

Newsletter

"A life not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory."



President's Message



Hi Sea Islanders – both past and present,

Our November issue highlights activities of the Canadian Armed Forces on Sea Island during World War II, while remembering our veterans and their contributions to the war efforts. Some were our mothers and fathers, others were military personnel (permanent and non-permanent) stationed on Sea Island. We honour the sacrifices they made to promote peace. Lest we forget!

As another year is coming to a close, Sea Island Heritage Society volunteers continue to add to our Collection of "all things Sea Island." We are busy with a variety of projects and invite you to join us. Check out some of the projects we are working on at <https://seaislandhome.org/sea-island-projects.html>.

We continue to collect Sea Island school class photos and work to identify each student. If any of you are downsizing and don't know what to do with these photos, please think of donating them to us. We will then digitize these photos and send you a copy. Or if you want to keep the original, we will gratefully accept your scans, preferably in high resolution.

Our House Histories is another project that we would appreciate your assistance. If you have found an old photo of your Sea Island home, again we'd love the original, but a scan is appreciated. We are very lucky to still have the thriving community Burkeville, although so many houses are being replaced. The communities of Cora Brown, Tapp Road, the PMQs, Japanese Canadian canneries and those on rural properties no longer exist. To receive photos of these houses and properties would be great.

Copies of Bill McNulty's book, *Sea Island British Columbia The Beginning of Richmond*, are available from the SIHS. See more information on page 4.

And finally, we would like to encourage everyone to become a member of the Sea Island Heritage Society. Either as a Lifetime member or an Annual Member. Your support helps us to carry on with our mission into our 25th year. Come celebrate with us in May 2026!

Eunice Robinson



President

Sea Island Heritage Society

The ongoing work we do!

With a bit of break over the summer, September saw the Society get back to it. Here are highlights of what we've been up to:

- In May 2025, Mr. Wilfred MAH, the 93-year-old son of MAH Bing, agreed to be interviewed by the SIHS. Initially, Mr. MAH was reluctant. Reliving the harshness of his childhood brought about painful memories. Mr. MAH developed a rapport with one of our directors and invited her into his home for the interview. Through this interview, the SIHS learned of other MAHs from Sea Island, and two brothers to MAH Bing. The SIHS will publish the story of MAH Bing and his family in the next newsletter.
- In August 2025, Mr. Terry O'Neill contacted the SIHS saying he had bought a framed copy of the 2442 Squadron badge from 1953 at a thrift store which he wanted to donate to the Society. David England, our Vice President picked up the donation from Mr. O'Neill. This interesting find led to a recent article in the Richmond News titled, "*Richmond historians excited by discovery of 1950s RCAF memorabilia*" - see <https://bit.ly/48TOal0>. The article caught the attention of the Office of the Governor General in Ottawa who put the Society in touch with the Department of National Defence where we learned about the origin of the badge, authorized by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. The Society will be updating the webpage of the 2442 Squadron with this new information.



Figure 1. [Mr. Terry O'Neill and David England holding the 2442 Squadron Coat of Arms, donation by Mr. O'Neill]. (2025). (Source: David England).

Upcoming Events

BECOME A MEMBER!

We need your help! Join us in preserving our shared history of Sea Island and shaping a future where our local heritage thrives.

Documenting our history and heritage, be it our own family stories, accounts of our neighbourhood, and yes, the memories of our unique little island, is important. History and heritage teach us lessons and give us a sense of connection.

Your membership helps us expand the Society's Collection through the work we do and meeting our goals as a network hub, a gathering 'space' for conversations, and a collective voice in ensuring Sea Island's history and heritage benefits its future.

December is the time to join or renew your membership for 2026. We offer both annual and lifetime membership. If you are a lifetime member, no action is necessary.

We welcome new and returning members:

- 2026 annual individual membership is \$15.
- Lifetime membership is \$100.

Fees can be paid in one of two ways:

- Mail a cheque for your membership or donation to:

Sea Island Heritage Society

Box 88051, Lansdowne Mall
Richmond, BC V6X 3T6.

- Join, renew your membership, or donate to the Society via e-Transfer to treasurersihs@seaislandhome.org.

Upon receiving your membership fee (cheque, cash or e-Transfer), the Society will send you the Coffee Chat schedule and the Zoom link to participate in our online events. At the discretion of the directors, non-members can be invited to join one or two Coffee Chats to explore their interest in becoming a member.

Thanks for connecting with and supporting the work of the Sea Island Heritage Society!



COFFEE CHATS - CONNECTING THE SEA ISLAND COMMUNITY!

Are you interested in connecting with fellow past and present Sea Island residents and learning more about this community? Consider joining our monthly online "Coffee Chat" sessions, where we bring together SIHS members and non-members alike.

