

## C. ANTHONY LAW AND 'AN ARTIST'S PARADISE'



*C. Anthony Law  
Williams Lake, NS  
nd  
Courtesy of Gerry Shortt*

## **C. ANTHONY LAW AND A PAINTER'S PARADISE**

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those have served Canada and continue to serve.

Go forth into the world in peace;  
Be of good courage;  
Hold fast to that which is good;  
Render to no man evil for evil;  
Strengthen the faint-hearted;  
Support the weak; help the afflicted:  
Honour all men.



I Chronicles 22:13  
1 Thessalonians 5:21  
1 Thessalonians 5:15  
1 Thessalonians 5:14

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AGNS	Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
APAC	Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CAFCAAP	Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artists Program
CDR	Commander
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CFS	Canadian Forces Station
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
Cmdre	Commodore
CPO	Chief Petty Officer
CO	Commanding Officer
CWMF	Canadian War Memorials Fund
CWM	Canadian War Museum
CWR	Canadian War Records
CWRO	Canadian War Records Office
DHH	Directorate of History and Heritage
DND	Department of National Defence
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
E-Boat	Elbing Class
IWM	Imperial War Museum
HMS	His or Her Majesty's Ships

HMCS	His or Her Majesty's Canadian Ships
HRO	Historical Research Officer
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
LCdr	Lieutenant Commander (Modern version)
Lt Cdr	Lieutenant Commander (WWII style)
Lt	Lieutenant (WWII style)
MCAC	McMichael Canadian Art Collection
MMA	Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
MMC	Maritime Museum of Canada
MID	Mentioned in Dispatches
MTB	Motor Torpedo Boat
MGB	Motor Gun Boat
NASA	North American Space Agency
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
NGC	National Gallery of Canada
NL	Newfoundland
NO	Navigating Officer
NSCA	Nova Scotia College of Art
NSMFA	Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Art
NSSA	Nova Scotia Society of Artists
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OSA	Ontario Society of Artists
PO	Petty Officer

RAdm	Rear-Admiral
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCA	Royal Canadian Academy of Artists
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RCNVR	Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve
RN	Royal Navy
SAM	Shearwater Aviation Museum
SCNO	Senior Canadian Naval Officer
SMU	Saint Mary's University
SLt	Sub-Lieutenant
SOSUS	Sound Surveillance System
SSA	Sheffield School of Art
UNB	University of New Brunswick
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USN	United States Navy
VAdm	Vice Admiral
WAAC	War Artists Advisory Committee
WWI	The First World War
WWII	The Second World War

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis owes its greatest debt of gratitude to my paternal Grandmother Teresa Pearl Thompson Jessup (1899-1996) who followed the course charted by the Group of Seven and whose vision, compassion, love of the land and artistic sensibility inspires me every day.

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Much appreciation is extended to the staff at the Canadian War Museum, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Shearwater Aviation Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, the Library and Archives of Canada, Saint Mary’s University and the Directorate of History and Heritage of the Department of National Defence. In particular I would like to recognize Maggie Arbour-Doucette, Christine Hines, Dr. Dianne O’Neill, Troy Wagner, Dr. David Campbell and Dan Conlin for always going the “extra mile” in their support.

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## **PREFACE**

How naive of me to think that I would possess more than a normal insight on my topic given that I was a serving naval officer, studied military history and dabbled in paint. Very early in the process did I learn that there was little about Tony Law that was predictable or recorded and that the only similarities we shared were our commitment to the Canadian Navy and our admiration of the Group of Seven.

Law was unconventional. Though he adapted well to the customs and traditions of the military, he saw and experienced life through the lens of an artist looking for his next canvas. His passion for art-making equaled his love of the sea and naval life and he managed to balance both during parallel and remarkably successful careers.

Growing up at the summer homes of his grandparents, his parents' home in Quebec City and private schools in Ontario afforded Law the opportunity to savor the outdoors, excel at sailing and develop a taste for painting. He was seen as principled, good-natured, conscientious and industrious, attributes no doubt inherited from strong family lines committed to Canada, nationalism and justice. Both his father and grandfather Law had military service and his maternal grandfather was a respected human rights advocate and judge with the Canadian Court of the Exchequer.

Law was raised as a Catholic. Despite being immersed in French culture, Law never mastered the language. Even in English, while well spoken, he struggled with writing. His personal correspondence and military reports were fraught with malapropisms, suggesting that Law may have been hampered with language-based learning issues. Nevertheless, his writing was painstakingly academic and well researched. He was a strategic and clear thinker, and modern military academics have

concluded that Law's reports and documented concerns about Northern sovereignty written during Arctic deployments in the 1950s are as relevant today as they were fifty years ago.

At a very young age Tony Law's artistic abilities were notable. By sixteen his paintings, in the style of twentieth-century Quebec landscape artists, were well composed and balanced. A personal tour of a Group of Seven exhibition conducted by the famous anthropologist Marius Barbeau was a defining moment and Law began a life-long journey as a follower of national school of painting started by the Group. Formal training at the Ottawa School of Art (OSA) in his late teens refined his emerging talent and he fixed his sights on a career as an artist.

The Depression hit the art market hard and squelched many artists' careers. Tony Law, as did his colleagues at the OSA, took jobs outside his field just to survive. Working long hours, six days a week at a neon light firm in Montreal left him very little time for painting or any manner of social life. But Law seemed to thrive under these conditions and he used his limited time in front of the easel to relax. Years later, after a grueling night of battle at sea during the Second World War (WWII), he would again take to his painting to "keep sane". Overall, Law was at his most prolific when he was stimulated by extraneous pressures or time constraints. He had a well-earned reputation for being indefatigable, even towards the end of his life when he was suffering from cancer. His painting colleagues remember him calling upon his strength and confronting his illness. His wartime career speaks of his drive and commitment in the face of the enemy, at the same time exceeding the expectations of a demanding war art program by producing a large number of high-quality paintings in a very short time.

At 21 years of age Law's hard work paid off when he was awarded the prestigious Jessie Dow award for excellence of work in oil and watercolour. The prize gave him national recognition by which he became "collectable". It also meant that he could give up his meager-paying day job to paint full-time and study with the renowned artist Percyval Tudor-Hart in Quebec City. Upon arrival, Law pursued a part-time career in the militia, partly following in his forbears' footsteps but mostly because of his interest in world affairs. His concern over the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, described in his book *White Plumes Astern*, led him to join No. 1 Ordnance Ammunition Company, Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. His seemingly bright painting future abruptly changed with the outbreak of war in September 1939. Recognized for his organizational and leadership skills, Law was appointed Commanding Officer of his Corps.

In 1940 Law transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and joined the coastal fleet in the United Kingdom. Following training for service in Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs), Law almost immediately faced enemy action. The MTBs, small but lethal wooden ships, prowled the English Channel at night searching for enemy ships and gathering intelligence. The work was physically and mentally demanding on the crews, with high casualties and frayed nerves. While many sought solace in local British pubs during their off-duty time ashore, Law painted, sharing studio space with Peter Scott, an established British natural life artist and fellow officer. In 1942, several of Law's paintings were selected for an exhibition arranged by Sir Kenneth Clark, director of the National Gallery in London. This show, attended by Queen Elizabeth among other dignitaries, exposed his work to the highest levels of scrutiny. So impressed was Vincent Massey, the Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain with Law's paintings, that the

young artist was offered a much sought after position in the newly-formed Canadian war art program. Law declined the appointment, however, in favour of remaining actively engaged in the war.

The High Commissioner was not to be bested. In 1943, when Tony Law was given command of a newly formed MTB flotilla – the 29<sup>th</sup> - he was temporarily assigned to the war art program while his boats were being constructed. This hiatus from the action provided him the opportunity to work with the permanent war artists whose studios were in London, sharing ideas and experiences. Among them were former colleagues from the OSA, and Alex Colville, newly graduated from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick.

By February 1944 Law was back at sea. As the pre-invasion fight in the Channel intensified, Law proved to be a resolute and successful commander. The efforts of his flotilla contributed crucially to reducing the capacity of the German navy to mount a large counter-offensive and forced the enemy's ships to withdraw to safe haven. The reduction of this threat was paramount to the success of the imminent water-borne invasion of Normandy in which Law and his crews played a major part.

In the months to follow, the Allies advanced beyond the French beachhead and marched towards Germany and, ultimately, victory in Europe. However, Law's flotilla suffered a lethal blow when, at Ostend during a break from action, an accidental explosion killed 66 crew members and destroyed many of the MTBs. Law was devastated, plunging into a dark state of mind that was reflected in his art. Without a command, the war in Europe was over for him and he accepted a full-time appointment to the war art program.

After the war, the majority of Canada's military reservists returned to their lives and jobs put on hold during the previous six years. Tony Law, surprisingly, forwent his promising artistic career and opted instead to join the regular navy. His first years were spent in warships sailing from Esquimalt, British Columbia, and on postings to National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa.

In 1953 the Navy moved Tony Law to Halifax to become the First Lieutenant of the aircraft carrier HMCS *Magnificent*. Nova Scotia at the time, reputed to be an artistic backwater, had not yet awakened to mainstream modern styles. By contrast, in adjacent New Brunswick, a vibrant and innovative artistic community at Mount Allison existed under the leadership of Tony Law's war art colleague, Alex Colville.

Nova Scotia's provincial reputation has been attributed for the most part, to the leadership of the longstanding principal of the Nova Scotia College of Art (NSCA), the formidable Elizabeth Styring Nutt, a proponent of conventional fine art. "Strong willed and unremitting",<sup>1</sup> Nutt, a graduate of the Sheffield School of Art (SSA), clung to traditions of the British School, first introduced to the NSCA by her predecessor Arthur Lismer, like her a graduate of the SSA. For twenty-five years (1919 - 1943), Nutt influenced the artistic direction of the province and alienated those who challenged her

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Soucy and Harold Pearse, *The First Hundred Years, A History of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*, (Halifax and Fredericton: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and the University of New Brunswick, 1993), p. 144 and p.177. Upon retirement, Nutt ensured that her conservative style prevailed by hand-picking a former protégé, Donald Cameron MacKay, a veteran of Canada's war art program, to succeed her. NSCA did not experience artistic change until 1970 when MacKay retired and Garry Neill Kennedy was appointed to the newly established position of President, NSCA.

canon of art.<sup>2</sup> Among these was another SSA alumnus, the accomplished and popular Stanley Royle whom Nutt dismissed in 1934.<sup>3</sup>

Despite being hampered by the prevailing artistic climate, a handful of painters - including John Cook, Joseph Purcell, Jack Gray and Arthur Lloy - were working in a style reminiscent of the Impressionists, forthright in form and colour, and far removed from the high realism prescribed by the SSA.<sup>4</sup> LeRoy Zwicker, Gerald Roach and Elena Jahn, took their painting to another level and experimented with abstract art. Marion Bond moved even further from traditional painting and flirted with Cubism. Law quickly fell in with this group, contributing an artistic sensibility of landscape in the style established by Tom Thomson but seasoned by his own war-time experience, exposure to international artists and his post-war deployments.

When not at sea, Law explored and painted the nooks and crannies of the province with his painting contemporaries. Exhibitions of their work at Zwicker's, the only gallery of note at the time in Halifax, were well attended and favourably reviewed. Law's visually exciting paintings of bold colours, decisive strokes and sculptural planes stimulated his fellow artists and they perpetuated a movement that shifted away from the traditional styles dictated by the NSCA. In time, several Nova Scotian artists were seen

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<sup>2</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Mora Dianne O'Neill, 18 July 2009. Through Lismer, Nutt and D.C. MacKay, the SSA doctrine was sustained at the NSCA from 1916-1970.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Condon Laurette, *Stanley Royle, 1888-1961*, (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1989), p. 52. Nutt saw the well respected Stanley Royle as an artistic rival. Royle returned to the UK after being dismissed but returned to Nova Scotia in 1935 to teach at Acadia University in Wolfville, and then Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, where he taught Alex Colville.

<sup>4</sup> Mora Dianne O'Neill, *Paintings of Nova Scotia*, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Ltd., 2004), p. xiii. The Group of Seven were also followers of the Impressionists and were further influenced by the Scandinavian Post-Impressionists.

as comparable to “modern” Canadian painting and from 1955 to 1968 were included in the National Gallery of Canada’s (NGC) biennial exhibitions.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to appreciate how Law managed to maintain the pace that he did while juggling two demanding careers. His twenty-year service in the peacetime navy, was noteworthy. He commanded ships on both coasts as well as playing important leadership roles in the exploration of Canada’s north, the Cuban Missile Crisis and a World Health Expedition to Easter Island. He was a forthright officer remembered by all ranks for his selflessness, decision-making ability, and most importantly, for his interest in the welfare of his crew.

In 1966 Law retired from the RCN to assume an appointment at Saint Mary’s University (SMU) in Halifax as its first-artist-in-residence. The next twelve years brought great contentment for Tony Law and his artist-wife Jane Shaw. Initially challenged by his new but cramped out-of-the-way working space at SMU, Law overcame this obstacle by setting up exhibitions in corridors and offering en plein air art classes to the students and faculty. When it came time to draw up plans for a permanent gallery on campus, Law played an important role in the development of a conceptual design for the new facility, Halifax’s first purpose-built university gallery. As the gallery’s first curator, Law organized wide-ranging exhibitions, awakening an appetite for current trends and emerging art movements that extended beyond the student body. Law’s vision translated into a successful and vibrant gallery that today continues to serve the community by providing a platform for new and established artists. An offshoot of his

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<sup>5</sup> O’Neill, *Paintings of Nova Scotia*, p. xvi. LeRoy Zwicker, Ruth Wainwright and Carol Fraser participated in the NGA’s exhibitions.

efforts is the gallery's renowned collection of contemporary Canadian art and Irish artefacts.

During his tenure at SMU, Law galvanized the efforts of like-minded volunteers to push for a permanent home for the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts and its collection of over 200 works. The institution had been issued a charter in 1908 but for most of ninety years, did not have the impetus to move forward. Tony Law provided that impetus and is recognized for being the driving force behind the legislation that created long-awaited provincial art gallery.<sup>6</sup> In December 1975 the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) came into being, because of efforts to which his contribution was crucial.

Thus, a study of Tony Law's life and career offers important insights in a variety of areas. As an artist, his style was so innovative that he became the documented favorite of the naval war artists during Canada's War Art Program. It can only be imagined where his career would have taken him had he not joined the RCN after the war. Law's paintings of the peacetime navy have provided an invaluable resource to the Canadian Forces especially during Arctic exploration and the Cold War. His work contributed to the continuing practice by which professional artists are commissioned to interpret the activities of the Canadian military in all theatres.

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Riordon, *The AGNS Permanent Collection, Selected Works*, (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2002), p. 6. Law is credited for providing the leadership to push for a permanent gallery.



*Tony Law painting New Brunswick coastline, 1990.*

*Courtesy of Dr. Paul Price.*

Law's landscapes of Nova Scotia have also played an important role in the development of art in this province. He and his contemporaries, like the Group of Seven, through their paintings presented a fresh and modern view of the province to the rest of Canada. Their distinct and liberal style broke down barriers and opened the doors to other genres, allowing artists such as Joe Norris and Maud Lewis to enjoy market success and public recognition. Today, AGNS's massive collection of provincial art is a reflection of this acceptance and recognition of artists according to broadly-based criteria. In short, under Law's leadership, developed during his formative years in the RCN, the cultural fabric of Nova Scotia was enhanced by his art, by his role in the promoting the arts, and by his role in the establishment of major cultural institutions.

## INTRODUCTION



Commander (Cdr) Charles Anthony Law (1916 – 1996) lived an exceptional life as a gifted artist, respected naval officer and cultural advocate. A classically trained painter and a follower of the contemporary National School of painting, Law is remembered best for his portrayal of the Canadian landscape, his daring during the Second World War (WWII) and for stimulating the arts in Nova Scotia.

To understand Tony Law's approach to art it is necessary to examine the elements that influenced his beginnings. Born in England but raised in Quebec City, Law developed an interest in painting at an early age and worked in a style reminiscent of French Canadian landscape painters of the twentieth century. However after moving to Ottawa in the late 1920s and training under established, Canadian avant-garde painters, Law adopted a style nurtured in the trenches of France and emblematic of the devastation of the First World War (WWI).

An important part of this research involves the founding of the Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) by newspaper entrepreneur Max Aitken during WWI. Aitken sponsored the CWMF and oversaw the engagement of professional artists to document the activities of the Canadian military during the war. This unique opportunity exposed Canadian artists to emerging European trends and significantly influenced the style made popular in the 1920's by the Group of Seven. Two of the founding members of the Group, Alexander Young (A.Y.) Jackson and Frederick Varley, served in Aitken's program in Europe. Later, during WWII, Canada sponsored a war art program

responsible to the Canadian War Records (CWR) which was similar to the CWMF. During two sojourns from active duty C. Anthony Law painted as an official war artist with the CWR.

*C. Anthony Law – A Painter’s Paradise* is divided into five sections each representing a significant phase in the life of Tony Law. The text, teased from newspaper articles, interview transcripts, exhibition catalogues, personal artifacts and official military correspondence is primarily illustrated with Law’s work over sixty-five years. The title, *A Painter’s Paradise* is a play on the name of A.Y. Jackson’s autobiography, *A Painter’s Country* and is the phrase that Tony Law used to describe Nova Scotia when he moved there in 1952.

*Chapter One* describes Tony Law’s formative years, training and influences. It covers his studies in Ottawa with Frederick Varley and Franklin Hennessey and in Quebec City under Tudor-Hart. Law’s formal training was suspended in 1939 when Canada followed England into war and Law signed on to serve.

His wartime career is the subject of *Chapter Two*. During WWII, Law served in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) seeing action for the most part, in motor torpedo boats in the English Channel. When not on duty he kept up his painting by way of forays into the British countryside and visits to RCN establishments. Law’s wartime experience and his painting to balance the intensity of action at sea is examined more thoroughly in the section, *Tony Law and the RCNVR*.

