, Detachment personnel were reassigned within RCNAS Shearwater while Lt MacNeil returned to HU-21, where he resumed flying all three navy helicopter types as well as fixed wing aircraft such as the Sea Fury, Avenger, DC-3 Dakota, T-33 Silver Star and Beechcraft 18.

In February of 1957, he took charge of HU-21 Detachment 2 onboard *Labrador* again for a short period of time, training two other pilots in shipboard operations.

He also flew mercy flights during the Springhill, Nova Scotia mine disaster operations, which included the ferrying of medical staff and supplies to and from the mine disaster site.

201

Lt MacNeil left the RCN in the summer of 1957 for Canadian Pratt & Whitney as their first full time Canadian Test Pilot and helicopter Sales Representative.

"Test Pilot" Training at Sikorsky Helicopter Plan Hartford Conn.

On September 10th, 1957, he proceeded to Sikorsky Aircraft in Bridgeport, Conn. for test pilot training on all Sikorsky helicopter types.

In 1961, he was promoted to Engineering Test Pilot and, as more pilots were required for a growing fleet of aircraft used to test new engines, he was promoted in 1963 to Chief Test Pilot. In this capacity MacNeil was also a member of the Pratt & Whitney/Sikorsky Helicopter team bidding to win a contract to supply Canada with a fleet of CHSS-2 twin turbine anti-submarine helicopters for the RCN.

In 1966, he was promoted to Chief of Fight Operations, building their flight operations department from a single pilot operation into a department of six pilots, aircraft, maintenance personnel and office staff. Flight Operations handled flight test programs, production and overhaul test flying as well as providing executive transport for company personnel in North America and beyond. They operated a fleet of fixed wing aircraft and test-flew all types of civilian and military Sikorsky helicopters operating in Canada. Their flight test and engine

development programs for Pratt & Whitney included light turboprop, turboshaft (e.g., PT-6) and turbofan (e.g., JT-15D) engines.

Ship's Helicopter Detachment Pilot - SLt Glyn FitzGerald[155]

Born in Alert Bay, B.C., Glyn FitzGerald enlisted and served in the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets from 1946 to 1951.

Appointed as a University Naval Training Division Cadet (UNTD) RCN(R) with seniority dated 01/09/1952 he served in HMCS *Discovery* for 1952.

Transferred in 1953 to HMCS *Stadacona* he entered Initial Flying Training and then was transferred to HMCS *Shearwater* for flying orientation in 1954 and then on to RCAF Centralia's #1 Flying Training School for further Flight Training.

Next transferred to RCAF Moose Jaw #2 Flying Training School for further Flight Training in 1955 he was awarded wings 26/08/1955. He was appointed as an A/Sub-Lieutenant (P) RCN(R) (With seniority dated 01/09/1955). He was then appointed as a Sub-Lieutenant RCN(R) (With seniority dated 01/09/1955).

Then promoted to Lieutenant (P) RCN(R) (With seniority dated 01/09/1956) he served in HMCS *Shearwater* with HU-21 Squadron for helicopter training in 1955. In 1956 he served in RCAF Summerside with a detached unit of HU-21 Squadron for helicopter Operational Training and was then posted to HMCS *Labrador's* HU-21 Squadron, Detachment #2 as the Detachments second in command during *Labrador's 1956* Arctic voyage. On return of the ship to Halifax, FitzGerald transferred back to HMCS *Shearwater* with HU-21 Squadron then later in 1956 he served in HMCS *Malahat* with VC-922 (Reserve) Squadron flying Grumman Avengers anti-submarine aircraft. In 1957 FitzGerald was released from the RCN joining Okanagan Helicopters in British Columbia as a helicopter pilot and was assigned to Campbell River BC as Base Manager and Pilot.

Service Aircraft Flown: Harvard, Avenger, HTL-6, HO4S-2, HO4S-3, HTL-4, HUP-3, C-45. Civillian Aircraft Flown: Bell 47G. Sikorsky S-55, Hiller 12E, Tripacer, Cessna 172, Taylor-craft.

About the Author

Don MacNeil is the son of the late Lt (P) John A. MacNeil, CD helicopter detachment officer in charge onboard the RCN's Arctic patrol ship HMCS *Labrador* for her 1956 Arctic voyage. Don also served in the RCN from 1963 to 1966 onboard HMCS *Columbia*, *Yukon* and *Ottawa* and later worked for Pratt & Whitney Canada as a Stationary Engineer.

Moving to Ontario in 1972, Don joined Bell Canada where he worked as an Associate Director of Marketing involved with the creation of new high speed data, email and internet services. Taking early retirement from Bell in 2004, he was hired by Cognos, where he was a Senior Product Marketing manager responsible for performance management software products and from where he finally retired in 2007.

He has had a life-long interest in aviation and is currently a volunteer with the Canada Aviation & Space Museum. He is also an active member of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society's (CAHS) Ottawa Chapter and past member of the CAHS National executive where he served as National Membership Secretary. Don also spent four years helping Vintage Wings of Canada research and document the history of the aircraft in their collection, train tour guides and develop educational packages for high school students visiting the Vintage Wings aircraft collection.