Coffee Chats take place on the third Thursday of each month, starting at 10:00 am and typically continue until noon. These virtual gatherings are hosted via Zoom and provide an opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful conversations about Sea Island's history, heritage, and future.

Our **next Coffee Chat** is scheduled for November 20. This session will focus on two timely topics: Remembrance Day and updates from SIHS regarding new informative signage and pathways planned for Sea Island.

Please note that there will be no Coffee Chat in December. We will resume our monthly gatherings in the new year, with the **first Coffee Chat of 2026** taking place on January 15 where we'll talk about some family stories of those from Sea Island.

Please note that the Zoom link for 2025 & 2026 is the same as the one used in 2024. If you have lost the link or need help with Zoom, contact David England at davidwengland911@gmail.com and we'll find a way to assist you.



Now available - the perfect holiday present!

SEA ISLAND BRITISH COLUMBIA - THE BEGINNING OF RICHMOND

Sea Island British Columbia - The Beginning of Richmond is the fourth book authored by Bill McNulty, a respected elected councillor for the City of Richmond and a long-time resident of the area. In this publication, McNulty offers chronological insights into Sea Island, British Columbia, the place where Richmond truly began. This book is an essential read for both past and present residents of Richmond, British Columbia, as well as those in the surrounding communities.

Packed with historic details, this book provides a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the changes and achievements made by those who called Sea Island home. It

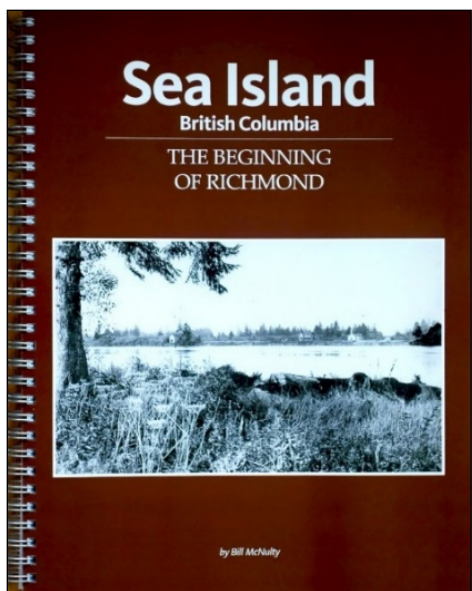
is the ideal gift for anyone interested in the rich history of Richmond, making it a thoughtful holiday present.

Copies are available through the Sea Island Heritage Society. The publication is priced at \$40 CAD. For those wishing to have the book shipped anywhere in Canada, an additional \$24 CAD per copy will be applied to cover shipping costs.

Payment by cheque can be made to:

Sea Island Heritage Society

Box 88051 Lansdowne Mall
Richmond, BC V6X 3T6



E-transfer: Payments by e-transfer can be sent to: treasurersihs@seaislandhome.org.

RCAF Army Cooperation Squadrons on Sea Island, WWII

Written by the Sea Island Heritage Society

Sea Island's terrain and the opening of Vancouver Civic Airport in 1931 provided an ideal base for the Aero Club of British Columbia, which trained RCAF pilots and advocated for non-permanent Air Force units on the west coast. In October 1932, the RCAF authorized three such units, including one in Vancouver, designated No. 11 Army Cooperation Squadron. The squadron conducted ground training at the Vancouver Horse Show Building and used hangars on the south side of the airport due to limited facilities. Its primary tasks included coordinating with coastal artillery, reconnaissance, artillery spotting, and anti-submarine patrols.

Prior to 1932

The No. 11 AC Squadron was established through the efforts of Aero Club of British Columbia members and former British Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force (RAF) officers. Major Alan Duncan Bell-Irving, a WWI veteran and club president, championed the creation of a non-permanent Air Force unit in Vancouver after the Club's early training work with WWI pilots for the British Royal Flying Corps of Britain at Minoru Park in Richmond B.C. c1915. After WWI, the Club moved to a larger airfield in Terra Nova, Richmond, thanks to farmland provided by James Thompson and D. McCallum to support aviation graduates seeking to join the Royal Naval Flying Corps.