At war’s end Law joined the permanent force of the RCN in which he served for the next twenty years. Simultaneously he enjoyed a robust artistic career while deployed

in Canadian warships or during shore based postings. Law's career in the post-war Canadian navy is the subject of *Chapter Three – The Painting Commander*.

*Chapter Four – A Painter's Paradise* overviews Law's retirement years. The chapter is divided into two sections that relate to the twelve-year phase of his first retirement during which he served as Saint Mary's University (SMU) artist-in-residence followed by his official retirement from SMU, painting the landscape of Canada.

Law's lifelong ambition of bringing art to people contributed to the establishment of the Centennial Art Gallery at the Halifax Citadel, the precursor to the AGNS. He led a full and productive life passing away in 1996 on his eightieth birthday. Generous and congenial, Tony Law enjoyed a long and happy marriage to Jane Shaw, whom he met when they were art students in Quebec City. The marriage endured long separations during WWII and later during his career in the post-war Canadian Navy. *Remembering Tony Law* is the theme of *Chapter Five*.

On 23 November 1994 Cdr Law wrote Dr. Laura Brandon, Senior Curator of the Canadian War Museum (CWM) following a videotaped interview during which they reviewed Law's paintings held at the museum. While acknowledging Dr. Brandon's in depth knowledge of the war artists, Cdr Law felt that she would benefit from reading his *White Plumes Astern* to learn more about him as a painter and naval officer.<sup>1</sup> But Tony Law was much more than the sailor's sailor portrayed in his personal account of the "daring life of MTB's." The intent of this thesis is to address this shortcoming and attempt to understand the unique and remarkable character of Charles Anthony Law, artist and sailor.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Anthony Law to Dr. Laura Brandon, 23 November 1994. Library of Canada (LAC), MG 30, E260. Vol.1. Correspondence; Notes; Draft Article; Memoranda, 1960-1966 n.d.

## CHAPTER ONE - C. ANTHONY LAW AND THE EARLY YEARS



*C. Anthony Law  
Sugar Bush, Gatineau Quebec  
1935  
Courtesy of the Art Gallery of  
Nova Scotia*

Born into a life of established wealth in 1916, Charles Anthony Francis Law was the elder of two surviving children born to Major Adrian Aloysius Sherwood Law,<sup>1</sup> a career soldier<sup>2</sup> with the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) and his wife, Maude Charlotte-Corinne Audette Law, daughter of Judge Arthur Louis Audette of the Exchequer Court of Canada. The Laws had met and married in Halifax in 1912 and moved with the Regiment to Bermuda when war broke out two years later.<sup>3</sup> The RCR was garrisoned in Bermuda until 13 August 1915<sup>4</sup> when the regiment shipped out to France and the Western Front.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marquis of Ruvigny & Raineval, Melville, Henry Massue Ruvigny et Raineval, *The Plantagenet Roll of the Blood Royal, The Clarence Volume, Containing the Descendants of George, Duke of Clarence*. (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1908), p. 55. Tony Law's father was a member of the Plantagenet family and a direct descendant of Edward III, King of England.

<sup>2</sup> Born in Toronto 18 September 1885, Adrian Law joined the Royal Canadian Regiment in Halifax in April 1906. LAC MG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5451 – 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Attestation Record Major Adrian Aloysius Sherwood Law, Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), Soldiers of the First World War (1914-1918).

<sup>4</sup> Thomas H. Raddall, *Halifax, Warden of the North, revised edition*. (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), p. 240. Much to the disappointment of the Regiment, instead of deploying overseas immediately, the troops were sent to Bermuda to relieve the Lincoln Regiment. The RCRs had to wait a full year before seeing action in France.

<sup>5</sup> Ken Bell and C.P. Stacey, *100 Years, The Royal Canadian Regiment 1883-1983*. (Don Mills, Ontario: Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc. 1983), pp. 63 – 65. The Regiment spent the next three years entrenched as

As was army practice during WWI, battle-weary troops were rotated from the trenches and retired to a safe area to rejuvenate every eight days or so. Officers, with more flexibility and a week each a quarter, often left the front to seek out more exotic locations for respite. Similarly the wounded were treated locally in field hospitals, sent to Boulogne with more serious injuries or to Great Britain if a longer and more specialized convalescence was required.<sup>6</sup> In March 1916 Major Law contracted a nasty case of influenza and was hospitalized “by special permission from Canadian Headquarters” in the Royal Victoria Military Hospital Netley near Southampton, England.<sup>7</sup> After rejoining his unit on the front, he was stricken again this time by trench fever followed by neurasthenia. Pale and thin, Mayor Law was invalided to No. 10 Palace Green in London and given two months leave to convalesce in a warm climate. When he regained his strength he was attached to the Canadian Overseas Military Forces Headquarters in London.<sup>8</sup> Recovering from the anguish of losing an earlier child, and concerned about his wife, Major Law was able to tend to her after the birth to their son Tony<sup>9</sup> on 15

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part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, CEF and engaged in fierce fighting at the Ypres Salient, Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele and during the “Hundred Days” Campaign that saw the end of the war. The Regiment suffered heavy casualties with 3113 injured, and 33 officers and 671 non-commissioned members lost in battle.

<sup>6</sup> Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon, Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919*, (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, 1989), p. 57. A rotation system on the front ensured that troops only spent 4-6 days in a row on the front line. At the end of their shift they would withdraw to support trenches and then to a reserve area for rest and relaxation for the same time period. This ensured that within a division of 12 battalions, only four battalions would be on the front line at any given time. Infantry soldiers were granted a week’s leave in England once a year while officers were allocated a week’s leave three to four times a year.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.qaranc.co.uk/netleyhospital.php>, 11 March 2009. Royal Victoria Military Hospital Netley was established to treat military casualties since the Crimean war and was strategically located near Southampton’s naval yard to facilitate the landing of patients from around the British Empire for treatment.

<sup>8</sup> Personnel record – Law. A. Major. LAC, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5451 – 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Case History Sheet, Ste Anne de Bellevue.

October 1916 in London. Baby Law arrived with considerable fanfare it seems, in the middle of a Zeppelin attack on the British capital.<sup>10</sup>



*Charles Anthony Francis Law with his mother, Maude Charlotte Audette Law, London England, 1916. Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Major Law's medical condition continued to deteriorate, precipitating an early repatriation to Valcartier, Quebec with the family returning to Canada on 31 January 1918 onboard the SS *Olympic*. Despite the change in theatre, Major Law's health remained precarious and he was released on pension from the army two weeks before the end of the war.<sup>11</sup> Following his retirement the Laws moved to Quebec City to raise Tony and his new brother Stuart.

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<sup>10</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Major Law recovered on the farm of G.G. Stuart at Neilsonville, Quebec following his discharge. LAC, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5451 – 6.



*Major Law on board SS Olympic, 1918.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*



*Tony and Stuart Law  
c. 1919  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Growing up, in the 1920s, the brothers were inseparable, spending alternate holidays at the summer residences of their paternal grandparents in Muskoka and Maude Charlotte's parents in the Gaspé. The holidays were filled with swimming, fishing, boating and youthful tomfoolery surrounded by friends and cousins. When the boys came of school age they attended Upper Canada College near Peterborough, Ontario, and then the University of Ottawa High School.<sup>12</sup>

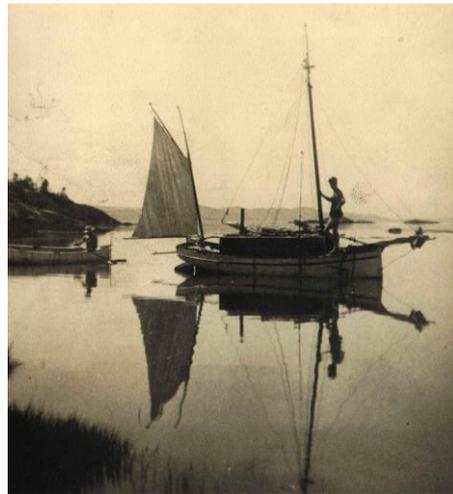
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<sup>12</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.2. DND Archives, DHH.



*University of Ottawa  
High School Class,  
1932.  
Tony Law, second row,  
left  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane  
Shaw Law<sup>13</sup>*

During the summers in Rivière du Loup, young Tony Law was taught carpentry by the Audette family chauffeur from whom he developed an interest for working with wood.<sup>14</sup> He used these skills to built his own sailboat by the age of 14. Two years later, Tony, Stuart and their friend Peter Cossette chipped in to raise the princely sum of thirty dollars to purchase a much larger boat, the 21 foot yacht *Bounty*, aboard which they spent many hours sailing on the St. Lawrence.<sup>15</sup>



*The Bounty  
1933  
Courtesy of  
Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

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<sup>13</sup> Many of the photographs that have been provided by Mrs. Law were annotated by Tony Law. Similarly he annotated the reverse of his paintings with inscriptions to the recipient, if the painting was a gift, or descriptions of the setting.

<sup>14</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Paul Price, 15 September 2008.

<sup>15</sup> “Attack on German Battleships Painted by Officer Who Took Part”, *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January 1943.

Tony Law demonstrated an early fascination with water and boats. As a toddler he toppled into Lake Muskoka after trying to push off the family canoe from the dock. Saved from drowning, Law remembers a stern reaction from his grandfather, retired from the Royal Navy. Instead of consoling the youngster, Captain Frederick C. Law, who “ran the island like a battleship,” launched into a memorable blast over his grandson’s questionable seamanship. In Rivière du Loup his grandfather Audette tended to be equally hardhearted about Law’s boating skills. “Bringing my boat alongside the jetty”, he recalled, was always a fearful undertaking. “I knew I would never get any encouragement – just a blast.”<sup>16</sup> Those early and demanding expectations by his grandfathers would serve Tony Law well during the Second World War (WWII) when he became renowned for his skill at the helm of motor torpedo boats.



*Stuart Law brandishing a paddle in Muskoka in shirt and tie, c1924.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*



*Eighteen- year-old Tony Law negotiating the narrows, 1934.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Law also showed an equal and early talent for painting. Maude Charlotte did much to encourage her son and his cousin Marie as they spent hours painting outdoors in the staid style of Quebec landscape artists of the time. But it was his sea captain

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. All quotes in this paragraph are drawn from the same source.

grandfather, a respected painter in Toronto, who was his earliest influence.<sup>17</sup> Grandfather Law did “a lot of watercolours of his ships, of Muskoka, of the Island, of landscapes and...woodcarving,”<sup>18</sup> Law recalled.



*Tony Law and his cousin Marie painting at Rivière du Loup, 1933. Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

The Audette family, on the other hand, he said, “were [was] full of lawyers and judges, not very interested in art.”<sup>19</sup> His grandfather, the Honourable Judge Arthur Audette, “frowning on his artistic aspirations”<sup>20</sup> hoped that he would “do something useful” with his life. A “doctor, lawyer or priest” perhaps?<sup>21</sup> It was the Depression, the family business was significantly damaged in the stock market crash and an offer of financial support by his grandfather to attend university proved to be irresistible.<sup>22</sup> In 1935, the Law brothers left Quebec for Ontario, a traditional education at the University of Ottawa and to live with their mother’s parents.

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<sup>17</sup> Colin S. MacDonald, *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, Vol. 3, (Jacobi-Lismer, Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks Publishing, 1971), p. 753.

<sup>18</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 12.

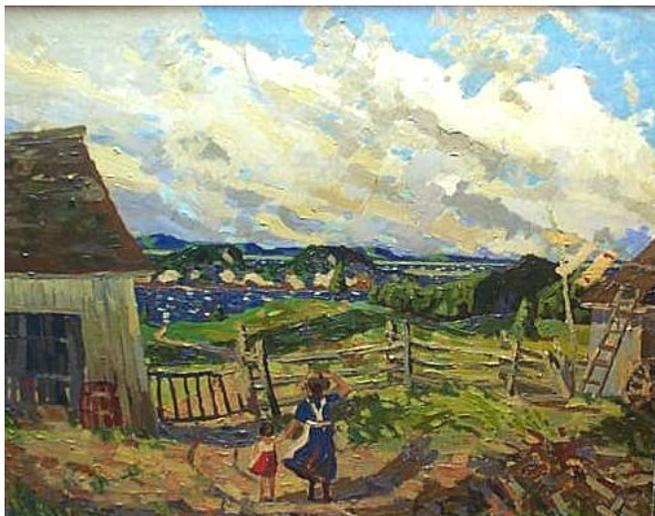
<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with the artist’s wife, Mrs. Jane Shaw Law, July 11, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*, 12 May – 25 June 1989, p.7. Bernard Riordon attended SMU as a student and volunteered at the Gallery where he worked with Tony Law. Riordon curated Law’s Retrospective Exhibition at the AGNS in 1989.

<sup>22</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 12.

## EARLY TRAINING, INFLUENCES AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR PROGRAM



C. Anthony Law  
*Windy Day, St-Andre, PQ,  
St. Lawrence River, 1938*  
Private Collection

In Ottawa, Dr. Marius Barbeau<sup>23</sup> of the National Museum of Canada - folklorist, anthropologist and personal friend of Frederick Law - took seventeen-year-old Tony Law under his wing. “I owe a debt of gratitude to him for his sound advise (sic) in my early years, continued encouragement, and constructive criticism”, Law recalled.<sup>24</sup> Barbeau was responsible for introducing the young artist to the painting style of the Group of Seven on exhibition<sup>25</sup> at the NGC<sup>26</sup> then located in the Victoria Memorial Building in Ottawa. Law was besotted and fifty-two years later spoke about the experience still vivid in his mind. “The freshness, the excitement, the colour – the terrific colour! I had never seen anything like it,” he effused. “You see my family was rather conservative”<sup>27</sup> and

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<sup>23</sup> Charles Hill, *The Group of Seven, Art For a Nation*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995), p. 177. Barbeau was born in Quebec and studied at Laval University, the Sorbonne and Oxford. He was a proponent of aboriginal peoples and of the Group of Seven. Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), pp. 56-57.

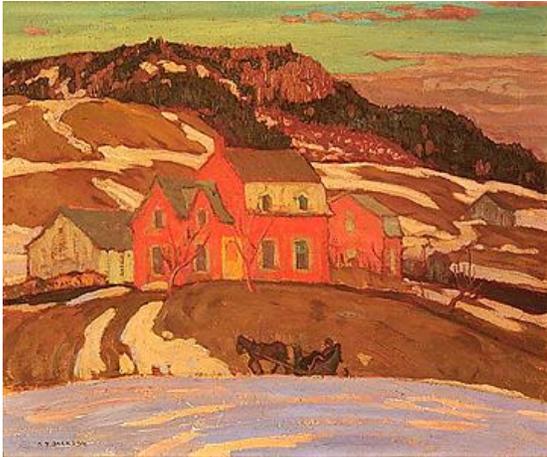
<sup>24</sup> The National Gallery of Canada, Information form. CWM, Law Artist's files. Law registered at the gallery on 13 May 1938 and credited Dr. Marius Barbeau as influencing his career on the application.

<sup>25</sup> Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*, Second Edition, (Oxford University Press, Toronto 1988), pp. 119 - 120.

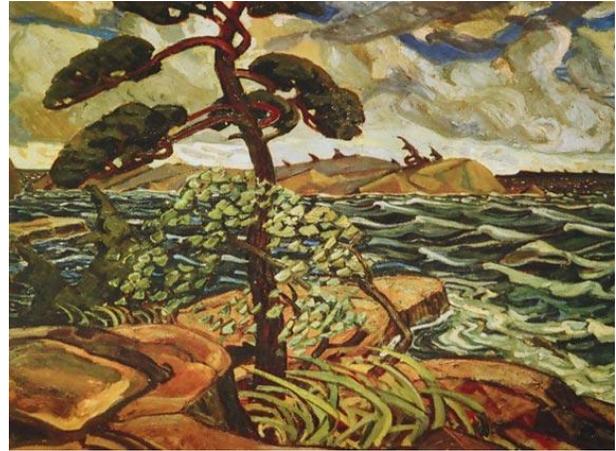
<sup>26</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “C. Anthony Law: A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*. Halifax 12 May - 25 June 1989, Bernard Riordon's commentary.

<sup>27</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Artscape”, *Halifax Daily News*, 15 May 1996. Interview with the artist after his following a 1966 Retrospective of his work.

thought the Group “a little wild.”<sup>28</sup> “There was nothing restrained about the Group of Seven,” he remarked.<sup>29</sup>



A.Y. Jackson  
*Early Spring, Quebec*  
c1923, NGC



Arthur Lismer  
*A September Gale, Georgian Bay*  
1921, NGC

A.Y. Jackson’s vibrant paintings, in particular of the Canadian wilderness in the style of the French Impressionists, struck a chord with Tony Law. Introduced to Algonquin Park and Georgian Bay by Tom Thomson (1877 – 1917), many likeminded Canadian painters regarded the backwoods as the subject of choice and symbolic of an evolving Canadian identity. Their intent was to articulate the uniqueness of the Canadian landscape using a visual language much removed from the established canons of art. Inspired by contemporary Scandinavian artists, “they [were] all imbued with the idea that an art must grow and flower in the land before the country [would] be a real home for its people,” wrote Lawren Harris in the foreword of the catalogue for a Toronto exhibition of the Group of Seven in 1920.<sup>30</sup> “The country was exciting: the atmosphere clear and sharp, the colours bright and crude...In the face of such blazing beauty, why stick to the

<sup>28</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Artscape”, *Halifax Daily News*, 15 May 1996.

barnyard, why paint cows and sheep and rural tranquility,” Jackson questioned.<sup>31</sup> After a canoe accident took Thomson’s life, Jackson along with Lawren S. Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, Frank Johnston, and Franklin Carmichael formed the *Group of Seven* to embody this vision.<sup>32</sup> Harris recalled the Group’s artistic journey to uncharted territory: “We had commenced our great adventure. We lived in a continuous blaze of enthusiasm. We were at times very serious and concerned, at other times hilarious and carefree. Above all, we loved this country and loved exploring and painting it.”<sup>33</sup>

Initially the Group was not well received by the Canadian public - firmly aligned with traditional landscape art - and was unflatteringly referred to as the “Hot Mush School.”<sup>34</sup> Critics dismissed their work as “garish...loud, affected, freakish.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly the British public questioned the style. At an exhibition at Wembley a woman observed: “What a strange country: surely I would not like to emigrate to such a place!” To which her companion replied: “Oh, I have been to Canada; it is a beautiful country; these pictures must have been painted by the Indians.”<sup>36</sup> Jackson shrugged off the criticism by

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<sup>30</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Group of Seven: Catalogue Exhibition of Paintings”, May 7 – 27, 1920, Toronto: *Art Museum of Toronto*, 1920 and Douglas Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), p.85.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=M1ARTM0010502>; Kaye Fulton. “The Group of Seven”. MacLean’s, 30 October 1985. Accessed 16 March 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Hill, *The Group of Seven*, p. 49. Jackson from Montreal, was befriended by J.E.H. MacDonald after he saw his *The Edge of the Maplewood*, 1910 on exhibition at the Ontario School of Art in Toronto in March 1911.