Don MacNeil in Front of Vintage Wing's FG-1D Corsair Photographer: Richard Lawrence

Endnotes

[1] Adam Lajeunesse, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, and Jason Delaney. *HMCS Labrador: An Operational History*. Arctic Operational Histories. Antigonish: Mulroney Institute of Government, 2017.
[2] Canadian military aircraft can be identified by various numbering methods. Some were identified by their manufacturer serial number; or, if obtained from U.S. military inventory, by their U.S. military serial number; or optionally by a squadron assigned number (in general, this was the method commonly used by RCN squadrons). For example, HUP 247 was received with a U.S. military serial number 51-16623 but was identified by the squadron-assigned number 947 on its fuselage. At different times, the RCN renumbered this aircraft: 947 was at one point identified as 923 and later as 623 (the "23" coming from its U.S. military serial number), and finally was identified as 407.
[3] Now known as Canadian Forces Base *Shearwater.*
[4] Lauzon, Québec was located Northeast of Québec City and is now amalgamated with the city of Lévis, Québec
[5] Thought to be the brand name of an aircraft starting cart used to convert ships power to the correct voltage and amperage required by helicopter engine starters . A company called Foxtronics made a Model PR-2400 "Rectostarter" providing 208V/460V, 3-Phase power for this purpose.
[6] A travel advance is a sum of money granted to cover out-of-pocket expenses when travelling.
[7] Likely ship's radar calibration flights.
[8] Ice coverage is measured in 10ths with 10/10's being complete ice coverage and 5/10's half coverage, etc.
[9] Resolute Bay is on the southern coast of Cornwallis Island where an airport and weather station had been built in 1947 and was the principle outpost for Arctic supply ship traffic at this time.
[10] Landing Craft Vehicle & Personnel (LCVP) *Albert* was the name of an LCVP carried onboard *Labrador* to carry material.
[11] J.M. Lemming, "HMCS Labrador and the Canadian Arctic," *RCN in Retrospective*, ed. James A. Boutilier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), 290.
[12] Theodolite - a surveying instrument for measuring horizontal and vertical angles.
[13] This is the descriptor used in the log. In the 1950s, the use of the term "Eskimo" was not considered to be improper.
[14] As above.
[15] Since the ship operated on a twenty-four hour a day basis, Sundays were only observed when weather or ice conditions interrupted the

progress of the ship in her operations. When this happened, that day would be declared a Sunday and a normal Sunday routine would be offered, including church services.

[16] See: "The Voyage of the Monte Carlo," *Boston College Magazine* (Fall 2000).

[17] This refers to navigational trials of a new "Admiralty Gyro-Magnetic Compass" which were being carried out by a Royal Navy officer.

[18] Lemming, 291.

[19] Weasel - a light tracked personnel vehicle designed for use in snow or soft ground.

[20] Heat waves continued to plague operations and at times even prevented helicopter flying altogether, as pilots would loose horizon situational awareness due to heat wave distortion.

[21] "Divisions" is the name given to the naval ceremony of gathering the ship's officers and men together for inspection and the communication of important information to the crew. It could also include a church service or the presentation of awards.

[22] Detachment log book does not say why this was necessary.

[23] During this period, Commodore Patric Budge, DSC, MID, CD, RCN, served as Commodore-in-Command and Commodore RCN Barracks *Esquimalt* 1954. He was appointed as a Hon AdC to the Governor General in 1954 and appointed as a Commodore RCN (with seniority dated 01/09/1955). He served as Chief of Staff to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast in 1958.

[24] Lemming, 293-294

[25] Ibid, 294.

[26] Ibid, 294.

[27] Ibid., 294.

[28] Kindley Field was established as a United States Army Air Force base in Bermuda from 1943 to 1948 and then operated from 1948 to 1970 by the U.S. Air Force.

[29] Slackers - naval slang for the home port of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

[30] Lemming, 295

[31] Ibid., P 295

[32] Commander Fredrick "Freddie" W. H. Bradley, RCN had joined the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) as an Ordinary Seaman in 1940, qualifying as a pilot and temporary SLt (P) that year. He rose to the rank of Commander by 1952, having flown throughout the Second World War off several RN aircraft carriers. He retired as Chief Staff Officer in the Operation and Administration Division of the RCN.

[33] VHF: Very High Frequency - the common aircraft radio communication set.

[34] A sea trial to verify ship maneuverability that involves turning the ship while at high speed in a 360 degree circle.

[35] The process of re-calibrating an aircraft's magnetic compass

[36] A British Member of Parliament and noted industrialist.