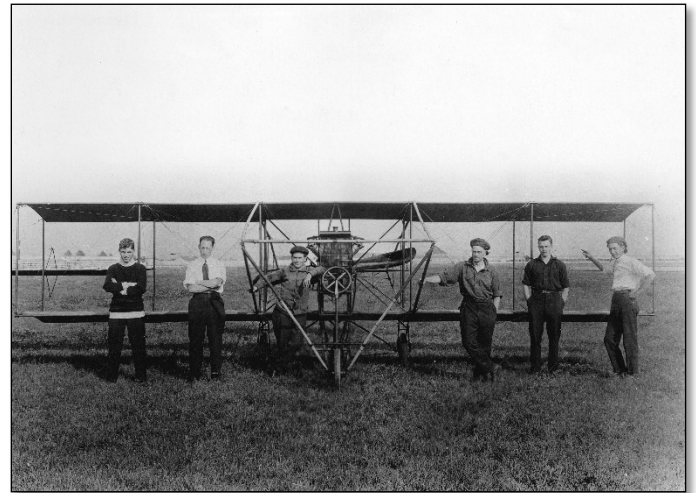


Figure 2. [Members of the first Aero Club in British Columbia, in front of their biplane at Minoru racetrack. The photo, shot by Major James Skitt Matthews shows (left to right): Billy Macrae, Phil Scott, W.M. (Billy) Start, Phil H. Smith, Murton A. Seymour and Vic Phillips]. (September 8, 1915). (Source: City of Vancouver Archives, photo Trans-P86).

Due to post-war declines and the Depression, fewer pilots were trained until the Canadian government encouraged more civilian pilot training in 1927. The club was restructured as the Aero Club of B.C. (Vancouver Branch), continuing its activities at Minoru Park, and started training civic and military reservists. When Vancouver Civic Airport opened on Sea Island in 1931, the Aero Club became its first tenant. In 1932, the No. 11 AC NP squadron formed with Bell-Irving as temporary commander and other Club members joining the ranks.

Activities of the No. 11

Flying began in November 1934 with four de Havilland Gipsy Moths at the Aero Club's hangar. That year, No. 11(AC) Squadron increased from five officers and nine other ranks to twelve and eighty-six by year-end, still below its authorized strength. The squadron held twice-weekly parades and training at Stanley

Park Armouries, while military aviation instruction took place at Vancouver Civic Airport and summer camps, including dive-bombing and aerial photography exercises.



Figure 4. [Gipsy Moth and hangar at Vancouver Civic Airport]. (1937). (Source: No. 11 AC Squadron RCAF NP Record Book 1933-1939, Geoffrey Rowe Library, Comox Air Force Museum).

At the 1935 summer camp led by Squadron Leader A.D. Bell-Irving, 40 airmen followed a rigorous schedule of physical training, lectures, recreation, and flying sessions. Accommodation included 24 tents and support facilities, creating a self-sufficient camp. The squadron won the City Shoot at Eburne rifle range that year.

The second summer camp, which took place from May 17 to 30, 1936, included approximately 75 airmen under the leadership of Bell-Irving and Flight Lieutenant W.G. Mackenzie. All officers were pilots required to complete monthly flying hours. By 1937, training expanded to aero engines, rigging, carpentry, armament, wireless, and operations, offering recruits both theory and practical experience in technical trades.

Hostility in the Western Pacific

As Japan's aggression grew, No. 11 (Army Co-operation) Squadron was renamed No. 111 (Coast Artillery Co-operation) Squadron (CAC)

in November 1937 and remained a non-permanent unit with upgraded gear and increased duties. New aircraft arrived periodically: Fleet 7B in 1936; two Avro 621s in late 1937; an Avro 626 in March 1938 for better training; and a Tiger Moth in August 1938. The final Gipsy Moths were retired by June 1939.



Figure 3. [Avro 626 #225 on Sea Island]. (1938). (Source: Richmond Archives photo 1997 5 69).

Squadron historian Bill Eull, referencing Robert Watts (son of pilot/instructor Alfie Watts), provided details about No. 111 CAC's history and its efforts to improve pilot training safety:

The specific task of the CAC squadron was to help the artillery batteries refine their shooting accuracy by flying over the shooting target area and informing the batteries of the accuracy of their shooting. They were also responsible for flying regular surveillance sortie to protect the Vancouver surrounds, including the artillery installations, from any threats from the sea.

The title, Coast Artillery Co-operation, was not intended to be ironic even though there were no usable coastal artillery guns to cooperate with. There were in fact some very old port-protecting guns, but they hadn't been fired for years lest they explode from the blast. Some protection!

Since, of course, no one had practised with them either. Nothing but "scarecrows."

On September 10, 1939, No. 111 CAC Squadron was activated and ordered to relocate from Sea Island to Patricia (Pat) Bay on Vancouver Island. The transition began as a one-aircraft detachment before the entire squadron moved by May 1940. The squadron received four Westland Lysander MKIIs by early 1940. Norman David Eastman of No. 13 Detachment documented the period with photographs.



Figure 5. [A Westland Lysander aircraft on Sea Island]. (November 25, 1940). (Source: Norman David Eastman Collection).

No. 111 CAC became a fighter squadron (No. 111(F) Squadron on June 14, 1940, but was disbanded in January 1941. A new No. 111 (Fighter) Squadron, equipped with Kittyhawks and composed of Ontario and Quebec servicemen, was commissioned in Ottawa and posted to Pat Bay in 1941. By mid-1942, they relocated to Annette Island and then progressed through several Pacific Northwest locations, fighting in the Aleutian campaign until its end in 1943.