<sup>33</sup> Peter Mellen. *The Group of Seven*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1970), p. 112

<sup>34</sup> A.Y. Jackson, *A Painter’s Country, The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson*. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1976), p. xiv.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=M1ARTM0010502>; Kaye Fulton. “The Group of Seven”. MacLean’s, 30 October 1985. Accessed 16 March 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Claude Bissell, *The Young Vincent Massey*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press), 1981, p. 181.

saying: “modern painters either stimulate, amuse or cause anger, which perhaps in such a young country is better than to go to sleep too soon.”<sup>37</sup>

Law was a member of the Ottawa Art Association (OAA) from 1934 to 1937 and at the age of eighteen started formal training under eighty-year old Franklin Brownell, of the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) and the Ontario Society of Art (OSA).<sup>38</sup> Admittedly intimidated by the old master, Law described Brownell as a “gruff old gentleman.”<sup>39</sup> All the while, the experience honed his confidence and developed his painting skills in portraiture and still life. Later training provided a solid grounding in style and technique based on classical methodology. It was at the OAA that Law first met fellow-students Tom Woods and Jack Nichols, with whom he would reunite five years later in the ranks of the Canadian naval war artists.

Occasionally using watercolour to sketch, Law grew to prefer oils. A physical analysis of his palette in 2005<sup>40</sup> demonstrated that he laid out his paints as prescribed in De Mayernes’ manuscript of 1620 and practiced by the great masters for more than five hundred years,<sup>41</sup> with light colours across the top of the palette and darker colours across

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=M1ARTM0010502>; Kaye Fulton. “The Group of Seven”. MacLean’s, 30 October 1985. Accessed 16 March 2009. Fulton cites Jackson quotation from 1922.

<sup>38</sup> Artist’s Information Form – Centennial Art Gallery, Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts, 23 Dec 1974. AGNS Archives, Tony Law file.

<sup>39</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*, 12 May – 25 June 1989, p.7

<sup>40</sup> Barbara Klempan, “Paintbox at Sea: The Materials and Techniques of Canadian Second World War Artist C. Anthony Law”, *Material History Review* 61, (Spring 2005), p. 68.

<sup>41</sup> E. van de Weterin, “Reflections on the Relation between Technique and Style: The Use of the Palette by the Seventeenth-Century Painter, in *Historical Painting Techniques, Material, and Studio Practice*”, *Proceedings of a Symposium at the University of Leiden*, 26-29 June 1995, edited by Artie Wallert et al. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1995, p. 199.

the bottom. He used “only the best”- Windsor & Newton Select paints, ordered from New York City.<sup>42</sup>

Later while serving as a war artist, Law frequently purchased his own supplies or had had them ordered especially for him. “Normally [the] Canadian Army are [is] able to supply our War Artists with anything they require, but in this case Lieutenant Law has the opportunity to purchase these virtually unobtainable materials,” wrote the Navy’s Historical Research Officer (HRO) requesting approval to pay for a recent purchase of 14 wood panels and a roll of canvas for £7.<sup>43</sup> However, Dr. Gilbert Tucker, Director of the Naval Historical Section questioned Law’s need for what he considered ‘over the top’ materials. “The bill for \$3.10 covering the purchase of a stretcher and a tube of paint from Priest & Son in Halifax, came in, and we justified its payment on the ground that you probably bought it in an emergency,” he said frankly.<sup>44</sup>

When Frederick Varley took over from Brownell, he and Tony Law “got on like a house on fire.”<sup>45</sup> Varley’s own training and experiences had been shaped by war and preconfigured that of the young artist who would go on to serve in WWII as both a combatant and war artist. During WWI, Varley along with A.Y. Jackson and almost one hundred other artists, had been recruited by Sir Max Aitken to serve in the Canadian War Memorial Fund (CWMF) – Canada’s WWI war art program - initiated to visually document Canada’s contribution to the war.

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<sup>42</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Artscape”, *Halifax Daily News*, 15 May 1996 and Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994, CWM Archives.

<sup>43</sup> Minute Sheet, War Art Supplies. Lt Jim George, HRO to SCNO (London), Approved 22 January 1944. LAC, RG24, Vol. 11749, file 617.

<sup>44</sup> Gilbert Tucker to Lt. Cdr C. A. Law, 8 August 1945. LAC, MG30 Series E260, Vol. 1. Correspondence 1940-1954.

<sup>45</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 Through June 23, 1996. p. 12. SMU Archives

Politically connected, wealthy and a successful newspaper owner, Aitken oversaw the Canadian War Records Office (CWR) in London during the war. His unofficial role as “overseas minister of information”<sup>46</sup> coupled with his background as a journalist and social connections in the highest circles, made him perfectly suited to the task. His writing mesmerized Canadian and British readers, resulting in a quip in the *Manchester Guardian* that it was “long open to doubt whether there was anybody but Canadians fighting in France.”<sup>47</sup> Aitken wrote after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres:

You can picture our army in the field spread out like a fan. The long wavy edge of the fan is the line of men in the firing trenches...often within a stone’s throw of the opposing Germany line...the battle which raged for so many days was bloody.... But as long as brave deeds retain the power to fire the blood of Anglo-Saxons, the stand made by the Canadians in those desperate days will be told by fathers to their sons.<sup>48</sup>

As the war progressed a shortage of photographic evidence recording the ever-growing achievements of the Canadian Corps inspired Aitken to reconstruct the Canadian battles using art. While some officers and men were permitted to carry cameras to record significant events, this ended with the issue of Routine Order 189 that “requested the withdrawal of all cameras.” As a result, Canadian battles, specifically the 2nd Battle of Ypres, St. Julien, Festubert, St Eloi and Givenchy, were not captured on film.<sup>49</sup>

While recognizing the value of film and photography as information and propaganda tools, Aitken also appreciated the “permanency and prestige” of paintings.

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<sup>46</sup> Sandra Gwyn, *Tapestry of War, A Private View of Canadians in the Great War*, (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1992). Gwyn cites Beaverbrook’s official biographer A.J.P. Taylor, in *Beaverbrook, A Biography* and remarks that Beaverbrook became “the voice of Canada in Great Britain...less official and more adroit than the High Commissioner”.

<sup>47</sup> Maria Tippett, “Lest We Forget: Souvenon-Nous,” *London Regional Art and Historical Museums*, 1989, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Gynn, p. 261. Report after the Second Battle of Ypres, 1 May 1915.

<sup>49</sup> Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 21. Laura Brandon, *Art and War*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.,

“Only paintings could provide the most permanent and vital form in which the great deeds and sacrifices of the Canadian nation in the war could be enshrined for posterity,” he wrote.<sup>50</sup> The CWMF was registered as a charity under the War Charities Act<sup>51</sup> and on 17 November 1916 was officially established to provide “suitable Memorials in the form of Tablets, Oil-Paintings etc., to the Canadian Heroes and Heroines in the War.”



*Sir Max Aitken*  
c. 1918  
National Archives of Canada  
PA 006477

The graphic portrayal of modern warfare was not by then a new concept to the Allies during WWI. Both the British and French had already positioned artists on the Front. Additionally, a talented team of “correspondents and sketch artists” from the *London Illustrated News*,<sup>52</sup> regularly submitted eye-witness reports and drawings to the weekly in England. Aitken, reputed to have little knowledge of art,<sup>53</sup> knew that he liked classic battle scenes as demonstrated when under the auspices of the CWMF, he secured for Canada Benjamin West’s historic and monumental, *The Death of Wolfe*.<sup>54</sup> It was

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2007), p. 40. Heavy and cumbersome cameras and long-exposure times for film were contributing factors to the lack of photographs of the battles.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Canadian War Records Office Official Report,’ 31 Aug 1919: app. I, *Canadian War Memorials Report of Executive Committee*, p.1, LAC RG 24, Vol. 1749.

<sup>51</sup> Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 25. Established in 1916, the Act dictated that all charities raising money for the war had to register.

<sup>52</sup> Maria Tippett, “Lest We Forget”, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> Maria Tippett interview in *Canvas of Conflict, Art of the Great War Video*. CBC, Canadian War Museum (CWM) and Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation.

<sup>54</sup> Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 44. The auction houses of Sotheby’s and Christie’s enjoyed a booming business during the First World War, providing Beaverbrook an opportunity through the CWMF, to purchase paintings of significant historical interest to Canada. *Sir John Franklin* by Thomas Phillips, *Joseph Brant* by George Rommney and *Jeffrey*, *Lord Amherst*, by Sir Joshua Reynolds were purchased at

Aitken's desire that the CWMF artists should imitate West's heroic style and he envisioned that selected pieces would later be installed in the new Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa that had been destroyed by fire in 1916.<sup>55</sup>



*Benjamin West*  
*The Death of Wolfe*  
1770  
NGC

The first artist hired under the CWMF was Major Richard Jack, a classically trained artist and member of the British Royal Academy. Jack was contracted to portray the Second Battle of Ypres which held special historical significance to the CEF and was where the enemy first used poison gas against the Allies during the war. Jack's painting, *The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May, 1915* was monumental in size at 12 feet x 20 feet and painted in the *Romantic* style, made popular almost a hundred years earlier by the French master Eugène Delacroix and *Neoclassical* artists, Antoine-Jean Gros and Jacques Louis David. Aitken was elated with Jack's painting and saw it as an opportune link to *The Death of Wolfe* as "a means of comparing the new battle pictures with one of the greatest of the old, bring [ing] the Second Battle of Ypres into touch with the Battle of

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auction and *The Death of Wolfe* by Benjamin West was donated directly by Duke of Westminster to honour Canada's role in the war. These acquisitions elevated the prestige of the CWMF.

<sup>55</sup> Laura Brandon, *Art or Memorial, The Forgotten History of Canada's War Art*, (Calgary: The University of Calgary Press, 2006), p xiv. The size of the collection posed storage challenges and accordingly, Beaverbrook contracted the British architect E.A. Rickards, to design a grandiose Pantheon-like gallery for Nepean Point overlooking the Ottawa River. After ten years of lobbying for the construction, Beaverbrook lost interest in the project "feeling that his war time work in Canada had been under-appreciated". Beaverbrook's gallery never came to fruition and the bulk of the CWMF artwork went into storage.

the Plains of Abraham.”<sup>56</sup> With its heroic disposition, reflecting Aitken’s own colourful prose on the action, *The Second Battle of Ypres* became the first of the commissioned “monuments” to the “Heroes and Heroines in the war” established by the CWMF.

Participating in the CWMF had been life-altering for Frederick Varley, known to be spiritual and introspective. Accompanied by Arthur Lismer from his hometown of Sheffield England, Varley had attended the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, in Antwerp Belgium and was classically trained in painting before the two artists immigrated to Canada in 1912.<sup>57</sup> Varley was selected for the CWMF in August 1918 and arrived on the front just in time for the Canadian-led offensive on Mons, Belgium.<sup>58</sup> While Jackson had previously experienced the war as a soldier, Varley on the other hand was a neophyte to sights and sounds of death and found it "strange and incredulous."<sup>59</sup> In *For What?* Varley pulls no punches in his forthright illustration of a burial party digging graves for a cartful of dead soldiers, stacked like cordwood on a cart mired in the mud of the decimated landscape. The painting underscores the futility of battle and later gave cause to Jackson to remark that Varley’s visceral interpretations were some of the “finest work of the whole of war records.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 45. WP, Box 34, Walker to Beaverbrook, 18 March 1918 [cable]; DND, RG 24, vol. 1749. ‘Canadian War Records Office Official Report,’ 31 Aug. 1919: app. I, ‘Canadian War Memorials Report of Executive Committee,’ p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> “Paintings”, *Beaverbrook Art Gallery*, (1959). p. 21 and p. 30. Lismer and Varley also studied together at the Sheffield School of Art when in their teens.

<sup>58</sup> Brandon, “Canada’s War Art, Canvas of War: Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) Journal*, (Spring 2003), p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: Christopher Varley, “F.H. Varley, A Centennial Exhibition”, *The Edmonton Art Gallery*, (1981), p. 44. Varley as quoted in a taped interview with Lawrence Sabbath, September 1960.

<sup>60</sup> CBC Archives: *A.Y. Jackson paints the First World War*. Broadcast: April 20, 1965. A.Y. Jackson recalled his assignments as a war painter during a speech at a Group of Seven dinner at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.



*Frederick Varley*  
*For What?*  
1918  
CWM 19710261-0770  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

A.Y. Jackson was convalescing in England after sustaining wounds to the hip and shoulder in battle near Ypres when he was recruited by Aitken for the CWMF.<sup>61</sup> One of the first Canadians hired, Jackson was ecstatic to be selected as the only drawing he had been doing in the previous two years was war-related, making diagrams and reworking field maps while serving with the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion.<sup>62</sup> Having already seen the war up close, he was not inclined to replicate the experience on canvas. “Same old war,” he lamented, “in nearly the same old places, same old soldiers sticking it out, fed up but cheerful and doing impossible things, same old mud and shell holes.”<sup>63</sup> Believing that “the old type of factual painting had been superseded by good photography,” Jackson chose instead to depict the war from remote vantage points around Lens. His “charming landscapes”<sup>64</sup> of disemboweled buildings and collapsed houses are iconic.<sup>65</sup> *Houses at Ypres, 1917*, is an example of his early war work.

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<sup>61</sup> Jackson pp. 39-40. Jackson’s wounds were such that he could not go back on active duty.

<sup>62</sup> Wayne Larsen, *A.Y. Jackson: A Love for the Land*. (Montreal: XYZ Publishing, 2003), p. 57 and Jackson, pp. 36-39.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Charles Hill, p. 64. Jackson, London to Florence Clement, Berlin, Ontario, 13 Nov. 1917.

<sup>64</sup> Jackson, p. 48.

<sup>65</sup> Jackson, p. 40. Despite being a landscape artist, Jackson’s first commission was a portrait of Victoria Cross recipient Private J.C. Kerr of the 49th Battalion. The British press had set the bar high for this work. An announcement claiming that all the Canadian VC holders were to have their portraits done by



A.Y. Jackson  
*Houses at Ypres*  
1917  
CWM 19710261-0189  
Beaverbrook Collection of War  
Art© Canadian War Museum

The inspired 1918 appointment of Paul Nash, the renowned British painter, to the CWMF changed the future of Canadian painting. Nash, a soldier in the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), was recuperating from battle wounds in England when he was invited to participate in the Canadian art scheme. Back to the front in time for Passchendaele, Nash did not soften reality when he produced his shell-blasted *The Ypres Salient at Night* of the devastation caused by the prolonged British bombardment. Deeply affected, he wrote to his wife: “the machine had superseded God’s handiwork; his landscape was being reshaped by man’s instruments.”<sup>66</sup> Nash’s *Void* personifies the wasteland of war, as analyzed by Maria Tippett, where “sunset and sunrise are blasphemous mockeries to man; only the black rain out of the bruised and swollen clouds, or through the bitter black of night, is fit atmosphere in such a land”.<sup>67</sup> The incessant rain, coupled with jarring diagonals, limbless trees, flooded trenches and

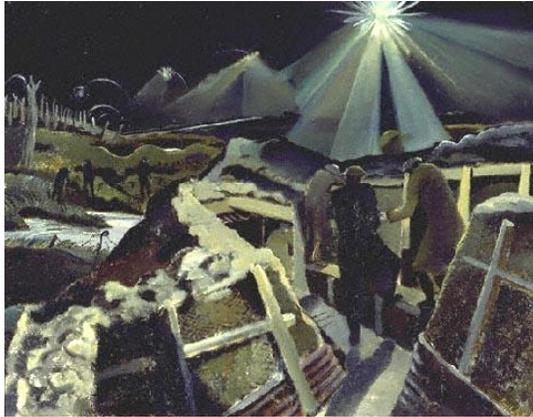
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“outstanding British artists”, concerned Jackson and he thought his career as a war artist would be over before it started. Apparently his work was well received and he was asked to do two more portraits.

<sup>66</sup> Tippett p. 58, Quoted in *Paul Nash, Outline: An Autobiography and Other Writings*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), pp. 195-196. Letter to his wife Margaret 6 April 1917.