[37] Refers to water landing practice.
[38] "Bergy Bits" is a naval term referring to small chunks of ice or mini-icebergs.
[39] As part of the lend-lease measures of the Second World War, the United States government obtained rights to build an air base in Newfoundland in 1940. American army and navy personnel arrived in Newfoundland on September 20 to scout for possible base sites and noted the excellent flying conditions on the island's west coast. This resulted in a recommendation to build an air base near Stephenville which was to be used to stage aircraft through the Maritime provinces to eastern Newfoundland. This site was later officially named Harmon Field on June 23, 1941 in honour of Captain Ernest Emery Harmon, who was a pioneer of military flying with the U.S. Air Corps during the First World War.
[40] Base Exchange - the military term for a base canteen where a variety of goods can be purchased, often at discounted prices.
[41] Lemming, 295.
[42] Form A-25 was an RCN accident report form completed to gather statistics on accident events such as this one.
[43] A CNA-21 was an RCN maintenance log used to record maintenance issues with an aircraft so they can be resolved by the aircraft maintainers.
[44] Lemming, 295.
[45] A kitoon is a tethered kite and balloon device designed to carry atmospheric instruments to altitude for weather observations.
[46] A component of a main rotor head assembly.
[47] "Chief ERA" refers to the Chief Engine Room Artificer who is the senior noncommissioned engineering person on board a navy ship and who is responsible for the ship's engine room and auxiliary mechanical equipment, as well as all engineering watch-keeping and engineering maintenance.
[48] A component of the hydraulic flight control system.
[49] Ice blown into a tight pack by strong winds.
[50] The PV2 Neptune was a long range maritime patrol aircraft designed and manufactured by Lockheed Aircraft Corp. for the U.S. Navy in the early 1940's and introduced into service in 1947. See photo p. 83.
[51] A prefabricated hut providing shelter for the station's technical equipment, similar to Quonset Huts, but smaller - about 20' wide with wooden arches and covered with insulated canvas.
[52] The term "make & mend" is a time honoured navy tradition of providing crew members with time off to conduct personnel business, do laundry, mend clothing, etc.
[53] A "follow-me Jeep" is used at military and some civilian airfields to lead aircraft on the ground to the correct parking spot or to the correct runway. The back of the Jeep would display a large sign reading: "FOLLOW ME".

[54] Lemming, 296
[55] Richard Morenus, *DEW Line* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Rand McNally 1957), 119.
[56] Lemming, 296.
[57] Ibid.
[58] A United States Navy Andromeda-class attack cargo ship.
[59] Originally the civilian cargo ship SS *Czechoslovakia Victory,* a Maritime Commission type (VC2-S-AP2) acquired by the U.S. Navy in March of 1950.
[60] The USNS *Lt George W.G. Boyce* (T-AK-251) was named after Army 2nd Lt George W.G. Boyce; he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour for heroic action at New Guinea during World War II. This ship was a 16,000 ton Boulder Victory class cargo vessel and was also employed delivering cargo to Greenland in this 1956.
[61] Artemis Class Attack Cargo Ship - navsource.org
[62] A RCN maintenance bulletin.
[63] Lemming, 299.
[64] Lemming, 299
[65] LCdr (P) Ian Webster, transferred from the Royal Navy, was a pilot and ship's officer brought onboard to help with flying and shipboard duties.
[66] Now on display at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa, ON, Canada
[67] Norman George Pascoe, S BA 68, spent 30 years as a journalist. beginning as a copy boy with the former Montreal Star in 1945 and working his way up to editor. In the mid-'70s, Norman moved to Ottawa to become a public affairs officer for Transport Canada, where he remained until his retirement in 1992. He also was an active member of the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve and was the first reservist to attain the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Norman died April 9, 2006 in Ottawa, aged 76.
[68] The RCN later planned a modification of *Labrador's* hangar based on a design by LCdr Robert Murray. His design was based on the same concept as a baby carriage hood, with a folding or telescoping door which would fold down from the top of the hangar entrance and fold out and over the tail booms of the helicopters to completely enclose the aircraft. This would provide better working conditions for helicopter maintenance personnel and an enclosed shelter for the aircraft to reduce exposure to salt spray. However, this modification was approved but never implemented.
[69] Military term for transfer of personnel.
[70] Red-leading – Red-lead is a lead based primer paint used to protect the ships bare steel hull prior to finish paint being applied.
[71] Flight deck netting was a safety feature of helicopter flight decks. Vertical stanchions around the flight deck were spanned with rope netting to prevent equipment or personnel falling off the flight deck.

During flying operations, the flight deck stanchions would be lowered to a horizontal position providing a place to catch personnel working the flight deck who might fall or jump to safety in an emergency.

[72] The "irreversible" is a hydraulic dampening system located in the rotor head of helicopters of this era.

[73] Sambro Light Vessel is a permanently anchored ship that serves as a navigational warning to ships of reefs in the Halifax N.S. harbour entrance area.

[74] A "helicoil" is a double threaded insert used to repair a stripped bolt hole in metal castings such as crankcases or cylinder assemblies.

[75] The diary entry actually states "Picton", but likely refers to the town of Pictou, N.S..

[76] *Labrador* had a design feature which allowed a disabled vessel to be snugged into a notch in her stern and be towed through ice.

[77] *Kismet* II, a Liberian freighter, ran aground during the early morning hours of November 27, 1955 off Cape Saint Lawrence, west of Meat Cove, Cape Breton with a crew of 21, a parrot and a budgie, and the ship's mascot, a small dog. She was empty en-route from Philadelphia, P.A. to P.E.I. to pick up a load of potatoes destined for Europe. An RCN H04S Sikorsky helicopter crew from HMCS Shearwater successfully rescued the ship's crew and their pets. The pilots were awarded the George Medal for bravery in doing so under difficult weather and sea conditions.

[78] Onboard to evaluate *Labrador's* icebreaking abilities.