In 1944, the squadron was re-designated No. 440 (Fighter Bomber) Squadron in Europe, initially flying Hurricanes and soon switching to Typhoons. Inactive from 1945 to 1953, it later operated CF-100s until 1962, then became a transport unit in 1968. Today, 440 Squadron flies Twin Otters out of Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories in Canada.

Wings of Victory

On August 24-25, 1945, after Japan's surrender in World War II, RCAF Station Sea Island held a post-war victory aircraft display featuring models built at Boeing Canada plant #3—such as the RCAF PBV-5A Canso and parts of the B-29 Superfortress—as well as other Royal Canadian Air Force aircraft. Attendees could view Catalina flying boat hulks and sit in the Flight Engineer's seat.

Aircraft on display included: Boeing PBV-5A Catalina Patrol Bomber; Boeing B-29 Superfortress (high-level bomber); Bell P-59 Airacomet (first American jet fighter); Avro Lancaster (4-engine heavy bomber); Supermarine Spitfire; Fairchild Bolingbroke; Douglas Dakota RCAF C-47; Northrop USAF Black Widow P-61; and Lockheed USAF P-38 Lightning.

While much remains to be discovered about the various eras and roles of the RCAF 111 Squadron at home, in the Aleutians, and Europe, we honour all who trained and served. We also acknowledge the Air Force Club / Aero Club of BC's efforts training WWI pilots at Minoru Park, Richmond c1915, and the foresight of Major A.D. Bell-Irving and his peers in establishing a non-permanent Air Force unit to help protect the west coast before and during WWII.

We thank Bill Eull for sharing with us his knowledge of the No.111 CAC. Bill's interest in this group inspired us to learn more. Discover the heroic men of the No. 111 (F) Squadron on Bill's website at

<https://www.rcaf111fsquadron.com>.

Major (Retired RCAF) Jerry Vernon graciously shared his extensive knowledge of the RCAF and more specifically of the No. 111 Coastal Artillery Cooperation Squadron. Jerry began his career as an airman with 442 (Auxiliary) Squadron, retiring as a Squadron Leader. He lived in quarters at the Sea Island base with the RCAF Auxiliary in the summer of 1953. In 2017, he received the *Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers*

(<https://www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipients/342-77668>). Aside from his professional expertise, he had access to Chapter two of the *440 History Book*, a chapter that provided information about the squadron, now included in this story that we were not otherwise able to confirm. Jerry provided the details we needed. Thank you, Jerry.

As well, see the military page of the Sea Island Heritage Society at

<https://seaislandhome.org/sea-island-military.html>.

If you have information, stories and/or photos related to the No. 111 CAC you are willing to share or if you would like the full version of this story with references, please contact us at info@seaislandhome.org.

Canadian Army Presence on Sea Island, WWII

Written by the Sea Island Heritage Society

Sea Island, BC, was chosen for coastal defence in WWII because of its strategic location near Vancouver and existing airfield. Surrounded by the Fraser River, it offered natural barriers and access points. The area's flat landscape allowed easy expansion of military facilities.

Canadian Army personnel were stationed on Sea Island before and during WWII under Western Air Command and Pacific Command, tasked with ground defence and anti-aircraft operations. As Japan's ambitions grew, defending the west coast became critical; these units focused on coastal protection against potential air and naval attacks and supporting Aleutian Islands operations.

The Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC) handled logistics, including transporting and distributing supplies, constructing barracks and shelters, and ensuring infrastructure was in place. Coastal artillery batteries provided field and air defence training, often using older or improvised equipment, and worked as part of a larger home defence network with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

Field artillery batteries provided anti-aircraft support, manned fixed artillery positions, and trained new recruits to reinforce home defence capabilities. The 28th Anti-Aircraft Regiment provided the gunners. The batteries had a range of weapons, including Canadian made, anti-aircraft 40 mm Swedish Bofors guns,

installed on platforms to prevent them from sinking in the soft Sea Island sediment. These rapid-fire guns could target low-flying fighter bombers used on aircraft carriers but were ineffective against the high-altitude bombers used in the Japanese attack on the Aleutian Islands. By April 1943, many of the Bofors guns were replaced by Vickers-Armstrong 3.7-inch calibre AA guns.



Figure 6. [40 mm Bofors gun on Annette Island, AK, USA]. (ca 1943). (Source: Gerald H. Bowman Collection).