<sup>67</sup> Excerpt from *Canvas of Conflict, Art of the Great War*. CBC, CWM and Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation Video.

abandoned corpses, all contribute to the organized chaos of the painting and the realization that no-one is returning from this “field of death.”<sup>68</sup>



Paul Nash  
*Void, 1918*  
NGC



Paul Nash  
*The Ypres Salient at Night*  
1918, IWM ART 1145  
Copyright Status: IWM reproduction right

Nash’s work established a new style in battlefield art, shifting away from the use of Romantic and Impressionist styles to portray modern battle. As a result, A.Y. Jackson questioned his own work.<sup>69</sup> In Jackson’s *A Copse, Evening*, Nash’s influence is apparent and the painting marks a departure from Jackson’s earlier work. No longer detached and distant, his work becomes a primeval interpretation of the degradation of human life and the wasteland of the Western Front. “Visual impressions were not enough,” Jackson wrote, and were “ineffective” in conveying the essence of battle.<sup>70</sup>

Commenting on Jackson’s matured style, the *Christian Science Monitor* on 10 February 1919 acknowledged that the work represented the artistic creation of an “artist, freed from traditions of the academies.”<sup>71</sup> It was acknowledged that Jackson had crossed a threshold.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.art-ww1.com/gb/texte/052text.html>, accessed 11 March 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Jackson, p. 43. After an exhibition at Burlington house Jackson wrote: “If the critics had looked carefully, they might have discovered that the little thirty-inch canvas by Paul Nash, entitled *Void*, ... expressed more about war than [than] all of the big twenty-foot canvases put together”.

<sup>70</sup> Jackson, pp. 47-48.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Hill, p. 65.



*A.Y. Jackson,  
A Copse, Evening  
1918  
CWM 19710261-0186  
Beaverbrook Collection of  
War Art© Canadian War  
Museum*

When Varley and Jackson returned to Canada, their work was infused with a passion not seen before in Canadian painting. Underlying themes of isolation, destruction and desolation, coupled with a renewed appreciation of the raw wilderness of the Canadian landscape, defined their work and established them as the founding members of the national school of Canadian painting.<sup>72</sup>



*A.Y. Jackson  
Lake Superior Country, 1923  
McMichael Canadian Art Collection (MCAC)*



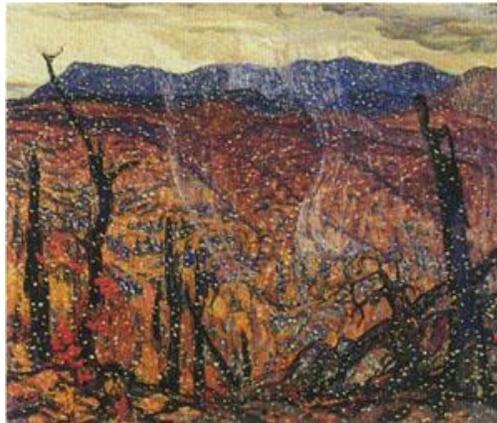
*Frederick Varley,  
Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay, 1921  
NGC*

Jackson's war experience haunted his work. He wanted to "paint storms and ...things that had been smashed up." Battered landscapes and shattered trees, the signatures of the Western Front, lived on in his landscapes and appeared on the canvasses

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<sup>72</sup> Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada, Toward a People's Art*, (Toronto: New Canada Publications, 1974), p. 132. Brandon, *Art and War*, p. 46. Four future Group of Seven artists participated in the CWMF. These were: Frederick Varley, A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer and Frank Johnson. Hill, p. 65. In December 1917, Maurice Cullen, J.W. Morrice, Charles W. Simpson, and J.W. Beatty and C.W. Jeffreys were added to the roster of Canadian artists selected for the program.

of fellow-artists with whom he formed the Group of Seven. “The stark, bleak, muddy-coloured landscape of the front....had given a new appreciation for the irregular and barren wilderness of Northern Ontario.” He and “his fellow artists deliberately sought to paint ‘swampy, rocky, wolf-ridden, burnt and scuttled country....”<sup>73</sup> Group Member Frank Johnston’s *Fire Swept-Algoma* typifies this style, which bears a striking similarity to Nash’s *Menin Road*.



A.Y. Jackson,  
*First Snow, Algoma*  
1919-20  
Courtesy of the MCAC

In the post-war work by the Group of Seven, established European traditions prevalent in Canadian art before the war, disappeared. For the first time, the Canadian landscape was portrayed from a Canadian perspective, based on the war artists’ liberating experiences in France and Belgium. “We have created a national myth that the art of the Group of Seven sprang from the Canadian land,” remarked Dr. Laura Brandon in a *Maclean’s* magazine interview. Ignoring the motifs of “destruction and the barrenness of the bombarded Western Front in their great landscape paintings...would be a disservice” to Canadian art history,” she said.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Excerpt from *Canvas of Conflict, Art of the Great War*. CBC, CWM and Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation Video. Maria Tippett speaking on the Group of Seven in Algonquin Park and Tippett, *Art at the Service of War*, p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> “The Art of War”, *Maclean’s*, 14 Feb. 2000, p. 22. The article provides an overview of the CWMF and introduces the CWM’s *Canvas of War* Exhibition.



*Frank Johnson*  
*Fire Swept – Algoma*  
1920  
NGC



*Paul Nash*  
*The Menin Road, 1918*  
IWM ART 2242  
Copyright Status: IWM reproduction right

Following the war, Varley moved to British Columbia and eventually moved to Ottawa in the mid-thirties. During the weekends he would organize painting excursions into the adjacent Gatineau Hills and would muster Law, Woods, Nichols and the Ottawa artist Henri Masson for the out of town adventures. Masson was especially important to the expeditions because he owned the only car and to make the sortie seem worthwhile to the artist, his passengers would scrape together twenty-five cents a trip for his gasoline. Masson had a reputation as a taskmaster and the young artists often questioned his choices. After driving for what seemed hours, “we’d say, there is a lovely subject, we would like to paint that” remembered Law. Masson would invariably respond: “No, too photographic.” Continuing further, Masson would arrive at what he considered the ideal location and “we would all pile out, and look with our mouths wide open, we couldn’t see the subject.” Masson and Varley were masters of visually editing extraneous detail in their work, and these forays into nature exposed Law to a “new approach”<sup>75</sup> to art-making that became his hallmark. The notion of ventures into the backwoods in search of the pristine and picturesque was perfected by A.Y. Jackson and the Group during treks

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

into the wildernesses of Lake Superior, Algonquin Park and as far as Greenland and Baffin Island in the 1920s.<sup>76</sup>

For the most part, Law worked on carefully prepared wood panels in the tradition of “the old Group,” hand rubbing the surfaces with linseed oil to tease out the golden colour of the wood. He preferred the treated wood to canvas, finding the glare of a white surface distracting when painting outside.<sup>77</sup> However, on occasion during the war he resorted to commercially manufactured canvases<sup>78</sup> or because he thought the quality of panels that were being provided by the HRO inferior, covered the cost of the supplies on his own. “It is requested that you send me on my own account and not on the Canadian navy’s, six stretched canvases, 30” x 24,” he wrote to the Windsor-Newton supplier in Middlesex.<sup>79</sup>

Further studies with the renowned Frank Hennessey, RCA, OCA, provided the fledgling student with the impetus to follow his preferred career choice. Hennessey was an attentive instructor, including Law on landscape painting expeditions to the Gaspé and again to the hills in the Outaouais Region. Hennessey taught Law how to work quickly in changing light, how to capture reflections on water and introduced him to the rainbow of colours in snow.<sup>80</sup> In later life, Law made several trips to the north, first with the

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<sup>76</sup> Jackson, p.103.

<sup>77</sup> Video interview. Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM Archives. In the interview, Law explains that he picked up this preference to using wood from Varley when they painted in the Gatineau hills and the treatment of the surface from Hennessey.

<sup>78</sup> Barbara Klempan, “Paintbox at Sea”, p. 66. Ten of the 46 panels completed during his appointment as an official war artist were done on Lechertier Barbe canvases purchased by special order out of his own pocket. His other paintings were done on either solid or three-ply birch panels.

<sup>79</sup> LCdr C. A. Law to Mr. Solomon, Windsor Newton Ltd, Bruce Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex, 31 July 1944. The 6 canvases cost £4 10. Lieutenant John George, RCNVR, HRO to SCNO (London) was responsible for ordering supplies for the naval artists and would take delivery of Law’s special orders at the Canadian Naval Mission Overseas Office, King’s House, 10 Haymarket Street, London. LAC, RG 24 Vol. 11.747, file 617.

<sup>80</sup> Exhibition Catalogue, “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 12.

Canadian Navy, developing a penchant for black water, blue glaciers and towering icebergs. After retiring, he visited the north seven more times including a last trip in 1996, the year he died. One of his last paintings *Morning with the Iceberg, West Coast of Greenland* speaks of Hennessey's influence over sixty years.



*Frank Hennessey photographed by Anthony Law, 1935.*  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law



*C. Anthony Law  
Melville Bay, Greenland, 1996*  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law

Tony Law held his first solo exhibit in 1937 in Quebec City. The show, consisting of fifty canvases, many of them snow covered landscapes, proved to be a life-changing event in many ways. Short of funds, he traded lights for exhibition space and students from the École des Beaux Arts assisted him with the installation of his paintings. Among the students was Philadelphia-born Jane Brumm Shaw, the first American woman to be accepted by the college.<sup>81</sup> Jane was studying under the famed Jean Paul Lemieux at the time and was one of a small group of female students whom Tony Law nicknamed the “Smart Girls”<sup>82</sup> for their dedication and hard work. Earlier, Jane had been formally introduced to the young artist by a family friend of his mother. Maude Charlotte was adamant that Tony socialize with some nice Anglophone girls and had solicited the

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<sup>81</sup> C. Anthony Law, *White Plumes Astern, The Short Daring Life of Canada's MTB Flotilla*, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1989), p. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Paul Price, 15 September 2008.

assistance of her friend the matron of the local YWCA to help. The plan worked and Tony and Jane “fell head over heels’ for each other. Years later, Law recalled with great fondness that it was “a lot of fun in those days” as the courtship blossomed.<sup>83</sup>



*Jane Brumm Shaw  
École des Beaux Arts, c1937  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

The *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph* reported that there was “considerable interest” in the talented young artist whose “virile treatment” and “appreciation of colour” according to the paper was “usually found in one much older.” Law, the *Telegram* added, demonstrated “a strong leaning to landscapes of typical Canadian character...with his winter scenes executed in strong colours,...showing an intelligent treatment and delicate touch.”<sup>84</sup> The revered painting master, Percyval Tudor-Hart, noted as well that Law had a “talent worthy of recognition and encouragement”.<sup>85</sup>

Law questioned his own ability – a prevalent theme during his developmental years. “I immediately recognized how very inadequate were my skill and knowledge,

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<sup>83</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Shared Passion”, *Halifax Daily News*, 25 May 1996.

<sup>84</sup> *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*, 9 December 1937.

<sup>85</sup> Alasdair Alpin MacGregor, *Percyval Tudor-Hart, 1873, Portrait of an Artist*, (London, Geneva, P.R. MacMillan Limited, 1961), p. 229.

how very elementary my pictures,”<sup>86</sup> he remarked after meeting Tudor-Hart. Five years later as a war artist, he described his paintings as “terrible” and admitted to a journalist that his naval colleagues referred to him as the “temperamental artist.”<sup>87</sup>

During the years following the Depression, Law, like his friends Nichols and Woods in Ottawa, worked at odd jobs to make ends meet. The twenty-one year old toiled for a Montreal neon light firm six days a week from “eight o’clock in the morning and leaving at six” for \$40 dollars a month.<sup>88</sup> His demanding work schedule left little time in his off hours to paint but he persevered all the same. His career however, took an abrupt turn when at the age of twenty-one, he was awarded the prestigious Jessie Dow Prize<sup>89</sup> at the 56<sup>th</sup> Spring Exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal. An oil sketch of his entry *Cold Winter Day, Quebec Province*, an expansive, snow covered, Hennessey-inspired landscape, can be found in Saint Mary’s University (SMU) Art Gallery collection.



C. Anthony Law,  
*Oil sketch for Cold Winter Day,*  
*P.Q., 1937*  
*Courtesy of Saint Mary’s University*  
*Art Gallery*

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<sup>86</sup> MacGregor, *Percyval Tudor-Hart*, p. 230.

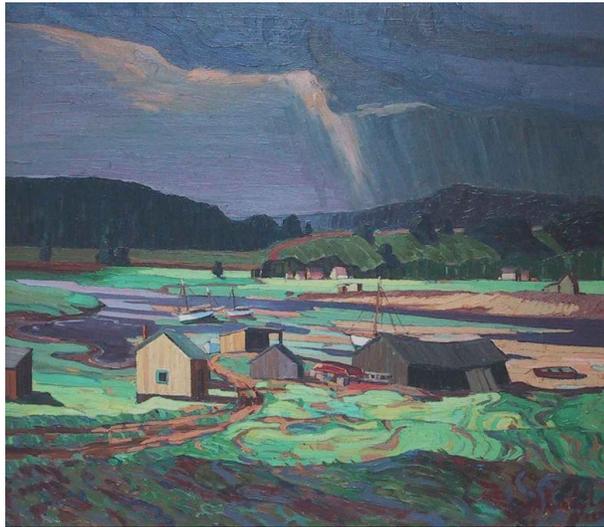
<sup>87</sup> “Quebec Artist, Lt. C. Anthony Law, Paints Nazi Warships’s Brest Dash”, *Montreal Gazette*, 13 June 1942. In later life Law would cut up his “stinkers” for kindling.

<sup>88</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.canadianassociationny.org/gallery3.htm>, accessed 7 March 2009. Considered the most prestigious of Canadian art prizes and awarded by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Jessie Dow Prize is given for excellence of work in oil and watercolour.

The art critic for the *Montreal Gazette* was particularly impressed with Law's entry and progress. "The forms are broadly handled, the design effective and the colour crisp and clean...Law, whose marked natural talent was developed by personal determination and industry, has in the last few years benefited by some spasmodic professional training," he wrote.<sup>90</sup>

Winning the Dow gave his career the same boost that RCAF war artist Carl Schaefer enjoyed when he won the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1940,<sup>91</sup> allowing Law to "promptly resign" from his day job to study painting full time with Tudor-Hart in Quebec City.<sup>92</sup> In 1938, the painting *Contrast, Rivière du Loup* of his beloved summer retreat at low water, was selected over sixty other entrants by the Royal Canadian Academy.<sup>93</sup> The painting toured Canada as part of the Academy exhibition in 1938.



C. Anthony Law,  
*Contrast, Rivière du Loup, 1938*  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law

<sup>90</sup> Photo caption: "Awarded Jessie Dow Prize For Landscape in Oils", *The Montreal Gazette*, 1 April 1939.

<sup>91</sup> Schaefer was a student of the Ontario College of Art where he studied under Group of Seven painters J.E.H. MacDonald and Arthur Lismer. The Depression had played havoc with Schaeffer's career and instead of venturing abroad for further education and subject matter, he found inspiration in the fields and farm buildings in his Collingwood area home of Ontario. In 1940 he won a Guggenheim Fellowship and an opportunity to work and study in New England. In 1943 he was commissioned into the RCAF and into Canada's war art program overseas.

<sup>92</sup> "Sixty years of Painting from Nature", *Saint Mary's University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 12.

<sup>93</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.

Descending on both sides from solid intellectual stock, Tony Law was always mindful of world events. Troubled by news in Europe of Hitler's aggressive expansion policy of Lebensraum<sup>94</sup> and the annexation of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia in 1938, he decided to join the Army Reserve in Quebec City while still studying with Tudor-Hart. His first unit was No. 1 Ordnance Ammunition Company, Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps<sup>95</sup> where he served as a lieutenant. His preference, however, was to join the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) with the hope of going to sea, but the navy was not 'hiring' when Law made his decision to serve his country.



*C. Anthony Law  
Church on the Hill,  
Bouchette, PQ  
1939  
Courtesy of Dr. Arif Samad*

Law credits the Julian-educated Tudor-Hart for teaching him everything he acquired "about composition, the mixing of colour, colour harmony, what to do, and what never to do." Looking beyond his student's talent, Tudor-Hart saw that Law possessed the necessary mental fortitude and commitment for a lifetime career in art when he agreed to take him under his wing. Law remembered his thirty months as an understudy

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<sup>94</sup> R. L. Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War*, Second Edition, (London and New York: Longman, 1998), p. 40. Nazi Party policy of providing adequate 'living space' for ethnic Germans by revising the borders established by the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

<sup>95</sup> Law, *White Plumes Astern, The Short Daring Life of Canada's MTB Flotilla*, p. 8.

with great affection: "He worked me hard ...and I can never be too grateful for all he taught me, not only in the field of art, but in so many other fields of creative endeavor."<sup>96</sup>

And so, the already accomplished young Canadian artist, deeply influenced by the fresh national artistic trends flowing from the First World War, was poised to play a major part in his country's next war.

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<sup>96</sup> MacGregor, *Percyval Tudor-Hart, 1873, Portrait of an Artist*, p. 230

## CHAPTER TWO – MARCHING AS TO WAR



*C. Anthony Law  
Windy Day in the  
British Assault Area,  
1946  
CWM 19710261-  
4123  
Beaverbrook  
Collection of War  
Art©  
Canadian War  
Museum*

Tony Law's time with Tudor-Hart came to an end on 1 September, 1939 when Nazi Germany launched its lightning war against Poland from the west and Russia invaded from the east.<sup>1</sup> Two days later France and Great Britain declared war on Germany and on 10 September, Canada entered the fray.<sup>2</sup>

Having recently acquired a new "much bigger and better yacht" the *Seagull*, with "an engine and everything," Law was enjoying a leisurely trip on the Saguenay River, painting as he sailed. Landing in Tadoussac, he was shocked by the troubling news from Europe and sailed immediately for his unit in Quebec City, reporting for duty on the morning of 2 September.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Even though Poland was crushed between the advancing armies the government did not officially surrender, and continued in exile in London.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> "Attack on German Battleships Painted by Officer Who Took Part", *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January, 1943.