[79] Affectionately referred to as "Mac the Knife" by his fellow officers.

[80] This was one of the first Arctic diving operations conducted by RCN trained underwater demolition unit scuba divers. See: Jason Delaney, "Cold War Frogmen of the Far North" *Canadian Naval Review* Volume 7, Number 4 (Winter 2012).

[81] Much of the information in this section was provided by Wally Green who later left the navy, returned to school and went on to have a successful career with Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs as well as Energy, Mines and Resources.

[82] These garments were made of angora wool, nylon and sheep wool.

[83] Delaney.

[84] RCN, *The Crowsnest* (November 1956).

[85] "In Routine" was the process of assigning new crew members to sleeping quarters, issuing shipboard personnel gear, etc.

[86] HMCS *Labrador's* Daily Orders

[87] Pullen Papers via Graham Rowley, *The Northern Mariner* II, No. 2 (April 1992), 29-49

[88] An Electronic Position Indicator (EPI) is a radio navigation system used in hydrographic surveying, providing circular lines of position.

[89] "Goofers Stations" is navy slang which refers to the practice of off duty crew assembling at any convenient location onboard ship to observe an event that might provide some form of entertainment.

[90] Commander Savage DSO, DSC, MID was a career Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm pilot attached to the British High Commission in Ottawa as an Arctic warfare expert.
[91] First Dog Watch:1600 hrs to 1800 hrs and Second Dog Watch:1800 to 2000 hrs
[92] Pullen Papers via Graham Rowley.
[93] The RCN's Liaison Officer with the major DEW Line contractor, The Foundation Company, during this period was LCdr Jame P. Croal who by 1956 had gained considerable Arctic experience in the areas of Arctic clothing, survival, navigation, construction and scientific research. He was, in 1955, naval co-ordinator of DEW Line construction in Fort Churchill. During this '56 cruise, he continued to co-ordinate *Labrador's* scientific program but not as a crew member as in the previous year. See: Jason Delaney, "He was Writing the Book - Lieutenant Commander James P. Croal: The Royal Canadian Navy's Cold War Arctic Specialist," *The Northern Mariner* (Oct. 2015).
[94] LCdr B. F. Ackerman, Officer in Charge of *Labrador's* Underwater Diving Unit Bravo
[95] Pusser's is the brand name of a rum produced in the British Virgin Islands. Since this rum was also supplied to the Royal Navy and dispensed to RN ships crews, it also became a slang term used for a ship's supply officer and is also used to describe anything supplied by the RN.
[96] Lt MacNeil and others enjoyed fishing for Arctic Char when time permitted and described it as an excellent sport fish, known for striking so hard that they left teeth marks in the paint and metal of the lures being used and putting up quite a fight before being landed.
[97] As the clearance divers cleared landing beaches, navigational beacons were set up or used as a reference if in place to make it safe for any landing craft to navigate to the cleared areas of beach.
[98] This term usually referred to the entire crew being turned out to perform cleaning and painting maintenance onboard. Each crew member was assigned to a particular part of the ship, hence "part-ship".
[99] RADM. Herbert Sharples Rayner DSC & Bar, CD, RCN
[100] USS *Edisto* was the icebreaker class on which *Labrador's* design was based. More heavily armed than *Labrador,* she had a 3.50 inch gun housed in a turret on the forecastle in addition to the same Bofors gun arrangement as *Labrador* mounted on each wing of the bridge deck. However, she lacked a helicopter hangar to facilitate aircraft maintenance.
101 CCGS *Edward Cornwallis* was a buoy tender, lighthouse supply vessel and light icebreaker built in Montreal by Canadian Vickers Shipyard in 1949.
[102] It is believed that FitzGerald in his log was referring to the USNS *Lt George W.G. Boyce* (T-AK-251) which was named after Army 2nd Lt George W.G. Boyce; he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour

for heroic action at New Guinea during World War II. This ship was a 16,000 ton Boulder Victory class cargo vessel and was also employed delivering cargo to Greenland in this same year.

[103] Blade tracking is a procedure to ensure that all the rotor blades of a helicopter track in line with each other. If tracking is not properly adjusted, it can cause vibrations ranging from mild to severe which potentially could destroy the aircraft.

[104] USS *Fort Mandan* was a Casa Grande class dock landing ship named after the encampment of the Lewis & Clark Expedition that wintered at Fort Mandan from 1804-1805 in what is now North Dakota.

105 According to an article by Graham Rowley in: *The Northern Mariner* II, No. 2 (April 1992), 29-49 "On 22 September the ship made four attempts to get through Bellot Strait, but withdrew each time as the water shoaled to within twenty feet of the bottom of the ship."

[106] Lemming.

[107] A kedge anchor is a light anchor generally used in calm sea conditions.

[108] Brass pipe - The object held in the right hand of Captain Pullen in the above photo and in the right hand of Lt (P) MacNeil in the photo below.

[109] Canadian Government Ship

[110] Rowley, 29-49.

[111] Safety check to insure that all nuts and bolts were properly tightened or torqued to the right specification.

[112] *Fort Mandan's* efforts and seamanship in rescuing the *Lady Cecil* in such poor sea conditions were noted up the American military chain of command and were also highly commended by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Fleet Commander.