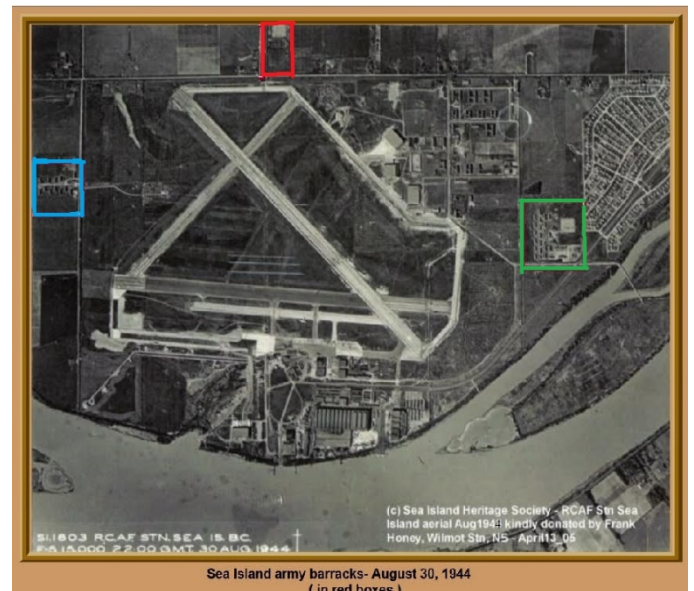
The No. 11 (Army Co-operation) Squadron of the RCAF trained on Sea Island from 1932, focusing on coordinating with coastal artillery through spotting targets and air support. In 1937 they were redesignated the No. 111 (Coastal Artillery Co-operation) Squadron (auxiliary) until relocating to Patricia Bay in 1940 as the No. 111 (Fighter) Squadron.

RCAF Station Sea Island opened in July 1940 for pilot training and later housed home defence squadrons. The RCN stationed a small crew nearby, using former Japanese houses on the southwest dike for lodging. Collaboration

among air, land, and sea forces was vital to local and coastal defence efforts.

Army Camps on Sea Island

Sea Island's three army camps served as temporary or semi-permanent sites for training, deployment staging, or housing personnel. Both tents and wood hutments accommodated troops.



The East and West Boulevard Camp was near Doherty Road, south of Burkeville (in green). The McDonald Road Camp was north of Miller Road (in red). The Ross Road Camp was at the west side of the runways (in blue).

Army huts or barracks were typically 60' x 24' cedar shingle-sided or wood tarpaper sheathed duplexes.

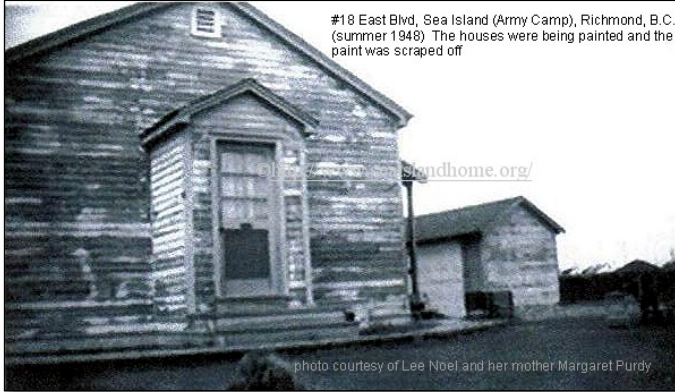


Figure 8. [#18 East Boulevard Camp, Sea Island]. (1948). (Source: Purdy Family Collection).

Other buildings within the camps stored ammunition, housed a signals center to send or receive important information and an air raid shelter primarily designed to protect against aerial attacks. Camouflaged shelters on Sea Island were constructed above ground and covered in grass to blend with the surrounding area.

After Boeing Canada left the island in 1945, the Army took over most of its plant by 1946 for storage and workshops, including facilities for the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps and an RCASC supply depot.

The Sea Island Heritage Society has recorded that by 1945, children lived in the East and West Boulevard and McDonald Road Camps, attending school first in Steveston and then at Sea Island School by 1947.

East and West Boulevard Camp

The camp at East and West Boulevard housed Army personnel and No. 111 CAC Squadron in U-shaped barracks, along with Permanent Married Quarters (PMQs) for RCASC families. Located off Doherty and Airport Roads, soldiers were seen marching down Doherty Road to Dinsmore Island and firing rifles into the slough,

after which local kids would collect spent lead. Near WWII's end, huts became temporary duplexes for veterans and families awaiting military housing, while some were used for emergency accommodation.



Figure 7. [A duplex on East Boulevard]. (1948). (Source: Zaruk Family Collection).

No.4 East Boulevard was the home of the Noakes family: Trixie Noakes and her four children, Brian, Tony, Brenda, and Bob. It was 1945 and this was their first home in Canada. Mrs. Noakes was an English war bride of Canadian soldier who was killed in WWII.

In 1948, the Zaruk family - Frank, Margaret and daughters, Barbara and Lee - lived on East Boulevard. They later moved to 230 Handley Avenue, Burkeville. The daughters attended Sea Island School until they left the island.