*The Seagull alongside at Rivière du Loup  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

With the declaration of war, Law was promoted to captain and given command of his old company, which was primarily responsible for the warehousing, accounting and distribution of ordnance and equipment.<sup>4</sup> As observed by Tudor-Hart earlier regarding his charge's degree of commitment, Law took his role as Commanding Officer (CO) seriously. He was well respected by his military colleagues, working hard to support the war effort. In addition to his command, Law also participated in recruiting drives in and around Quebec City.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Law, p. 8

<sup>5</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January, 1943.



*Captain C. Anthony Law seated centre, front, holding baton, 1939.*

*Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*



*Capt Law left with mascot and unidentified sergeant, 1939.*

*Courtesy of Mrs. Law*

Six months later and after a chance encounter with the CO of the Naval Reserve Division in Quebec City, the course of the war changed for Law. Law learned that the RCN was recruiting sailors to support the Royal Navy (RN) overseas and he wanted in. Seizing the opportunity to go to sea he tendered his resignation from the Army the next day after being assured that there would be no difficulty in his transferring from a non-combatant unit to one that would most certainly see action. This certainly proved to be the case.<sup>6</sup>

Law's superior officer, Major V.A. Curmi, was disappointed at the prospect of losing Law. Yielding to the more urgent calling, Curmi wrote:

Mr. Law,  
 During the three years that you have been Second-in-Command, and then O.C. [sic Officer in Charge], of the Ordnance Ammunition Company, I have had ample time to realize your very sterling qualities, your initiatives, and your indefatigable industry. I congratulate the R.C.N.V.R. in benefiting from our loss, and cannot make a better wish than: Your service in the King's Navy will bear as good as results as that of the Land Services. I wish you goodbye and God speed with regret.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p. 2. DND Archives, DHH.

<sup>7</sup> Major V.A. Curmi, District Ordnance Officer, M.D. No.5, Quebec City to Mr. Law, 26 March, 1940. LAC, MG 30, Series E260, Vol. 1, Correspondence 1940-1954.

## TONY LAW AND THE RCNVR



*C. Anthony Law  
St. Laurent attacking surfaced  
U Boats, 1942  
Collection of the author*

Law's transfer was immediate. Within days he was appointed to the rank of an Acting Temporary Probationary Sub-Lieutenant in the RCNVR and on his way to HMCS *Stadacona* in Halifax for assignment. Two weeks later, he and twenty-four other new recruits were crossing the North Atlantic aboard the *Duchess of Athlone*. "Of course, all our colleagues in *Stadacona* were absolutely livid," Law recalled, "to see us all going over. We had a ball because we were the only first-class passengers."<sup>8</sup> The trip overseas had been arranged so quickly that the group sailed in their civilian clothing because there wasn't enough time to be properly kitted in their naval uniforms. Law, however, did have time to pack his paints and a recently purchased paint box, which served him well throughout the war.<sup>9</sup>

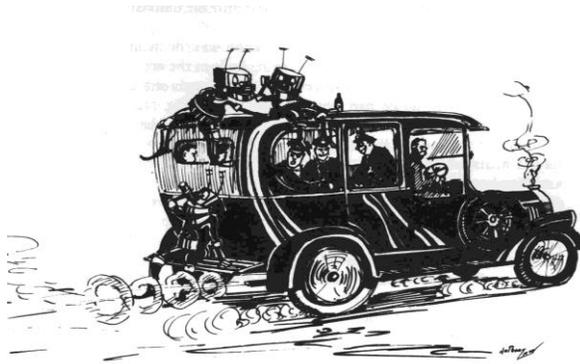
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<sup>8</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p. 2. DND Archives, DHH.

<sup>9</sup> Klempan, "Paintbox at Sea", p. 68. Law purchased the paintbox in Quebec City in 1938 and later donated it to the Canadian War Museum. Klempan, through extensive research has determined that he used the box to paint several small panels found in the CWM collection. She did this by matching paint build up on the box frame and comparing the pattern with the edges of the painted panels.

In the early days of the war, and prior to the fall of France, the sea lanes were not infested with U-Boats and transatlantic travel was relatively safe. The *Athlone* crossed without incident with the new sailors, including Tony Law, standing watch.<sup>10</sup>

Naval training followed at HMS *King Alfred* at Hove, near Brighton in the United Kingdom, including weekend adventures to London. With an emphasis on drill and deportment everything was “at the double” and the uniform issue quickly resolved when Law and his mates fell in on their first morning dressed in their “old gaiters and flannels.”<sup>11</sup> The British were not impressed, he recalled.



*C. Anthony Law*  
*Black taxi ride to town*  
*c1941*  
*Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw*  
*Law*

*White Plumes Astern*  
*illustration*

The war intensified in May and June 1940 when the Wehrmacht swept through the Low Countries, smashed through the Ardennes Forest and trapped the BEF and French army on the beaches of Dunkirk.<sup>12</sup> While a large part of Britain’s war machinery was abandoned on the beaches and 68,000 killed or captured, more than 330,000 British and French soldiers were evacuated to safety in what Winston Churchill called “a miracle of deliverance.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Law, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.3. DND Archives, DHH.

<sup>12</sup> The BEF was in France and Belgium were fighting alongside the French and Belgian armies trying to stem the advance of the Germans. But by mid May the German army had swept through the Low Countries and a spearhead through the Ardennes, cut off the Allies from the main army squeezing them into a small area around Dunkirk.

<sup>13</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/765004.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/765004.stm), accessed 6 March 2009.

Within weeks, the German army had advanced on Paris and France surrendered. With the fall of France and the capture of her ports and airfields, Great Britain was in serious danger<sup>14</sup> causing a solemn Churchill to proclaim on 18 June 1940: "the Battle of France is over. I expect the battle of Britain is about to begin."<sup>15</sup>

Law was then learning celestial navigation, a prerequisite for service in motor torpedo boats, during the evacuation at Dunkirk and so he missed the action. However upon completion, and now promoted to Sub-Lieutenant (SLt), he found himself in the thick of the war in HMS *Wolfe*, a converted armed merchant cruiser tasked with patrolling the Denmark Strait between Greenland and Iceland. It must have seemed ironic to the young Anglophone officer from Quebec when he learned that the *Wolfe* had once sailed as the *Montcalm* in a previous life with the Canadian Pacific Steamship Fleet.<sup>16</sup> Someone at the Admiralty, it seems, had a wry sense of humour.



C. Anthony Law  
*Patrolling off shore Iceland*  
1940  
CWM 19920157-013  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© CWM



C. Anthony Law  
*HMS Wolfe*  
1940  
CWM 19920157-011  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© CWM

<sup>14</sup> Overy, p. 86. After the surrender of France, Great Britain was alone against Germany and her status as a great power was threatened. The capture of the French ports gave the Germans a forward operating base to attack shipping bound for Great Britain with supplies to support the war effort. The port of Brest was of particular strategic value as a submarine pen and repair facility for German U-Boats.

<sup>15</sup> R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War, A Short History*, (Oxford UP, 1989), p. 44.



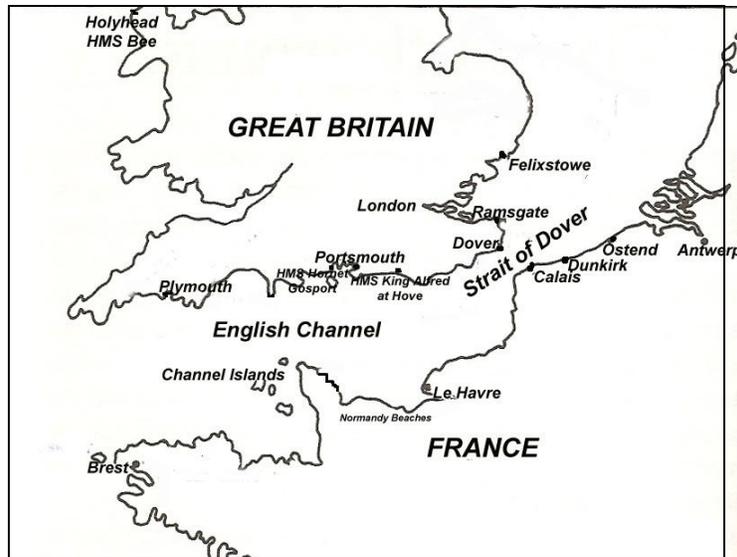
*Slt Tony Law, lower right, on sextant training in Portsmouth, 1940.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Daunted by his first trip to Arctic waters in search of the German surface raiders *Bismarck*, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisnau*, Law admittedly didn't have "a clue on how we [they] were going to deal with them" if they were found. *Wolfe*, armed with "old 6-inch guns, not even centre-lined", would not have stood a chance against the German guns. The RN patrol came under attack on its return to Scotland and ships abreast *Wolfe* were torpedoed and sunk. *Wolfe* sped for the safety of her home port "by going beyond our speed limit" and zigzagging all the way, Law recalled.<sup>17</sup> This would not be the last time that Law would cross paths with the *Scharnhorst*.

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<sup>16</sup> Law, p. 9. *Wolfe* served as both a submarine and destroyer depot ship.

<sup>17</sup> All quotes in this paragraph are drawn from Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p. 3. DND Archives, DHH.

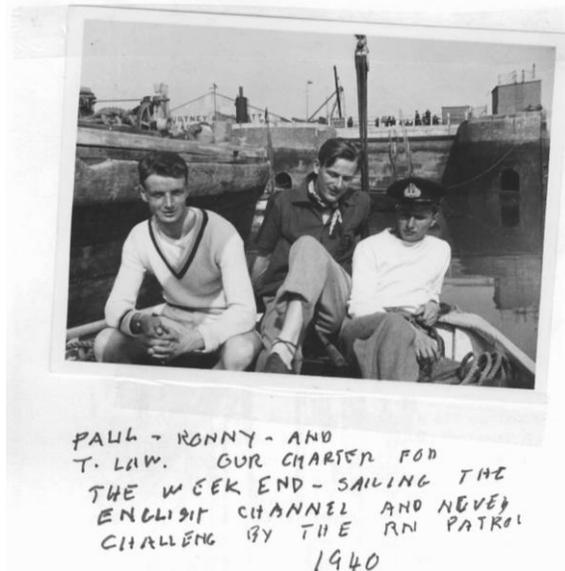


After three more patrols and anti-submarine training at HMS *Osprey* in Portland, Law was finally posted to the RN Motor Gun Boat (MGB) Flotilla at HMS *Hornet*, in Gosport. He joined MGB 53 on 8 March 1941 as her First Lieutenant and Navigating Officer (NO)<sup>18</sup> and soon found the boat quite rambunctious compared to the staid *Wolfe*. So much so that the sextants had been removed to spare the navigators from black eyes suffered while trying to take sightings as the boats bounced over the waves.<sup>19</sup> It seems that Law's earlier celestial navigation training had been for naught as he had to revert to dead reckoning for navigation.

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<sup>18</sup> Law, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p. 4. DND Archives, DHH.



*Law, right, sailing with friends off Portsmouth, UK, 1940.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Apart from the rough ride and the ongoing Battle of Britain, life patrolling the Channel was relatively quiet. “We went out, but didn’t sight the enemy. We picked a few people out of the drink, German airmen...but nothing very exciting,” recalled Law.<sup>20</sup> Regardless, the crews were hardly comfortable and often suffered from the cold and wet as they faced bone-chilling weather and high speeds on an open bridge. The standard clothing didn’t seem to protect them and Law was always cold. As a countermeasure he purchased a Royal Air Force (RAF) flying suit wired like an electric blanket to keep the pilots warm while aloft. Plugged into the ship’s electrical supply, Law was quite toasty until a wave washed over the bridge, short circuiting his new suit and engulfing him in blue sparks. He swore never to wear that “ridiculous garb” again, preferring to brave the elements rather than risk electrocution.<sup>21</sup>

Law faced other wardrobe challenges and could not adapt to wearing protective head-gear during battle. He recalled that his tin hat “always fell over my [his] eyes,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Brian Nolan and Brian Street, *Champagne Navy, Canada’s Small Boat Raiders of the Second World War*. (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited, 1991), p. 134.

causing a complete blackout and putting me [him] in a position of not having the vaguest notion of what was happening”.<sup>22</sup>

In less than a year Law was given his first command, MTB 48, and joined the RN's MTB Flotilla at HMS *Wasp* in Felixstowe to patrol the waters off of Holland and Belgium.<sup>23</sup> The MTB was a small, fast and muscular warship with a crew of seventeen, armed with torpedoes and depth charges and designed to operate in shallow water. The crews were renowned for their daring as they sped in and out of enemy territory harassing coastal convoys and drawing German destroyers from safe havens to within striking range of Allied warships. The German equivalent to the MTB was the diesel-fuelled E-Boat, driven by Mercedes Benz engines.

When not underway in the English Channel, Tony Law shared studio space over a pub with a fellow painter, Cdr Peter Scott.<sup>24</sup> During their off hours, the two artists along with colleagues Davie Cobb and Ronny Barge<sup>25</sup> would paint in the British countryside as well as contribute to the decor of the officers' messes in HMS *Bee* and Ramsgate.

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<sup>22</sup> Russ Lownds, “Exploits of Canadian 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla in World War II recalled by commander”, *The Mail-Star*, 22 December 1975.

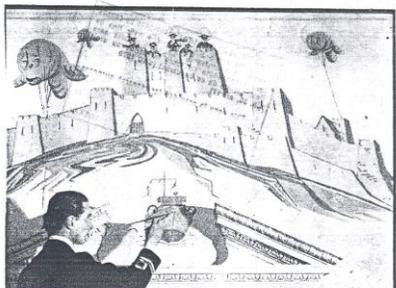
<sup>23</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.5. DND Archives, DHH.

<sup>24</sup> Law, p. 3. Scott also commanded MTBs and was later awarded an OBE and DSC. He was a well-established artist and the son of Sir Robert Scott, also known as Scott of the Antarctic. A lifelong friend of Tony Law's, Scott wrote the foreword to *White Plumes Astern*.

<sup>25</sup> C. Anthony Law to Dr. Laura Brandon, 23 November 1994. LAC, MG 30, E260. Vol.1. Correspondence; Notes; Draft Article; Memoranda, 1960-1966 n.d. All four artists served in MTBs. Note: Photo of Ronny Barge on preceding page.



Mural paintings by Lieut. Law, like those above, cover the walls of the officers' quarters at the English naval base where he and other young Canadian officers are stationed. Lieut. Law himself is pictured below while putting the finishing touches on another of his humorous mural sketches. This one he describes as "The Ramparts of England".



C. Anthony Law  
*Haystack and Cow, c1942*  
 Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law

It wasn't long before *MTB 48* saw action and "bloodied" by the enemy off Dover.

But it was an encounter in 1942 that established Law as a solid commander and earned him his first of two Mentioned-in-Dispatches (MID) for bravery.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> "Quebec Artist Directs Successful Attack on Hun Trawlers", *Ottawa Journal*, 28 May 1943, Law's second MID was awarded for action off the Dutch coast. On the night of the encounter, Law was engaged in battle with four heavily armed German trawlers, sinking one and forcing the remaining three to flee. *Canadian Forces Administration Order 18-27*: A MID is a Canadian military honour, awarded by the sovereign, recognizing valiant conduct, devotion to duty or other distinguished service. The recipient is awarded a bronze oak leaf that is worn on the left lapel.



C. Anthony Law  
*My First Command*, 1941  
CWM 19920157-012  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum



C. Anthony Law  
*My First Command*, 1941  
CWM 19920157-001  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

On 12 February 1942, a German armada consisting of the German battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, the cruiser *Prinz Eugen*, ten Narvik destroyers, 15 fast torpedo boats and 24 Elbings under protective cover of scores of Messerschmitts, boldly set out at speed from Brest for Norway under orders from Hitler. With the tide in its favour, the German fleet departed the French port and sailed undetected until the following morning before the alarms went off just off Dover. Five MTBs, including Law's MTB 48, immediately gave chase. At 4000 yards they launched torpedoes at the enemy ships shrouded in a protective smoke screen and flanked by the flotilla of E-boats.<sup>27</sup> The distance was "far from ideal range for us," Law remarked, "but there was nothing for it but to try."<sup>28</sup> All five boats missed their targets, but they posed enough of a threat that one of the enemy destroyers turned to fend off the attackers and almost ran aground doing so. The Luftwaffe, Law recalled, left them alone. "There were a few little shots at us because they were waiting for the RAF, who hadn't appeared".<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Video interview with Commander Tony German and Charles (Bones) Burk, DSC with two bars, *Seasoned Sailors - MTBS/MGBS*, National Defence: 2000. Burk sailed with Tony Law out of Dover. Smoke screen was used as an evasive measure to conceal the ships while escaping from attack. It was and is still used by all navies.

<sup>28</sup> Law, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.11. DND Archives, DHH.

As the Germans entered the North Sea, newly arrived Royal Navy Swordfish aircraft continued the attack, dropping their torpedoes on the cruisers. They too missed their targets and all were shot down over the English Channel. Personnel losses were heavy, and out of eighteen flight crews only five airmen survived. The MTBs, on the other hand, fared better. Even though the boats were out-manned, out-gunned and out-maneuvered, they returned to port with “just a few bullet holes”.<sup>30</sup> “German fire was deadly accurate, straddling us time after time,” Law remarked. “Really we never should have got back.”<sup>31</sup>



*C. Anthony Law*  
*“The dear old Swordfish; S&G Channel Dash*  
*12 February 1942”*  
*CWM 19920157-014*  
*Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©*  
*Canadian War Museum*

*“Sir, look, there are a whole lot of little airplanes with two wings on them – they must be British”.*<sup>32</sup>

Although raised a Catholic, Law was not deeply spiritual. He did however abide by popular folklore that sailors were protected by gremlins and described them as “shadows with purple eyes.” “We rarely see them,” he said, “but they are always looking after us” and he believed they got him back safely to Dover that day.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>31</sup> “Channel Battle Inspiration For Canadian Artist”, *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 June, 1942.