[113] DND History of HMC *Labrador* – 81/520/8000 Box: 54 File 5

[114] 1984 Canadian Geographic Article by David Maclellan, Senior Editor

[115] Royal Canadian Navy, RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968; James A. Boutilier - Royal Roads Military College, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982.

[116] See: Canadian Naval Review, Volume 5, Number 1 (Spring 2009) - "Canadian Naval Technology Earns Global Sales" by Janet Thorsteinson

[117] Later promoted to Lt Cdr

[118] Salty Dips, Vol. 8, p35 Ottawa Branch, Naval Officers Association, Privately Published

[119] Practicing the direction of aircraft using hand signals when landing onboard the ship.

[120] HMS *Vernon* - A Royal Navy shore establishment, known in the RN as "Stone Frigates".

[121] A "Mae West" is an inflatable life jacket worn by pilots when flying over water. The name comes from the popular movie star and pinup girl of the times.

[122] Dr. Charles Winthrop Molesworth Swithinbank was a Scott Polar Institute scientist and noted glaciologist

[123] Oil dilution facilitated engine startup in cold weather.
[124] The USAF had built an airfield in the Torngat Mountains above Saglek Bay in 1954.
[125] Historical Record 924th AC&W Squadron, Saglek, Labrador, 1 April 1963 to 30 June 1963, Cyril J Hanko, Lt Col USAF
[126] This airfield is notorious for being at the dead end of a steep fiord and was a major stopover point for transatlantic flights from before World War Two to this date.
[127] Lemming, 303.
[128] Fifty-six years later, in 2013, LCdr Larry Zbitnew (Ret'd) recalled the following: "The picture of the Bell hovering was taken just before I was forced to land. The winds were gusting upwards of 50 mph, and there was a real bad down draft present. I had stripped the Bell with all unnecessary equipment and off loaded my hydrographer to make it as light as possible. Still I had trouble maintaining hover RPM's. It crossed my mind to slide over to the side of the mountain and throw it over the side but then I recall thinking that if the blades contacted the side of the mountain, it would have been a 2500 foot drop to the bottom. I then decided to land instead and on landing, my tail rotor contacted a rock and that was that."
[129] Larry Zbitnew recalls: "One item of interest was that this mountain was one of the few without snow and we didn't have any water with us. I removed my water supply [before leaving the ship - Ed.] and replaced it with a bottle of rum. Bruce [Vibert] replaced his with a bottle of brandy [also before leaving the ship - Ed.].We did have box lunches with us which included orange juice but that was a bad mix for rum or brandy. To this day I won't drink anything with orange juice as a mix."
[130] Larry Zbitnew recalls: "We were told to expect another drop of hot soup. What the ship's engineering officer did was purge a 5 gallon fire extinguisher and they put hot soup in this so it could be dropped on a fly by. A wrench was taped to the side so we could open it. As the HUP flew over us they dropped the extinguisher. A good idea but when it hit the rocks on the mountain, it begin to bounce all over the place. We all ducked for cover until the bomb came to a stop. The soup was the best I ever had, hot too."
[131] Larry Zbitnew recalls: "Brandy and rum gave us a nice sleep."
[132] Zbitnew recalled that: "the HUP was not totally serviceable but Dave Oliphant flew it anyway and we were happy to get back on board."
[133] Salty Dips, Vol. 8, p43 Ottawa Branch, Naval Officers Association, Privately Published
[134] The "Highline" or jackstay transfer is a method for transferring material and personnel from one ship to another by the means of cables rigged between the two ships. These transfer operations can be conducted while underway as the ships sail parallel to one another.
[135] Pogo Passage was named after *Labrador's* hydrographic survey boat *Pogo* which discovered it.