The late Grant Thompson, a former Burkeville resident and a director of the Sea Island Heritage Society (SIHS), living in Burkeville at the time, remembered the East and West Boulevard army camp noting:

There were approximately 14 army huts on East and West Boulevard converted into duplexes (about 24 families) complete with army standard battleship linoleum. The flooring was about ¼ inches thick. Green or brown were the only colours to choose from. They promised to never wear out!

There was a building to the right (east side) of the Doherty Road entrance referred to as the admin building. The entrance road split into East and West Blvd. This building was of a different shape from the other housing units and was unoccupied as far back as 1948. At one point it was the temporary home of the Army, Navy, Air Force (ANAF) unit 285* and was used on weekends as a canteen until they bought and moved into the old preacher's manse on Miller Road just west of the gas station about 1947 - 48.



Figure 9. [First Veterans Club on Sea Island located in the former minister's manse on the corner of Miller Road and Airport Road]. (1957). (Source: Grant Thomson).

McDonald Road Camp

The McDonald Road camp was located off McDonald Road on the east side north of Miller Road, and prior to 1940 had hutments and storage buildings for multiple military units prior the arrival of a more permanent air force base personnel. This camp housed infantry and artillery soldiers who manned anti-aircraft (Bofors) guns. They also performed other tasks such as sentry duties.

Ross Road Camp

Huts and tents lined Ross Road, while residents near the Sea Island canneries often watched soldiers march to the island's southwest corner to fire ack ack guns at drone targets. Gerry Bicknell's hand-drawn map below marks #45, a pole set up as a "dummy gun" east of Ross Road Camp—these fake artillery pieces were designed to mislead enemies about defensive strength. Wooden telephone poles used for barrels were placed around the airport due to a shortage of real guns.

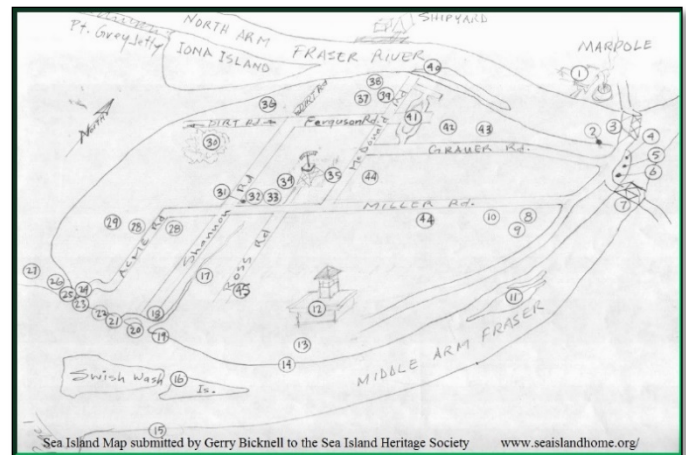


Figure 10. [Hand-drawn map by Gerry Bicknell locating Ross Road camp and #45 where a dummy pole was disguised as an artillery gun]. (1940). (Source: Gerry Bicknell).

Although we do not provide the full map key, features identified supporting the Canadian Military on Sea Island are identified: #34-Radar Tower WWII, #44-Army barracks WWII, and #45-Dummy Anti-aircraft Gun (Bofors). The local light anti-aircraft defences were stood down in November 1944 when the Japanese navy ceased to be a threat.

We highlight the Army's activity on the island, focusing on Bofors guns, and share a story following this one about artillery soldier

Edmund "Ed" August Novak, stationed at McDonald Road camp, who manned Bofors on Sea Island. Taking on another task, Ed was on sentry duty one night and had an unexpected encounter.

Also see a story in this issue (November 2025) about the RCAF Army Cooperation Squadron on Sea Island, WWII

We thank Infantry Captain Colin MacGregor Stevens, C.D. (Ret'd) and Major Peter Moogk, C.D. (Ret'd), Professor Emeritus, Department of History at the University of British Columbia (UBC) for their generous guidance and feedback on this account of the army on Sea Island during WWII.

If you have information, stories and / or photos related to the Canadian Army's presence on Sea Island prior to, during, or post-war you would like to share or if you would like the full story with references, please contact us at info@seaislandhome.org.

For more information about a military presence on Sea Island during WWII, we invite you to check out the Sea Island Heritage Society military webpage at <https://seaislandhome.org/sea-island-military.html>.

A Sentry Duty Encounter

Written by the Sea Island Heritage Society

Edmund "Ed" August Novak's (1916 - 2001) second military assignment was Sea Island. He had been trained at Canadian Forces Base Borden, Ontario, and was deployed to an Artillery Battery on Sea Island in the 1940s. His main task was to man anti-aircraft 40 mm Bofors

artillery guns at the five concrete pads provided to keep the guns from sinking into the Sea Island silt. He also had to look after the office at the McDonald Road camp. Working the evening shift, he didn't get to attend the occasional dances put on for the soldiers. Ed happened to be in the guard house office one rainy evening on sentry duties.