<sup>32</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.11. DND Archives, DHH.

<sup>33</sup> “Quebec Artist, Lt. C. Anthony Law, Paints Nazi Warships’s Brest Dash”, *Montreal Gazette*, 13 June 1942. Law reported that the air force had a version of the gremlin which was more temperamental, wore a top hat, red jacket and carried a green umbrella.



*Law and his painting of the Channel Dash with German Battle Cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the cruiser Prinz Eugen. c1942. Painting whereabouts are unknown<sup>34</sup> Photo courtesy of Canadian War Museum.*

The day after the Channel Dash, Law captured the battle on canvas. Recalling the event was easy, he remembered, “it had been mighty impressive.” The painting was one of eleven Law works selected for a 1943 naval war art exhibition at Eaton’s in Montreal and received critical acclaim. The *Montreal Gazette* was effusive about the “typically Canadian” manner to the painting with its “foaming columns thrown high by shell fire” and “swarms of RAF” planes in attacking the enemy. The paper went on to suggest that “no other artist could have done a better reproduction of the scene.”<sup>35</sup>

On 31 March 1942, Law received his MID, "for daring and resolution while serving in H.M. [His Majesty's] torpedo boats in daylight attacks at close range, and against odds, upon the German Battle Cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the cruiser *Prinz Eugen*."<sup>36</sup>

The tempo of activity increased in the Channel in the following months and took an exacting toll on the MTBs and their crews. Fighting was fierce as Law recalled of an engagement with the enemy off the French coast:

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<sup>34</sup> Victor Suthren, Associate Director, CWM to CO, HMCS *Donnacona*, Montreal, 24 Apr 1986. Suthren was enquiring about the whereabouts of the painting. Law Artist’s File, CWM Archives. The painting has never been recovered.

<sup>35</sup> “Attack on German Battleships Painted by Officer Who Took Part”, *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January 1943. All quotes in this paragraph are drawn from the same article.

<sup>36</sup> LAC MG30 Series E260, Vol 1 *Correspondence* 1940 – 1954 and CWM, Law Artist File.

The pom-poms were blazing away as our tiny ships closed the ugly black phantoms. Heavy 88 mm shells burst above our heads and left angry puffs of black smoke. Others exploded nearby, sending up gigantic needle-shaped columns of water. Green and red tracers, brilliant and terrifying missiles of death, flew through the air in graceful hose-pipe arcs towards the vulnerable wooden vessels. They danced over the water, then hit with a sharp resonating crackle. [The coxswain] and I kept ducking in unison each time a red spot came too close, and our heads banged together in the confusion. Finally, we disengaged to catch our breath and lick our wounds...I had, by now, managed to stop my knees from banging together...<sup>37</sup>

This highly dangerous and stressful activity came with a price and Law admittedly painted "to keep sane."<sup>38</sup> In the summer of 1942, on an extended leave after forty-six engagements with the enemy, he returned to Canada to marry his Ècole-des-Beaux-Arts "Smart Girl" Jane. A painting honeymoon in the Laurentians followed.<sup>39</sup>



*Tony Law honeymooning with his new bride, 1942.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

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<sup>37</sup> Russ Lownds, "Exploits of Canadian 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla in World War II recalled by commander", *The Mail-Star*, 22 December 1975.

<sup>38</sup> David J. Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein, *Dictionary of Canadian Military History*, (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 1992,) p. 114

<sup>39</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.16. DND Archives, DHH.

Prior to Law's reluctant return to service in the UK he presented Jane with an oil sketch on birch of the British countryside and penned the following on the back of the painting:

**To My Wife**

Time is past  
And war is fast  
So the time will come  
When I must return,  
And leave my wife and home,  
To take up my battle post again,  
To leave this happy life  
To fight for right  
And my God's inspiration.

*Anthony Law, Oct 1942*

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR ART PROGRAM and THE CANADIAN NAVAL WAR ARTISTS



*Leonard Brooks  
Atlantic Convoy  
CWM 19710261-1065  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

During the First World War, Sir Max Aitken had established the Canadian War Memorials Fund to address a perceived shortcoming in documenting Canadian action on the battlefield. During WWII, a similar program known as the Canadian War Records was introduced, this time with military artists commissioned to portray Canada at war.

The style adopted by the Group of Seven and attributed to European influences of WWI, overwhelmingly influenced the decision makers for Canada's WWII program. For the most part, this national style was an underlying pre-requisite for selection and the artists chosen were predominately well established, from Central Canada, and most importantly, capable of producing exhibition-quality work. In all 32, artists from the three services were selected to depict the war "vividly and veraciously,"<sup>40</sup> with eight

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<sup>40</sup> See Appendix A. Canadian War Artists Committee, *Instructions for War Artists, 2 March 1943, Ottawa*. The Instructions were primarily drawn up by Colonel A. Forescue Duguid, Director of the Army Historical Section with input from the Navy and Air Force but signed and promulgated by H.O. McCurry, Director of the National Gallery of Canada. While it was the intention of the War Artists' committee to promulgate the instructions to war artists along with their contract not all received the directive. Those that did were provided with a two page document of requirements which detailed a production schedule, quality, tone, historical significance, subject matter, medium and sizes. The artists were contracted for six months at a time and were expected to produce two 40x48 inch and 24x30 inch oil paintings, ten 22x30 inch and fifteen 11x15 watercolours within this period. Field drawings were not included in the finished total and all artwork was to be of the highest quality. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 24 vol. 11749, file CS617 and RG24 vol. 6918, Historical Report 82. *Further Material on Work of War Artists*. From the

seconded from the navy. Those selected included Cdr Harold Beament, Lt Rowley Murphy, LCdr Donald Cameron Mackay, Lt Tom Wood, Lt Michael Forster, Lt Leonard Brooks, Lt Jack Nichols and LCdr Tony Law.

Illustrating the war at sea presented unique challenges to the artists that were not experienced by those who documented the action of the army and air force. All the while, the naval artists sustained their creativity within an inhospitable environment of the North Atlantic while battling the tedium of a long and rolling ocean crossing.

During the First World War, the CWMF artists produced paintings and sculpture on a grand scale. Comparatively, the CWR paintings, produced in accordance to the “Instructions to War Artists,” were smaller, bolder in style and more manageable. Many times completed on the spot, the paintings and drawings, specifically the naval art, present a spontaneous and non-traditional view of the war.

Yet the CWR program had been slow to get underway. Much to the chagrin of the Canadian art community, the Canadian military<sup>41</sup> and the Honourable Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain, Prime Minister Mackenzie King deferred approving the sponsorship of the Canadian war artists’ program until late 1942. Not wanting to be accused of “putting [public] money into frills that were not connected with winning the war,” Colonel James Ralston, the Minister of National Defence supported King’s position.<sup>42</sup> Despite this formidable obstacle, interest in a war art program remained strong and behind the scenes communication kept the notion alive.

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beginning, the demands to meet quotas established by the WAAC put a strain on the naval artists, the majority of whom had little experience painting the sea. Time was needed to adjust to the subject at hand to accommodate bad weather, lack of subject matter and “bureaucratic red tape”.

<sup>41</sup> Joan Murray, *Permanent Collection: The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa*. (Oshawa: Herzig Somerville Ltd., 1978), p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Joan Murray interview with Colonel C.P. Stacey, 1981, Ottawa. LAC, MG30 D142 vol.5, file 35.

Unfortunately, there was no one of Aitken's influence to finance the scheme in Canada and the program was dependent upon federal patronage to proceed.<sup>43</sup>

With the war raging over the skies of Europe and at sea in the North Atlantic, the artistic community rallied at Queen's University in Kingston Ontario in 1941 with a view to pressuring King into making a decision to support a war art program. 150 prominent Canadian artists, outraged at the indifference displayed by the government during the first two years of the war, formed *The Federation of Canadian Artists* and demanded a war art program. For many, a program meant an opportunity to ply their trade full time, something that the Depression had prevented.<sup>44</sup> Simultaneously, H.O. McCurry, Director of the NGC, equating the value of a war art program as being "worth many ships, tanks and guns," was pressing for a government program because it would offer employment to artists impoverished by the interwar slump.<sup>45</sup>

Cdr Harold Beament for one, a veteran of WWI,<sup>46</sup> was already serving in the RCNVR in 1939 when he wrote his friend McCurry to "get in on the Naval end of it" if an official program got started. A member of the RCAA, Beament saw that "really important stuff was [is] going on here that should be recorded. Unfortunately in the job

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<sup>43</sup> Maria Tippett, "Lest We Forget: Souvenon-Nous", p.26. Artists, despite the lack of a government sponsored program, recorded the war effort. For example, Arthur Lismer a participant in the CWMF, was recording activity in HMC Dockyard, in Halifax in 1940. He was later joined by Rowley Murphy and Edwin Holgate who painted the war at sea. In Toronto, Nancy Burden painted a mural in Union Station commemorating the Commonwealth Air Training Plan for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

<sup>44</sup> Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada, Toward a People's Art*, p. 192 and John Virtue, *Leonard and Reva Brooks: Artists in Exile in San Miguel de Allende*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 75. A.Y. Jackson, Rowley Murphy and Pegi Nicol McLeod figured prominently at the conference. Within one year of the conference over 1000 artists had signed a petition calling for a war art program.

<sup>45</sup> H.O. McCurry to W. B. Herbert, assistant to the director of the Bureau of Public Information, 6 December 1940. National Gallery of Canada Archives, NGC fonds, Canadian War Art 5.1 C-Canadian War Artists Committee/Canadian War Records file 1.

<sup>46</sup> Joan Murray, *Permanent Collection*, p. 32. Beament was a Petty Officer in the First World War.

that I am doing at present, it is impossible to find time to do anything.”<sup>47</sup> Beament, at the time, was Senior Officer of River Patrol out of Rivière du Loup in charge of two armed motor-boats and one yacht in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.<sup>48</sup> He described his job as “rush[ing] from one place to another down the Gulf hoping to give the impression that there were dozens of little vessels waiting to devour any marauding German ships.”<sup>49</sup>



*Cdr Harold Beament, RCNVR  
DND photo*



*Harold Beament  
St. Lawrence Convoy, nd  
CWM 19710261-1049  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

Similarly, Torontonian Rowley Murphy, RCAA, who joined the RCNVR in 1940 kept in touch with McCurry. “I have been from the start of the war greatly interested in drawing and painting naval war records; and to that end have been permitted to go sea ...at my own expense.” The result was “the production of a good deal of work, though I have always been hampered by my unofficial status.”<sup>50</sup> A lecturer at the Ontario College

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<sup>47</sup> Harold Beament to H.O. McCurry, 22 October 1939. CWM Archives, Beament’s Artist’s file.

<sup>48</sup> Joan Murray, *Permanent Collection*, p. 32.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid and James W. Essex, *Victory in the St. Lawrence, Canada’s Unknown War*, (Erin, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1984), p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> H.O. McCurry to Rowley Murphy, 4 April 1941. CWM Archives, Beament’s Artist’s file.

of Art, Murphy's first job with the navy was to develop camouflage patterns for RCN warships.<sup>51</sup>



Rowley Murphy, *Esquimalt Studio*, 1943  
DND Photo



Rowley Murphy  
*Prince Ship Under Air Attack*, 1943  
CWM 19710261-4278  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

Fredericton native Donald Cameron (D.C.) Mackay saw a war art scheme as an opportunity to paint. “It was practically impossible,” he later recalled, “to make a living as an artist unless you were a successful portrait painter. In the 1920s and 30s, artists made money as teachers, illustrators, commercial artists, or as consultants in some field related to the arts, but they had little time to produce paintings.”<sup>52</sup> While primarily employed within the Intelligence Branch, Mackay managed to get to sea to “do some drawing and painting and a little work on camouflage as well.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Rowley Murphy Obituary, *Toronto Star*, 15 Feb 1975. By the end of 1941 three ships were painted using his designs with HMCS *Hamilton* painted with different patterns on each side! The other two ships, *Annapolis* and *Assiniboine* were later repainted to conform to the Admiralty “Town” and “River” class destroyer patterns.

<sup>52</sup> Joan Murphy interview with Donald Mackay, 31 August, 1978. Murphy’s Artist’s file, CWM Archives.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



*D.C. Mackay*  
*Convoy Afternoon*  
CWM 19710261-4208  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum



*D.C. Mackay*  
*Signal Flag Hoist*  
CWM 19710261-4251  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

With the added voice of the artists from the Kingston Conference and the tireless petitioning of the government by McCurry, A.Y. Jackson and the Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain, the Honourable Vincent Massey, King acquiesced in late 1942.<sup>54</sup> With Cabinet approval, the CWR was formalized and the first artists selected by February of the next year. Vincent Massey was appointed Chair of the program and with the assistance of senior officers from the army, navy and air force, he oversaw the artists in their theatres of operation. Only military officers with pre-established artistic qualifications were deemed eligible. Massey, it was reported “had quite a definite eye....and was a sort of supervising uncle to all the war artists over in England...”<sup>55</sup>

Unlike the CWMF, where Aiken hired civilian artists to document Canadian battles, during WWII a committee headed by the Director of the NGC<sup>56</sup> and consisting of

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<sup>54</sup> Graham Metson and Cheryl Lean (eds.) *Alex Colville Diary of a War Artist*, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1981), p. 12. The National Gallery of Canada commissioned artists to paint war related subject matter prior to the endorsement of a formal program by the government.

<sup>55</sup> Joan Murray interview with Harold Beament, 15 May 1979. CWM Archives, Beament Artist's File.

<sup>56</sup> Laura Brandon, *Art or Memorial? The Forgotten History of Canada's War Art*, (Calgary: The University of Calgary Press, 2006), p. 42. During the First World War, Eric Brown was the Director of the NGC and

representatives from the historical branches of the RCN, Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Canadian Army, administered the art program.<sup>57</sup> The War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC), responsible to the CWR, oversaw and adjudicated the artists participating in the program.

McCurry drew upon the expertise of advisors from the wider artistic community including, A. J. Casson, Edwin Holgate, Charles Comfort and particularly, A.Y. Jackson played a key role in the selection process for the program.<sup>58</sup> “As far as possible the most capable artists in the country were given the opportunity to participate,” recalled Jackson, with “professional artists already in the armed forces” given first consideration.<sup>59</sup> For this reason, Harold Beament, Rowley Murphy and Donald Cameron Mackay, already serving in the navy, were offered the first naval billets in the program.<sup>60</sup>

Jackson knew most of the potential artists personally and acknowledged that while there was much interest in the program from the art community, “it was not possible to gamble on the mere promise of potentialities.”<sup>61</sup> He thought Leonard Brooks, a member of the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto would do well as a naval artist because

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oversaw the Canadian War Artists Advisory Committee in Canada. When he passed away, H.O. McCurry took his place as Director, NGC.

<sup>57</sup> The Historical officers selected were Group Captain K.B. Conn for the RCAF, Colonel A. Fortescue Duguid for the Army and Dr. G.N. Tucker for the RCN.

<sup>58</sup> Holgate and Comfort later signed up for active duty and were employed as war artists with the army.

<sup>59</sup> Jackson, p. 163. While Jackson preferred to have first hand knowledge of the artists, an amateur Army and Air Force art competition brought recognition to Bruno Bobak, Pat Cowley-Brown, Aba Bayefsky and Molly Lamb. Each of these artists were later offered commissions in the CWR.

<sup>60</sup> HO McCurry letter to D.C. Mackay 16 Feb 1943. CWM Archives. Mackay Artist's file. The letter to Mackay was as follows: “As you may have heard, the Department of National Defence has set up a Committee for the purpose of developing war records by Canadian artists of this country's part in the war. ... the Committee has named three artists to record the work of the navy, of which you are one, and I am writing to ask you informally if you would accept an appointment as Sub-Lieutenant”.

<sup>61</sup> Jackson, p. 163.

“he can stand cold weather. Good out door guy.” Jackson and Brooks had worked outside together on winter painting expeditions.<sup>62</sup>

Another, Michael Forster, also received Jackson’s approval. After emigrating to Canada during the Depression, Forster found employment with *the Grip*, a commercial art firm, in Toronto where he came under Jackson’s eye.<sup>63</sup> Forster had studied under the modernists Bernard Meninsky and William Roberts in London and Paris and his decidedly avant-garde style appealed to Jackson.



*Michael Forster at work in his studio.*  
DND Photograph



*Michael Forster*  
*Submarine Pens in Brest, 1945*  
CWM 19710261-6169  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© Canadian War Museum

In accordance with the “Instructions to Artists,” the artists were expected to record "significant events, scenes, phases and episodes in the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces" and engage in "active operations" in order to "know and understand the action, the circumstances, the environment, and the participants." The artists would be required to produce paintings and field drawings "worthy of Canada's highest cultural traditions, doing justice to history, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at

<sup>62</sup> A.Y. Jackson to H.O. McCurry, NGC, 27 Jan 1943. NGC archives, Ottawa.

<sup>63</sup> J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada a History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 183. The Grip, also known as the Rapid Grip commercial studio employed several members of the former Group of Seven.

any time."<sup>64</sup> Artists recruited for the program, if not already serving, underwent obligatory basic training as junior officers. In the case of Beament, Law, Murphy and Mackay, contracts were offered commensurate with their existing rank.

The war art scheme offered full time employment for the naval artists at the junior rank of Sub-Lieutenant for a probationary six-month period.<sup>65</sup> A promotion, a pay increase of 75 cents a day,<sup>66</sup> and a longer contract followed if the artist's work pleased the committee. Commissioned in 1944, Leonard Brooks was thrilled with the appointment as he now could paint with gay abandon "with no other thought in mind."<sup>67</sup>

In addition to the selection of artists, the WAAC also had to contend with quality control. If an artist was not 'measuring up', the committee's recommendation to the CWR invariably meant a return to active service. While Harold Beament received a reprieve after "a good talking to",<sup>68</sup> D. C. Mackay and Rowley Murphy felt the displeasure and were replaced after only one year.