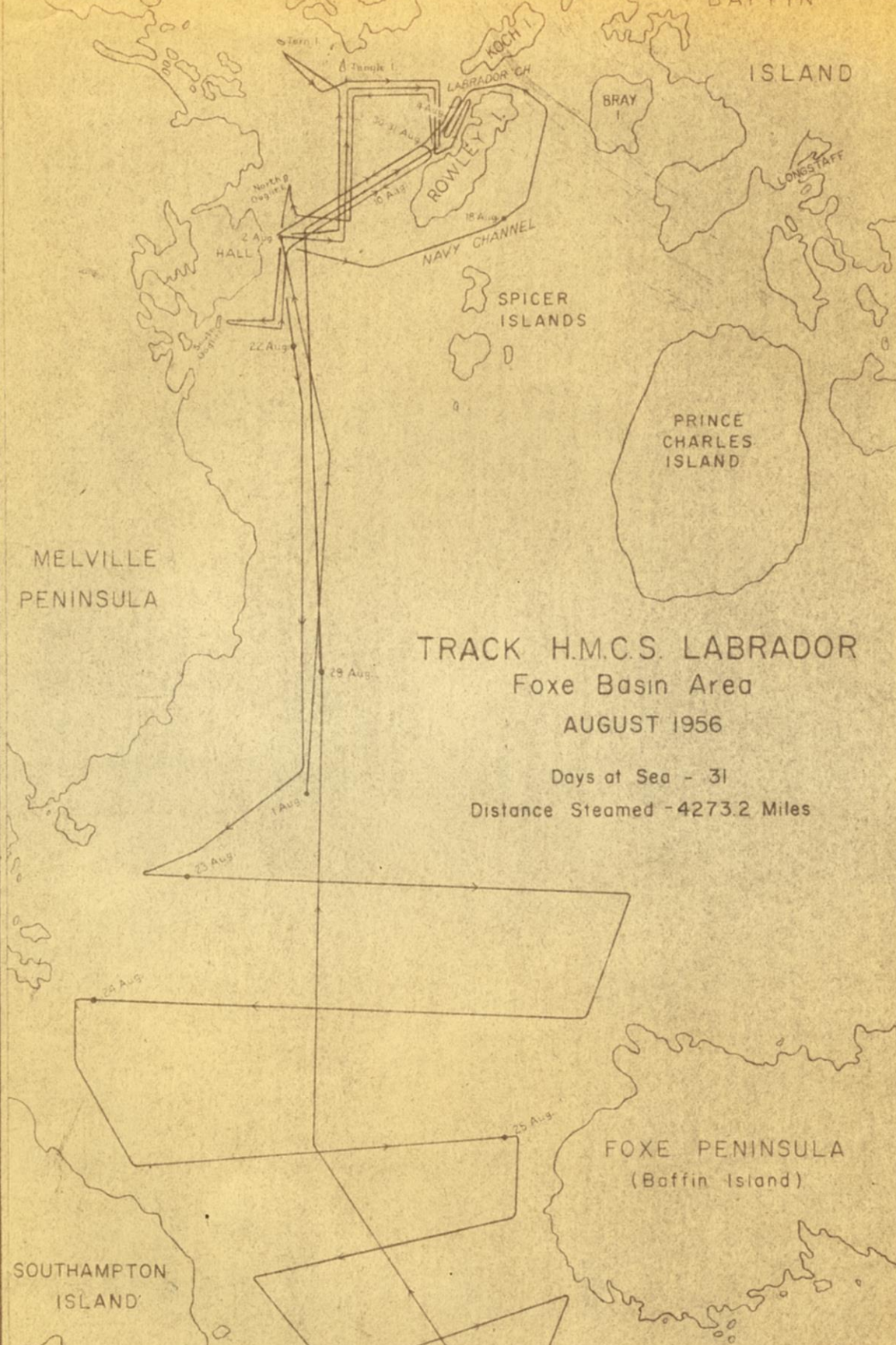
[136] Laid down as *Tavern*, 16 May 1945, a Maritime Commission type (T1-M-BT2) tanker hull, under Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 2648) at Todd-Houston Shipbuilding Corp., Houston, TX. Source: http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/20/2076.htm
[137] A *Escambia* Class Fleet Oiler - Laid down,18 September 1944 as *SS Mission San Francisco*, a Maritime Commission type (T2-SE-A2) tanker hull under Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 1831) at Marin Shipbuilding Co., Sausalito, CA. Launched, 29 October 1944. Acquired by the US Navy and Commissioned USS *Tamalpais* (AO-96), 20 May 1945. Source: http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/20/2076.htm
[138] Lemming, 304.
[139] Thought to be the U.S. Navy tug SP (Service Patrol) - 1134 *Rosebud*.
[140] Operation "Bellot" was to complete a thorough survey of Bellot Strait in order to create accurate navigational charts for this strategic area.
[141] The "Tide Pole" parties were dispatched to take measurements of tide levels in the areas being surveyed in order to make accurate navigational charts.
[142] The process of adjusting all flight controls so the aircraft would fly in the correct attitude based on flight control inputs by the pilots.
[143] SHORAN is an acronym for Short Range Navigation, an electronic navigation system used to accurately measure distances. This system was invented by an RCA engineer in 1938 and was used to improve the accuracy of military bombing and navigation systems.
[144] Tellurometers: early electronic distance measuring systems which greatly improved the accuracy of measurements over long distances.
[145] A small, smooth bore cannon used by the Royal Navy in the 1700s & 1800s.
[146] A "Pan, Pan, Pan" designates an emergency, one level below a "May Day, May Day" call.
[147] Lemming, 306-307
[148] Government of Canada The Canadian Navy List, Ottawa ON
[149] Ibid.
[150] Obituary by Lt (N) Pat Jessup, Community Relations Officer/Public Affairs Officer at Maritime Forces Atlantic.
http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo6/no3/history-histoire-01-eng.asp
[151] Nova Scotia Naval Officers' Association Newsletter, January and February 2012
[152] Biography source: Ottawa Citizen Obituary, October 2013
[153] Friends of Hydrography Web Site:
http://www.canfoh.org/index.htm
[154] Personal biography by Donald R. MacNeil
[155] The Nauticapedia: http://www.nauticapedia.ca