Figure 11. [Ed Novak]. (1945). (Source: Novak Family Photo Collection).

Margaret Rose Bicknell (1925-2005) and her teenage friends had been out walking by the army camp and were feeling wet and cold. Nearing the guard house on McDonald Road, they decided to visit the cute soldier working the front desk, use the loo and have a hot drink. Ed Novak was behind the desk on sentry duty. A few weeks later, Margaret and her friend hosted a party at her friend's house on Miller Road and Margaret invited Ed.

Margaret Bicknell grew up with her brothers Gordon, Ron, and Gerry on the southwest corner of Sea Island. They lived with their parents, Percy and Florence Bicknell, at 373 Shannon Road where the road met the banks of the Middle Arm of the Fraser River. Percy managed the store, cannery, and marine gas station for the Vancouver Cannery and was a well-known duck hunter and duck decoy carver.

As WWII intensified with the Battle of Midway, there were re-assignments. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) base was looking for someone who could type. Ed's army buddy, Frank Laudon, said "you can type, Eddy," thinking it

was a safer role for Ed, as the real risk of crossing to England was getting torpedoed. Ed was eventually deployed to England.

Meanwhile, Margaret graduated from Richmond High in 1943. Love letters were sent back and forth between Ed and Margaret with a hello to Margaret's mother, Florence, whose ancestors had arrived at the Plymouth colony at Grand Manann Island, New Brunswick in 1620.

After Ed's army service in England, he returned home on the Queen Mary to New York, then by train to Winnipeg via Montreal. He was in Winnipeg for a while but hated the cold winters. He decided to move back to the west coast. He wanted to check out that Sea Island girl he had met on sentry duty.

A move to the west coast had Ed stationed in Prince Rupert, manning the guns at the airport on Digby Island. The constant rain got to him. He left the army to move closer to Vancouver and Margaret.

Ed worked in the receiving department at the Hudson's Bay Company on Georgia Street. Frank, Ed's army buddy, had a job as the payroll clerk at the nearby No. 1 Firehall on Hamilton Street. The Firehall was looking for a purchaser, so Frank walked over to the Bay and told Ed about the job opening at the Firehall. Ed asked his boss if he could leave early, then walked over to the Firehall and got the job. Now that he had a steady, good job, marriage was in the cards.

Margaret and Ed Novak married on May 10, 1947, at St. Augustine's Anglican Church on Hudson Street in Vancouver, B.C. Their wedding reception was at the Montgomery family home on Shannon Road, Sea Island, Richmond British Columbia. The Bicknell and

Montgomery families were close neighbours. The Montgomery's had a lovely, large house and offered it to Ed and Margaret for their reception.

Growing up, Doreen Braverman (née Montgomery) often rode the school bus with Margaret. Mr. Jewel was the bus driver.



Figure 12. [Ed and Margaret Novak's wedding reception at the Montgomery home]. (1947). (Source: Novak Family Photo Collection).

Ed and Margaret lived at 89 Abercrombie Road in the Cora Brown subdivision on Sea Island and had two children: Brian Edmund (b. 1953) and Paul Raymond (b. 1955). Frank Loudon later became Brian's godfather.



Figure 13. [Margaret and son Brian at 89 Abercrombie Road with their first car, a Hillman, in the driveway]. (ca 1954). (Source: Novak Family Photo Collection).

Ed served in the Canadian military for four years and then in the offices of the Vancouver Fire Department for 32 years, retiring in 1978.

One year Margaret and Ed drove to New Brunswick for a vacation to visit her mother's relatives and to hear stories of the past.

In the 1990's Ed and Margaret went to Los Angeles to take a cruise. They went a few days early to visit the Queen Mary in Long Beach. It was an emotional experience especially for Ed as he remembered the ship packed with soldiers anxious to get home and grateful to be alive.

Margaret was very involved with the Sea Island Boy Scout Association. Ed would join the camping trips but became more involved after retirement. Sixth Richmond Scout troop, Sea Island Ventures and Rovers meetings were held at the community center. They were affiliated with the troop at St Augustine's in Marpole. Margaret was a proud member of the Baden Powell Scouting Guild, the Red Cross, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.).

Thank goodness for that rainy day encounter with that cute soldier holding sentry duties in the office!