Ottawa native Thomas Wood did very well in the CWR. Steady employment at movie theatres across the river in Hull, Quebec at a "time when they went for elaborate fronts" kept him at home until he was almost thirty before volunteering for war duty.<sup>69</sup> Joining the RCNVR on 23 May 1943 at the HMCS *Carleton* in Ottawa, Wood's first job was within the Directorate of Special Services at Naval Headquarters designing

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix A. *Instructions to Artists*, Annex B, Paragraph 2, Portrayal and Paragraph 4, Projected Use. Library of Canada (LAC), RG 24 vol. 11749 file CS617.

<sup>65</sup> Canadian national telegram dated 17 February, 1943 to D. C. Mackay from H.O. McCurry. CWM archives, Mackay Artist's file. "My letter February sixteenth overlooked fact you are already in navy. Appointment if accepted would be at present rank". Both D.C. Mackay and Harold Beament were already Lieutenants in the navy and were permitted to retain their substantive rank.

<sup>66</sup> H.O. McCurry to Michael Forster, 9 June 44. CWM archives, Forster Artist's files. A married man, Forster was concerned about wages and wrote McCurry accordingly. McCurry responded with the following rates: \$4.25 for first 3 months, \$5 a day after the probation period was over. An extra \$45 per month for a wife and a monthly cost of living bonus of \$2.20.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Leonard Brooks, 25 October 1977. CWM archives, Artist's files.

<sup>68</sup> A.Y. Jackson to H.O. McCurry, 12 May 1944, CWM Archives, Beament Artist's files,

propaganda posters and pamphlets. Six months after enrolling, he sailed for England in a troop carrier as a newly minted RCN war artist.<sup>70</sup>

While Wood worked from sketches in isolation in his bedsitting room in Kensington, which doubled as his studio, he found the shared experience of living in close quarters aboard a warship “added an element of authenticity” to his painting<sup>71</sup> in that “I [he] was aware that I [he] was confronting a grave historical event which indeed war is...”<sup>72</sup>

Leonard Brooks felt the same way. “Our terms of reference were to interpret as [best] we could or make sketches. We could wander around and do anything. Being on board a ship sometimes there's not that much to paint ... I'd go down to where they were cooking.”<sup>73</sup> According to Brooks, his portrayal of the ordinary routine of the fighting sailor provided an element that the camera could not capture.<sup>74</sup> His water colour snapshots, “often made under great difficulty on a tossing deck, [in] a cold wind, and [in] on-going action, caught at the time some of the feelings, the mood of the moment...”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Alan Walkinshaw interview with Tom Wood, Ottawa, 2 May 1979. CWM archives, Wood Artist's files.

<sup>70</sup> *Canvas of War, The Art of the World War II*, video. The naval artists reported to the Naval Historical Division in the Sun Life Building adjacent Canada House in Trafalgar Square.

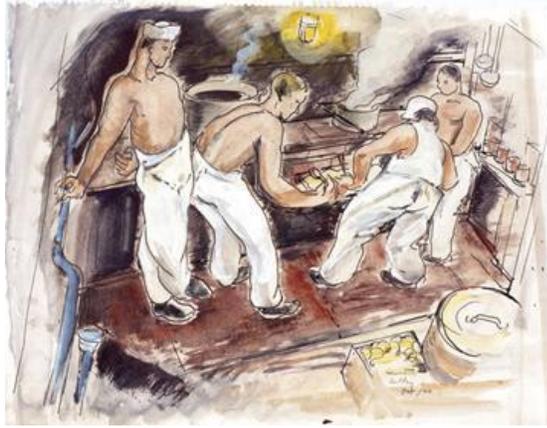
<sup>71</sup> Cynthia Malkin, “A War Artist Remembers”, *the Sunday Post*, 11 Nov 1979, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> Joan Murray interview with Tom Wood, 2 May 1979. CWM Archives, Wood Artist's File.

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/artwar/images/artworks/19710261-1081\\_corvette-galley\\_e.html](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/artwar/images/artworks/19710261-1081_corvette-galley_e.html), accessed 4 November 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Joan Murray interview with Leonard Brooks, 25 Oct 1977. CWM Archives, Brooks Artist's file.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid



*Leonard Brooks  
Corvette Galley, 1944  
CWM 19710261-1081  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

The naval artists, at times criticized for unimaginative subject matter, captured everyday life at sea as those who are sailors know it still today. The three-week long crossings in convoys were challenging for those artists used to the quiet and contemplative atmosphere of their shore-based studio. Rowley Murphy seemed particularly exasperated when he described trying to paint “as the vessel slices through swells or rough water, which spreads water-colour washes most unexpectedly; and the vibration from her powerful engines and propellers is frequently so great that putting a line or brush stroke on paper or canvas is often an exciting gamble as to its ultimate position or character. Add to this that the ship rolls all the time, and is zigzagging with a convoy...”<sup>76</sup> All the same, Murphy was enthralled with the pageantry of the ocean passage. “The big convoy which we are helping to protect is a beautiful sight rolling and plunging in a heavy sea with white water coming aboard and gorgeous sky over all. It seems like a very thrilling performance put on for our special benefit with war far away, - until ‘action stations’ are sounded as possibly somebody ‘gets it’.”<sup>77</sup>

Tom Wood found the business of war boring and the long weeks at sea tedious. The inactivity wore him down and he sympathized with the crew that had to remain with

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<sup>76</sup> “Rowley Murphy, An Artist With the Royal Canadian Navy”, *Maritime Art*, (December 1942 – January 1943), p. 45.

the ship while he went ashore for the comfort of his studio. “You really might say that you are in jail for 21 days” when making a crossing, he recalled. “When there was action, it was pretty abstract...a change in pitch in the asdic...When you are in a convoy with ships 25 miles across...very rarely did you see action in the Hollywood sense of the word, with tracers and guns and planes and that sort of things...”<sup>78</sup>

Water colour grew to be the medium of choice at sea. As D.C. Mackay pointed out: “Even at sea, nobody liked the smell of turpentine if you were painting in oils. Turpentine clings to woolens and uniforms, particularly in dampness. No matter what rugged seadogs the sailors were, they were all apt to get a little queasy in heavy weather...”<sup>79</sup>

While depicting the war at sea had its unique problems, conditions ashore could be dangerous as well. In London, Harold Beament and Tony Law were almost killed when a German V-2 bomb slammed into the street outside their pub in 1945.<sup>80</sup> Fairfax House, the Canadian war art studio, was also hit, killing 27 occupants, none of them Canadian. As a result several of the artists, including Wood, Nichols, Brooks and Beament, moved out of the city for the safety of Ryde on the Isle of Wight and “a nice little pub in which to live.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p 47.

<sup>78</sup> Joan Murray interview with Tom Wood, 2 May 1979. CWM Archives, Wood Artist’s File.

<sup>79</sup> Joan Murray interview with Donald Mackay, 13 Aug 1978, CWM, Artist’s files.

<sup>80</sup> Paul Duval, “War artist Carl Schaefer’s life is no dilettante’s existence”, *Saturday Night*, 3 March 1945.

<sup>81</sup> Joan Murray interview with Harold Beament, 15 May 1979. CWM Archives, Beament Artist’s files.



*C. Anthony Law  
V2 bomb damage – Portsmouth  
1943  
Courtesy of the Maritime Museum of the  
Atlantic (MMA)*

On 6 June, 1944, Wood landed in Normandy with the Canadians three hours after the first troops came ashore. The voyage across in a British landing craft was far from boring. "The craft was pitching around too roughly to permit any sketching, so I stood up and took pictures with a borrowed camera...Snipers were firing at us, but their aim was poor; only one man in our whole flotilla was wounded." Even though Wood was surrounded by the dead and dying, he resisted yielding to his "emotional forces."<sup>82</sup> Instead, his portrayal of jaunty landing craft, bedecked with pennants blowing in a brisk breeze and rushing towards shore, belies the devastation and human cost of the day. Save for faint flashes from distant German shore batteries, the painting could be of a regatta with boats racing for the finish line.

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<sup>82</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, c. 1945. Note: The article was filed without a caption or date. CWM archives.



Tom Wood painting alongside en plein air in St. John's, Newfoundland (NL)  
DND photo



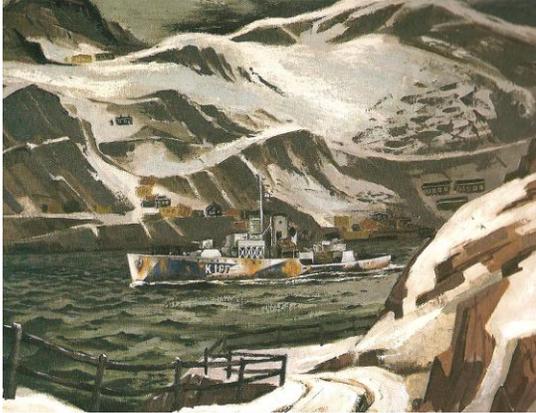
Tom Wood  
D-Day, 1944  
CWM 19710261-4857  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

Wood, deployed to St. John's, Newfoundland after D-Day was confronted with "utterly atrocious" weather in the "isolated port." "We have had every variety...that I suppose exists, except sunshine. It has sleeted, rained and snowed, and fog, fog, fog, all the time!" Even so, Wood found the port city picturesque with "great jagged rock formations enclose [enclosing] the harbour like a bowl"<sup>83</sup> as illustrated in his *Corvette entering the narrows, St. John's*, painted from a bleak vantage point on the south bank of the harbour. "It is a raw cold day and the Flower Class corvette "*Drumheller*," returned from Derry with the Escort Group, is passing through the narrows..." he dutifully recorded in his diary.<sup>84</sup> Later, Wood, found himself in a fortuitous situation in the "isolated port" when U-190, having surrendered to the RCN off of Cape Race, was escorted into Bay Bulls on 14 May 1945. Convincing authorities to take him to where the crew was being held, Wood spent several hours taking photographs of the sailors which he later used to paint, *German Prisoners Leaving Their U-Boat, Bay Bulls*.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Tom Wood to H.O. McCurry, 13 Jan 1945. CWM Archives, Wood Artist's files.

<sup>84</sup> Tom Wood diary. January 1945. CWM Archives, Wood Artist's files.

<sup>85</sup> "Lt. Tom Wood Gets Picture Scoop for the RCN with Tiny \$25 Camera", *The Evening Citizen*, Ottawa, 6 June 1945.



Tom Wood  
*Corvette entering the narrows, St. John's, NL,*  
1945 CWM - 19710261-4853  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum



Tom Wood  
*German Prisoners Leaving Their U-Boat, Bay Bulls,*  
NFLD, 1945, CWM 19710261-4870  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

Law's friend from Ottawa, Jack Nichols confronted the atrocities of war, head on. His penchant was people. Not a traditional portrait painter, Nichols instead captured the inner spirit of his subjects with an undercurrent of strong graphic design. Nichols was commissioned as a naval artist in 1944 after being contracted along with Michael Forster to document the merchant navy for the NGC. Arriving in England in time for the D-Day embarkation, the artist sailed across the Channel in "a small merchant vessel, overflowing with soldiers and sailors" to record the invasion.<sup>86</sup>

In his portrayal of life at sea Nichols delineates his figures with a heavy hand and uses a monochromatic colour scheme to emphasize the mundane existence of the crew. In *Atlantic Crossing* the sailors are animated with exaggerated expressions and the Mannerist-like staging within a shallow and oblique foreground. This placement draws attention to the cramped living quarters below deck. As in the work of the Mannerists, motion is created with the strong use of gestures and contour.

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<sup>86</sup> Dean F. Oliver and Laura Brandon, *Canvas of War*, (Ottawa: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000), p. 137



*Jack Nichols in his studio. Drowning Sailor is on easel behind Nichols. DND photograph*



*Jack Nichols Atlantic Crossing, 1944 CWM 19710261-4285 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© Canadian War Museum*

While primarily tasked to record the war at sea, the naval war artists would invariably pitch in when needed. “I spent many a long watch on the freezing open bridge of a Corvette to relieve a tired, worn-out seaman...,” remarked Brooks.<sup>87</sup> Rowley Murphy saw action in HMCS Saguenay during *Actions Stations* and “dropped his paint brushes in a hurry to man a machine gun.”<sup>88</sup>



*D.C. Mackay, Corvette Bridge CWM 19710261-4211 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© Canadian War Museum*

<sup>87</sup> Joan Murray interview with Leonard Brooks, 25 Oct 1977. CWM Archives, Brooks Artist’s File

<sup>88</sup> Rowley Murphy Obituary, *Toronto Star*, 15 Feb 1975.

After the war, Vice Admiral G.C. Jones, Chief of the Naval Staff attested to the importance of the war art collection: “The cold realism of the camera and the vivid colours of the painter have given the people of Canada in this war a far greater knowledge of the work and objectives of their Navy than they ever had before.”<sup>89</sup>

A.Y. Jackson credited the war artists for their fresh vision and for injecting life back into Canadian art with their introspective approach to portraying Canada at war. Jackson noted:

There is a feeling of honesty and sincerity in these records...and little that is sentimental or melodramatic. The real value of our War Records programme was that our artists, through their experiences, gained a deeper understanding and a fresher vision with which in later days they were to stir up the rather sluggish stream of Canadian art.<sup>90</sup>

At the end of the war the WRO was terminated and Canada was left without an officially sanctioned military art program until the implementation of the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artists Program (CAFCAAP) in 1968. The program ran until 1995. Like the CWMF, the CAFCAAP hired civilian artists to record military activities. On June 6, 2001, the Canadian Forces Artists Program (CFAP) was introduced "to enable artists from across Canada, working in a variety of media, to capture the daily operations, the people, and the spirit of the Canadian Forces, and in so doing give the Canadian public a lasting record of our military men and women and their work."<sup>91</sup> CFAP artists are embedded with Canadian Forces personnel in modern domestic and foreign operations world-wide.

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<sup>89</sup> Grant MacDonald, *Sailors*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945), iii.

<sup>90</sup> Jackson, p. 165.

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/view-news-afficher-nouvelles-eng.asp?id=1261>, 7 March 2009

## Lt TONY LAW – WAR ARTIST



*Edwin Dean McNally,  
Lieutenant Charles Anthony Law,  
RCNVR  
1943  
CWM 20020115-016  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

Despite the initial lack of an endorsement of an official Canadian war artist program by the government at the onset of WWII, Vincent Massey was keeping a watchful eye on service personnel in England who had been professional artists before the war. Massey was taken by Tony Law's work in an exhibition organized by the National Gallery of London's Sir Kenneth Clark in 1942.<sup>92</sup> Later that year, several of Law's paintings toured Canada as part of a massive exhibition of naval art. The exhibition was well received and Law was noted in articles in the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*.<sup>93</sup>

Massey wrote H.O. McCurry, Director of the NGC: "Although the real scheme for Canadian war artists is still to be organized, there are, as you know, two or three people painting activities among our services here... There is a young officer named Law,

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<sup>92</sup> Kenneth Clark, "War Artists at the National Gallery", *The Studio*, cxxiii, no. 586, (January 1942). Sir Kenneth Clark was a friend of the Canadian High Commissioner.

<sup>93</sup> "Unique Naval Mixed Exhibit Goes on Tour", *Globe and Mail*, 15 December 1942, and "15 Tons of Navy Display in Show", *The Toronto Star*, 30 December 1942.

who was an art student before the war, who has produced some very striking canvases in the few hours he gets away from his motor torpedo boat in the Channel."<sup>94</sup>

Law's *Channel Dash*, in particular, caught the High Commissioner's attention. Another impressed Queen Elizabeth, the wife of King George VI. Her Majesty, it was reported, was especially impressed by the artist's use of blues.<sup>95</sup> Sir Kenneth Clark, Surveyor of the King's Pictures at Windsor and Director of the National Gallery in London, was taken with Law's *Old Norman Church, Dorset*, offering that the war had presented subjects to the artists that were "stranger than any dream."<sup>96</sup> Years later, Bernard Riordon, Curator, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS), described the painting as a "picturesque balance and an infusion of mystery...with romantic light bathing the ghostly structure of the church."<sup>97</sup>



C. Anthony Law  
*Old Norman Church, Dorset, nd*  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law



Lt Tony Law  
London, England, 2 February 1944.  
PA-116539

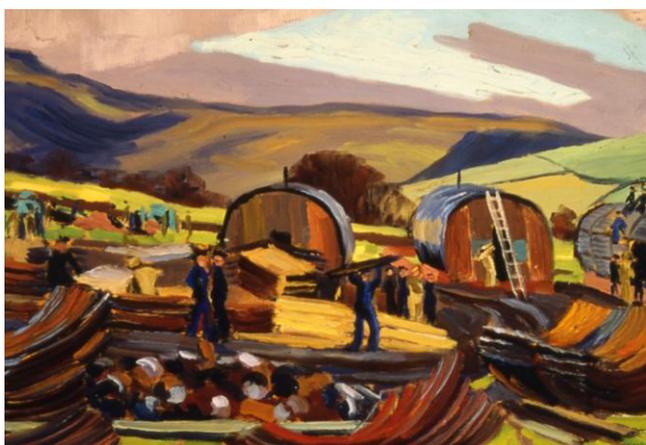
<sup>94</sup> Laura Brandon, "C. Anthony Law (1916-1996) Official War Artist". *Canadian Military History*, Vol 6, Number 1, (Spring 1997), p. 100 and NGC Archives, Correspondence with War Artist, 5.42.L, copy in CWM, Law Artist's File.