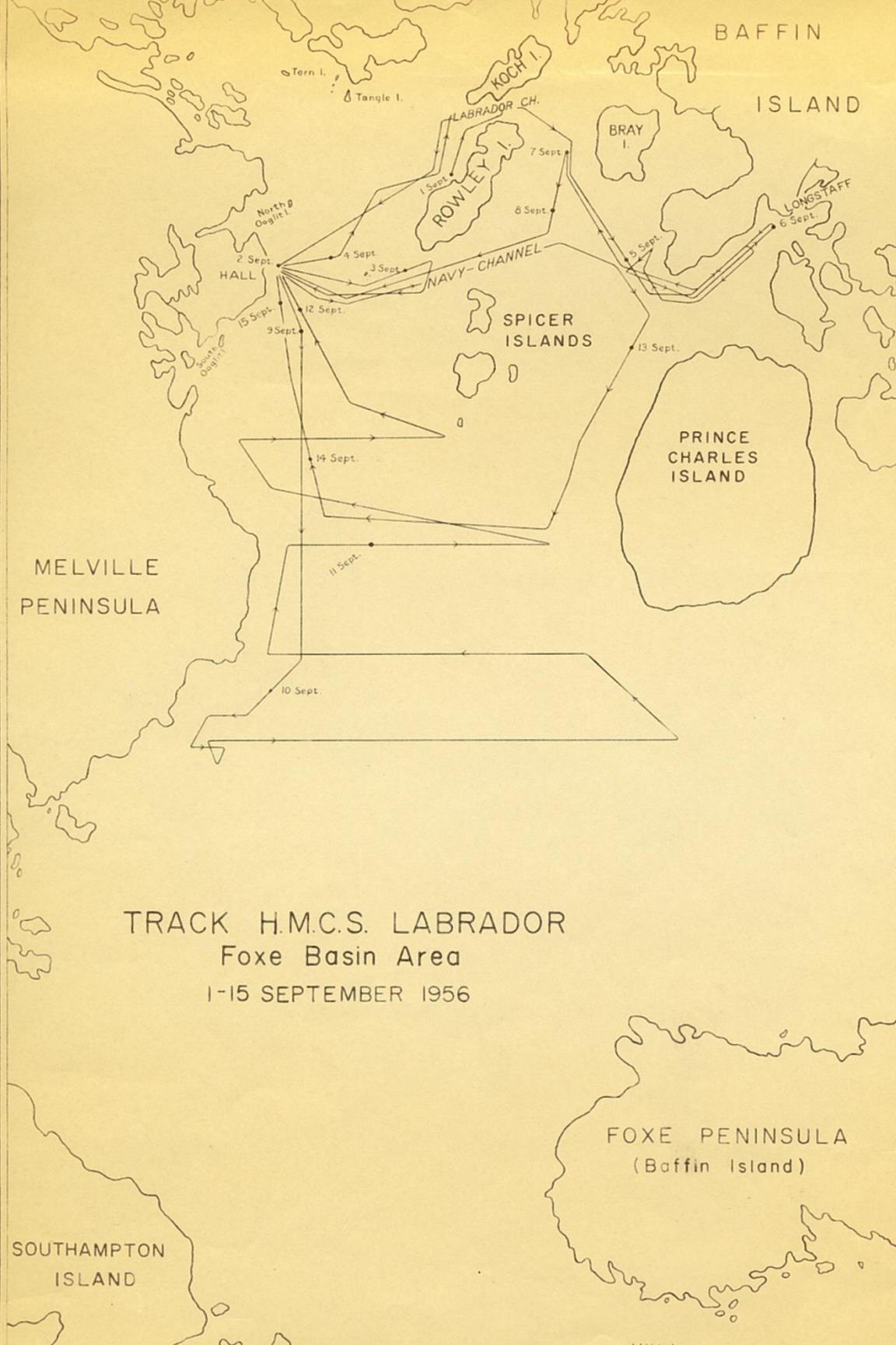
TRACK H.M.C.S. LABRADOR

JULY 1956

Days at Sea - 28

Distance Steamed - 5703.6 Miles


ISLAND
KOCH I.
LARRADOR CH.
BRAY I.
ROWLEY I.
LONGSTAFF
NAVY CHANNEL
HALL
SPICER ISLANDS
PRINCE CHARLES ISLAND
MELVILLE PENINSULA
TRACK H.M.C.S. LABRADOR
Foxe Basin Area
AUGUST 1956
Days at Sea - 31
Distance Steamed - 4273.2 Miles
FOXE PENINSULA
(Baffin Island)
SOUTHAMPTON ISLAND