A Poetic Moment in the War Years



Elma Alexander worked at the Boeing Canada Plant on Sea Island, as many women did during the war years. Elma and her family had lived in Burkeville in the 1940s. More than 80 years

later, her daughter, Carole Lefter (née Alexander), was cleaning out a recreational property she was selling when she came across a notebook that belonged to her mom. After years of notebook wear and tear, it was not in the same shape it once was. Before discarding it, Carole thought to double check and see if there was anything of value written on the pages. She uncovered this gem.

Lunch at Boeing

(by Elma Alexander)

*From 11 to 1 on any day, you hear a siren
roar*

*and then a mass of struggling flesh come
running thru each door*

*Don't be alarmed it's not a raid from Japan
Hun*

*Plant No.3's about to eat, the only time
they run*

*You drop your tools, you need a rest, you
saunter out to dine*

*Be patient friend, you don't eat yet, you've
got to stand in line*

*You're last but one, you wonder why, you
ran at sirens roar*

*You've got a lot to learn my friend, you
should have run before*

*Ten minutes pass, another smokes, your
frozen to the core*

*But fate is kind, the line moves on, you're
thru the cafe door*

*It's warm inside, the smell of food reminds
you with dismay*

*You're here to eat, so sit --- and eat the
Boeing way.*

*At Station 1, you grab a tray, a spoon, a
fork, a cutter*

*At Station 2, you dive your fork at a lousy
piece of butter*

*At Station 3, you vaguely point at what
you'd like to eat*

*At Station 4, they load you up with
vegetables and meat*

*At Station 5, your troubles start when
everything was fine*

*It's here you meet the fighting dame, who
never falls in line*

*It's sorta like a rummage sale where
females grab & fight*

*The pie you had your eye upon has
vanished from your sight*

*You look annoyed but what's the use, it's
no good raising hell*

*The piece of dough they call a cake will
raise that just as well*

*So, onto where the drinks are served, by
now you are a wreck*

*You get your tea, not on your tray, but
down your bloody neck*

*Another dame, not in the line has beat you
to the punch*

*Holds six full cups above your head, that's
all she buys for lunch*

*So, tray in hand & shaky knees you're
ready now to eat*

*I'm sorry friend not yet a while you've got
to find a seat*

*The fighting dames who crowd you out,
while you are getting eats*

*Are leaders of a female gang who corner
all the seats*

*You go to grab a vacant chair inclined
toward a table*

*A female voice shrieks out in spite, "Hey
that belongs to Mabel"*

*On all four walls a notice states, "Don't
bring your lunch in here,"*

*The reason for the warning note has never
been made clear*

*For scores n more of female eaters all
cluster round in bunches*

*And each & every one of them are eating
homemade lunches*

*An empty space you see at last as you are
passing by*

*But that's reserved for Foreman and not for
you & I*

*What matter if there's room for 8 where sits
a lonely 4*

*The looks you get if you sit here, will chill
you to the core*

*The glamour girls from 91 they all sit well
apart*

*And gently sip a spot of tea & nibble at a
tart*

*A haughty dame her lunch is gone, sits by
the counter rails*

*It's no good waiting here, my friend, she's
yet to trim her nails*

*Some 5 to 20 minutes gone, at last you
find a seat*

*And empty your tray of frozen food & settle
down to eat*

*A siren roars; you slowly rise a sadden
wiser man*

*You lift the food your heart desired & throw
it in the can.*

In Loving Memory

Sadly we have heard of the passing one Sea Islander since our last newsletter:

WILLIAM "BILL" GARIEPY (1951-2025)



William "Bill" Gariepy passed away on October 6, 2025, with the support of MAID. Bill was surrounded by his loving wife Marilynne, Bella (the cat), and a room full of family, and many lifelong friends.

Bill dedicated 35 years to the fire service, retiring as Captain. Bill was a true hero - saving lives, battling fires, and forging unbreakable bonds with his fellow firefighters, that became his second family.

Outside of his service, Bill was a Golden Gloves boxer, an avid golfer, and a loyal friend to many.

Bill is survived by his wife Marilynne, his brother Mike (Marge) and

niece Kelly.

Sea Island Artifacts and Memorabilia

Over the past few months, we have had some lovely donations. Donations are welcomed and appreciated. If you are downsizing or just cleaning out those boxes from the basement or attic, anything "Sea Island" would be most appreciated. Contact Eunice at eunice@genbug.ca.

CONTACT US

If you have questions, comments, or want to share your memories and photos, we would love to hear from you.

To submit a letter, documents, photos, or a cheque for your membership or donation via snail mail:

Sea Island Heritage Society

Box 88051, Lansdowne Mall
Richmond, British Columbia
V6X 3T6

To be added to our e-Newsletter, or send us an email: info@seaislandhome.org

To join, renew your membership or donate by e-Transfer: treasurersihs@seaislandhome.org

Website: <https://seaislandhome.org>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/seaislandheritagesociety>

"Sea Island is located within the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-waututh Peoples."