BAFFIN
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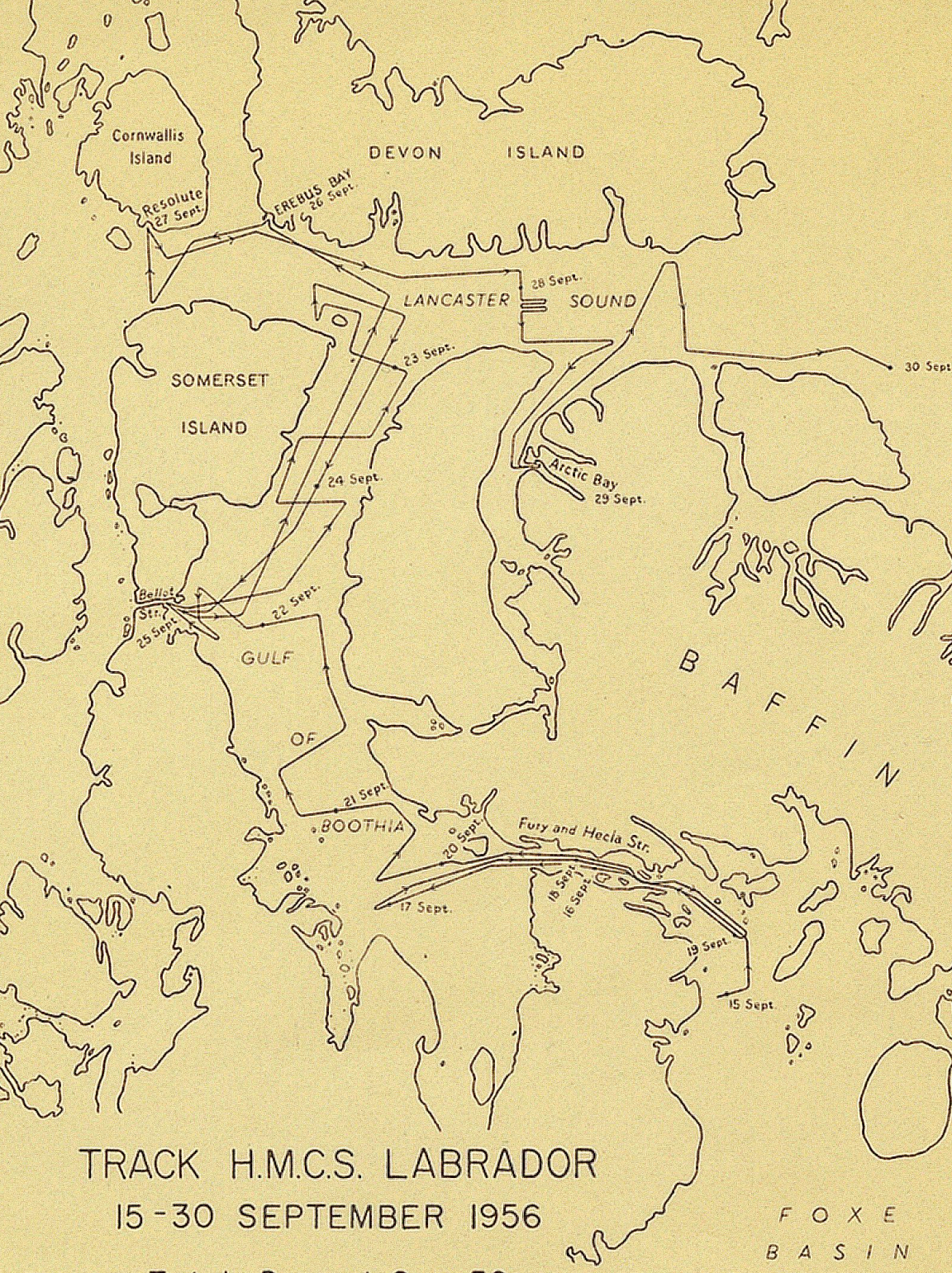
Tern I.
Tangle I.
KOCH I.
LABRADOR CH.
BRAY I.
ROWLEY I.
1 Sept.
7 Sept.
8 Sept.
LONGSTAFF
6 Sept.
5 Sept.
North Ogilvie I.
2 Sept.
HALL
4 Sept.
3 Sept.
NAVY-CHANNEL
15 Sept.
12 Sept.
9 Sept.
SPICER
ISLANDS
13 Sept.
South Ogilvie I.
PRINCE
CHARLES
ISLAND
14 Sept.
MELVILLE
PENINSULA
11 Sept.
10 Sept.
TRACK H.M.C.S. LABRADOR
Foxe Basin Area
1-15 SEPTEMBER 1956
FOXE PENINSULA
(Baffin Island)
SOUTHAMPTON
ISLAND



TRACK H.M.C.S. LABRADOR

15-30 SEPTEMBER 1956

Total Days at Sea - 30

Total Distance Steamed - 5745.2 Miles

TRACK H.M.C.S. LABRADOR

1-13 OCTOBER 1956

Days at Sea - 13

Distance Steamed - 2884 Miles

Rotary Wings over the Arctic

From 1955 to 1957 ***HMCS Labrador*** was the Canadian government's most visible presence in the Arctic. Commissioned at a time when the region was at the forefront of continental defence, the naval icebreaker worked with American partners to establish defence facilities, survey shipping routes, and show the flag in an area of growing strategic importance. A critical and often unsung element in Labrador's success was the embarked helicopters. By spotting leads, moving people and cargo, and surveying routes, these aircraft enhanced the ship's effectiveness, range, and impact. This volume is a collection of those flight logs. It provides a documentary snapshot of early icebreaking and helicopter operations in the Far North and provides researchers with new tools to study Arctic defence and navigation at a critical juncture of the early Cold War.

Don MacNeil is the son of the late Lt (P) John A. MacNeil, CD helicopter detachment officer in charge onboard the RCN's Arctic patrol ship HMCS Labrador for her 1956 Arctic voyage. Don also served in the RCN from 1963 to 1966 onboard HMCS Columbia, Yukon and Ottawa and later worked for Pratt & Whitney Canada as a Stationary Engineer.

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