<sup>95</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, 29 January, 1943. While the *Gazette* does not identify the painting it would have been of the same genre as the painting illustrated as *MTBs departing for English Channel* which Law painted as a private artist and not as a member of the war art program. He gave this particular painting to one his fellow MTB captains who later sold it at auction.

<sup>96</sup> Clark, "War Artists at the National Gallery", p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> "C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective", *AGNS*, p. 12.

Massey was keen on Law joining the war art program, considering his work of a “high category.” Law in turn was equally keen on retaining “his job as captain of a [an] MTB and is [was] not at all in favour of this procedure” offering instead to continuing painting during his spare time when his boat was “laid-up for refit.”<sup>98</sup> This seemed reasonable to Dr. Tucker, the Navy’s HRO in London and arrangements were made to assist Law so that he could “get around to where our people are” and to “paint in any naval establishment” when he was off duty. In order to comply fully with Admiralty regulations, Law had to submit his completed paintings to the censorship board before he was allowed to put them on exhibition or sell them outright.<sup>99</sup>



*C. Anthony Law,  
HMCS Niobe's new huts  
1943  
CWM 19710261-4088  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

Until May 1943, the RCN’s prime role was convoy escort through the wolfpack-infested waters of the North Atlantic to sustain Great Britain’s life line.<sup>100</sup> With the introduction of long-range bombers to provide air cover to protect the convoys, the threat of attack by German U-Boats was much diminished and Admiral Karl Dönitz, Commander in Chief of the German Navy, withdrew most of his submarine fleet from the

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<sup>98</sup> P. Tucker to Commander Kenderdine, 27 May 1943. LAC, RG 24 Vol. 11.747, file 617.

<sup>99</sup> Commander Price, Staff Officer Personnel to Lieut. C. A. Law, 12 June 1942. LAC, MG30 Series E260, Vol. 1. Correspondence 1940-1954.

<sup>100</sup> “The Battle of the Atlantic”, *Government of Canada, Veterans Affairs*, 2000, p.17. Twenty-four Canadian warships and 72 Canadian merchant ships were lost during the six years of the war, however over 25,000 merchant ship voyages were made to support the war effort in Great Britain and Russia.

North Atlantic. Because of this, the RCN was able to shift its focus to other naval operations. With the invasion of Normandy in the planning phases the RCN introduced its own MTBs, crewed entirely by Canadian sailors, into the British Fleet. Two flotillas were formed: the 65<sup>th</sup> consisting of D-Class Fairmiles or “long boats” under James Kirkpatrick, and the 29<sup>th</sup> under Tony Law.



*C. Anthony Law  
Convoy Leaves Thames [England]<sup>101</sup>  
1941  
Collection of  
the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic*

Law received news of his appointment on 1 October 1943 from the Senior Staff Officer (London):

Commander Price has just asked me to write you to give you what I think is great news: I hope you will too. In the first place you will be withdrawn from MTB's for a couple of months for an appointment to the staff of the Senior Canadian Naval Officer (London) (SCONO (London)) to advise him on Coastal Forces Organizational matters and to make the arrangements for the first two Canadian Flotillas of Coastal Craft which will be formed in this country before the end of this year. You will then be appointed to the second of these Flotillas, which is due to start some time in December.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Convoy Leaves Thames* was painted during the period that Law was not an official war artist. After the war he donated the painting to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax.

<sup>102</sup> Senior Staff Officer (London), Navy officer of Canada to Lieutenant C. A. Law. LAC, MG30 Series E260, Vol. 1. Correspondence 1940-1954.



*Law and the crew of  
MTB 459, Ramsgate, Kent,  
3 July 1944  
DND photo*

Law's leadership at the helm of a MTB was well known and the appointment was a natural fit apart from his appearance. While slight and unassuming, "his hair always appeared slightly longer than the navy allowed, projecting a presence slightly more bohemian than military."<sup>103</sup> The appointment in London, he was told, would take one day per week because the project was well advanced. To make up the remaining days, Law was instructed to:

...spend the rest of your time painting, for which purpose you will probably be made an Official War Artist by the Overseas Canadian War Artists Committee, of which Mr. Massey is the Chair. Therefore you will have plenty of time to paint Corvettes at Londonderry and anything else of that nature that you wish to undertake.<sup>104</sup>

It would seem that the Canadian High Commissioner had won a partial victory.

Law's boats were 71 and 1/2 feet long with a wooden hull built by British Power Boats at Hythe. With a draught of 5'8" they were ideal for stealth activities along the occupied coast, often very close to shore. Driven by three Rolls Royce Packard V-12 Supercharged 1250 Horse Power engines fuelled by 100% octane gas, the MTBs could

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<sup>103</sup> Nolan and Street, *Champagne Navy*, p. 120.

<sup>104</sup> Senior Staff Officer (London), Navy officer of Canada to Lieutenant C. A. Law. LAC, MG30 Series E260, Vol. 1. Correspondence 1940-1954.

reach speeds of 41 knots.<sup>105</sup> Their range of 120 miles was enough to take them across the Channel and back on their nightly sorties. Heavily armed with Mark VIII Submarine Torpedos, twin 20-mm Oerlikons, Pom Poms and a .5 inch Vickers machine guns the boats were a formidable opponent and the combination of speed and artillery made them especially capable.<sup>106</sup>



*RCN MTBs at speed,  
English Channel, 1944.  
DND photo.*

As planned, Law was appointed as a temporary official war artist while awaiting delivery of the Canadian MTBs. When the new boats did arrive, the torpedo tubes did not meet the Admiralty's specifications and Law's tenure in the war art program was extended until equipment modifications could be made.<sup>107</sup> Issued with special permits and letters of introduction, Law travelled to establishments across the UK from late November 1943 to the end of January 1944.<sup>108</sup>

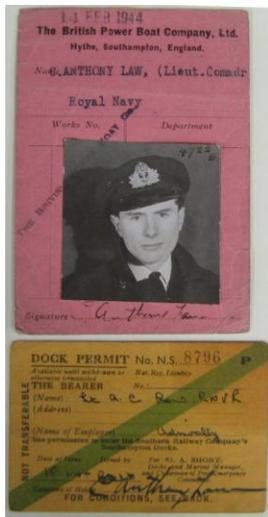
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<sup>105</sup> Commander Tony German, *The Sea is at our Gates, The History of the Canadian Navy*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), p. 166.

<sup>106</sup> Video interview with Commander Tony German and Charles (Bones) Burk, Seasoned Sailors - MTBS/MGBS. The E-boat was much faster than the MTB but not as heavily armed and the Canadian boats stood their ground in any engagement.

<sup>107</sup> HRO's Report, C.P. Stacey, pp. 63-74. LAC, MG24, Vol. 6918, Report No. 64.

<sup>108</sup> Lieutenant Law recorded naval activities in Southampton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Portsmouth, Clydebank, HMCS *Niobe* and Scapa Flow. During this period he finished 30 paintings. LAC, MG24, Vol. 11749, file 617.



*LCdr C. Anthony Law's MTB photo identification and permit to access naval establishments.*

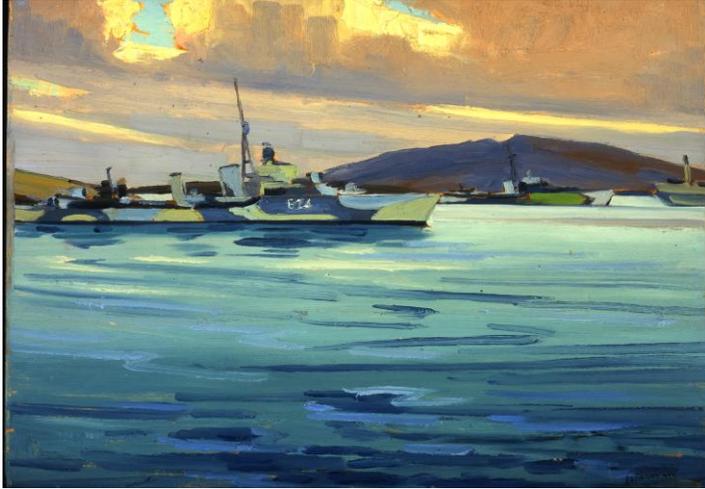


*C. Anthony Law, Evening, Scapa Flow, HCMS Haida CWM 19710261-4072 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art© Canadian War Museum*

Most memorable to Law was his three-week sojourn in Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands. Scapa Flow was a strategic northern anchorage from which the Home Fleet could safely deploy ships to protect convoys in the North Atlantic and those running supplies to Murmansk, Russia. During this time and using a high vantage point, Law recorded the mightiness of the northern-based fleet with ship portraits of HMC Ships *Haida*, *Chaudière*, *Huron*, and *Restigouche*, demonstrating a *joie de vivre*<sup>109</sup> for his temporary employment. Law relished this chance to explore other venues and to work with the official naval war artists, albeit briefly. At the end of the war, when he was assigned to the program full time, Law saw this as an opportune way to make the transition to peacetime and to “paint the war out of [his] system.”<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Laura Brandon, “Obituary: C. Anthony Law (1916-1996) Official War Artist”, *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (Spring 1997), p. 99.

<sup>110</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia* 12 May – 25 June 1989, p.12 from Bernard Riordon conversation with Tony Law.



*C. Anthony Law  
HMCS Huron  
1943  
CWM 19710261-4086  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

Self-described as a “naval character”, Law was not afflicted with seasickness but like the other war artists he was challenged by the elements when painting at sea. “Too much wind and your wood panel would blow off your easel,” he recalled.<sup>111</sup> With little time to capture the moment, Law worked quickly and directly from dark to light, as instructed by Hennessey, “racing his brush” across the smooth surface of his linseed-oiled panels.<sup>112</sup>

In Scapa Flow, using his Quebec-purchased paintbox,<sup>113</sup> Law finished many paintings “complete on the spot.”<sup>114</sup> However, in his studio ashore, relying on his prodigious memory he would work up some sketches for larger and more detailed

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<sup>111</sup> Transcript Joan Murray telephone interview with Commander Anthony Law, July 1981, p. 2. The Robert McLaughlin Gallery Archives, Oshawa, Ontario.

<sup>112</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. Law credited Hennessey in teaching him how to capture the key elements of a scene with a few quick strokes of the brush. CWM Archives.

<sup>113</sup> Klempan, “Paintbox at Sea”, p. 68. Klempan compared the paint build-up on the edges of Law’s paint box and the edges of Law’s panels in the CWM collection to conclude that he used the box on location. Law’s preferred painting surface of birch panels were specially ordered for the painter. All the panels measured 33 cm x 44 cm and fit into the lid of his paint box that doubled as a collapsible easel.

<sup>114</sup> Lieutenant J. George to Vincent Massey, 20 November 1943. LAC, MG24 11749 file CS617.

canvases.<sup>115</sup> While night photography was difficult, Law's paintings<sup>116</sup> embody the MTB action in the Channel.



*C. Anthony Law,  
MTBs Returning  
to Dover  
c1942  
Courtesy of the  
Maritime Museum of the  
Atlantic, Halifax*

The *Toronto Telegram* described Law's work as "vivid reactions of an artistic nature to the opulent colour, the swift action and the stern discipline of maritime warfare in the North Atlantic waters."<sup>117</sup> Law's innate ability to recall the imagery of heavy action was described in a 1943 interview in the *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*:

Certain subjects, phases of battle, for instance, form unforgettable scenes in one's mind. Such as lovely designs of star shells, flak and the horrors of war, ships sinking or on fire... I remember a certain night when we met a large enemy convoy heavily escorted. They put twelve star shells into the sky that was looking so beautiful. It was just like the 24th of May. That was the subject of my painting showing our boats in the middle of the night, with all the details shown because of the brilliant light coming from the star shells. And as the battle was progressing, dawn broke east and we could see the enemy convoy ships silhouetted against the horizon. That

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<sup>115</sup> Minute Sheet, 7 December 1943, Lieutenant Jim George, HRO to SCONO (London). Law shared studio space with Cdr Harold Beament at Fairfax House along with Army and RCAF artists. LAC, MG24, Vol 11749, file 617.

<sup>116</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with Mrs. Jane Shaw Law July 11, 2004. Tony Law was a tireless artist who in his later years could produce a painting a day. He worked in a large-scale format, quickly and primarily with a palette knife leaning towards the abstract. Dispensing with working drawings, Law preferred to work directly on canvas or wood panel.

<sup>117</sup> *Toronto Telegram*, 20 June 1942.

was a scene that I can still see today in my mind. It was simply unforgettable. And it was easy to reproduce it on the canvas.<sup>118</sup>

It was not Law's intention to replicate the scene but instead to present a sense of the experience. "I want the one who will look at this painting to feel the grandeur of the spectacle I witnessed. The dawn breaking in the background with the silhouettes of the enemy convoy ships, the star shells lighting the sky as in daytime and our motor torpedo boats gliding swiftly over the sea," he remarked.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, his brush was as eloquent as his writing and his mind's eye was constantly composing his next painting. During a transit at dusk to Dover he noted his surroundings: "the sky was filled with clouds soaking in the golden rays of the sinking sun, the waters were tinted with flame, and the chalk cliffs had turned to cobalt blue with hints of rose. In the midst of all this splendor the crews were tense...."<sup>120</sup>

In late 1943 Vincent Massey made arrangements for a special exhibition of Canadian War art at the National Gallery in London for February 1944 and hoped Law would have something ready to submit. "I should be glad if you would let Law know of these dates. Should he be unable to complete by the 1<sup>st</sup> of December a work of some importance ...can still be considered at a later date,"<sup>121</sup> wrote Massey. The exhibition was modest in size with room for only 50 pieces. RCAF and Army war artists dominated the show, and only four paintings from the naval side of the program were accepted. Tony Law submitted an impressive 30 paintings for adjudication, but only one, *East*

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<sup>118</sup>Lt. Jacques Trepanier, "Lt. 'Tony' Law Tells How Navy Inspired Art," *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*, 11 December, 1943.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Law, p. 44.

<sup>121</sup> Vincent Massey to Lieutenant J. George, RCN, HRO, 16 November, 1943. Massey was making every effort to accommodate Tony Law in the exhibition. The exhibition was called the "Canadian Service War Painting Show" and was opened by the Duchess of Kent on 10 February 1944. LAC, MG24, Vol 11749, file 617.

*Coast Convoy* was selected. Lt George tried to soften the blow to Law. “I know that this will be a great disappointment to you...Your rejects are in company with both of Ronnie’s [Lt Ronald Weyman], one of Commander [Harold] Beament’s and one by [Graeme] Aldwinkle,” he wrote.<sup>122</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
East Coast Convoy  
1943  
CWM 19710261-4068  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

Massey was furious. He had lost confidence in the naval war artists with the exception of Tony Law and accordingly wrote to Captain F.L. Houghton, RCN, SCNO (London): “Although this officer is the only one of the four not acting as a full time artist and only paints when he is on leave from his duties as a combatant officer, his work was larger in quantity and more suitable in quality than submitted by the other artists.”<sup>123</sup>

Law kept in touch with his fellow naval artists and occasionally hosted them onboard his MTB. Tom Wood embarked on an evening adventure with Tony to land British commandos off Dieppe. MTB 459 had just come out of refit and was sporting a flashy new paint job. “She looked very special...her sides had been painted a glorious robin’s-egg blue and her decks contrasted handsomely in darker blue,” Law recalled. Despite the obvious danger of the cross Channel operation, the sortie itself was

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<sup>122</sup> Lt George to Tony Law dated 7 February 1944. LAC, MG24, Vol 11749, file 617.

<sup>123</sup> Confidential letter from Vincent Massey to F. L. Houghton, dated 4 May 1944. LAC, RG24, Vol. 11749, file 617.

uneventful until 459 came under the friendly fire of two destroyers off Portsmouth. Law was not impressed with the obvious shenanigans of the ships “delighting themselves by putting shells over our heads” and he fired off a message accordingly.<sup>124</sup> Tom Wood, grateful for a reprieve from his usual convoy duties, enjoyed the “jaunt immensely”.<sup>125</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
MTBs departing for English Channel.  
c1942  
Courtesy of William Brayley*

Law's naval artist contemporaries shared different challenges as they attempted to record life at sea in convoys crossing the Atlantic. Grant MacDonald, Tom Wood, Frank Leonard Brooks and Harold Beament, frustrated by long sea voyages and little action to record, turned to portraiture<sup>126</sup> and depicting the daily routine of sailors at sea. Law, in the midst of the fray on a daily basis and seeing more than his share of action, used his art-making to relax, “forgetting for a time about your [his] service work.”<sup>127</sup>

After the long battle against German U-Boats in the North Atlantic subsided in the spring of 1943, the naval war shifted to the English Channel in preparation for the invasion in 1944. Two flotillas of MTBs, including Law's 29<sup>th</sup> and several Canadian

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<sup>124</sup> Law, p. 43

<sup>125</sup> Ibid and Interview: Allan Walkinshaw and Tom Wood, 2 May 1979, MG 31 D142 Vol. 6. CWM, Wood Artist's files.

<sup>126</sup> Lord, p. 186. During the inter-war years, an interest in portraiture arose among the social-realist and mural painters. An example is Miller Brittain's, Saint John Hospital mural cartoons.

Tribal class destroyers, joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Destroyer Flotilla, bolstering the fast striking British Fleet out of Plymouth. In the skies above British and American planes maintained an around-the-clock bombing campaign against targets in Europe, smashing factories, harbours and ports, airfields, railway lines and transportation routes that would abet the enemy after the landing.

Embarking on chilling, night-time sorties involving "high-speed brawling in the dark," the primary role of the "Fighting 10<sup>th</sup>" was to destroy enemy warships, blockade occupied harbours, attack coastal convoys and participate in intelligence gathering in the Channel area.<sup>128</sup> As a secondary role, the wooden-hulled MTBs were tasked to protect Allied ships during mine laying operations. During this period of intensity Law lost more than fourteen pounds but never his resolve. "He was a quiet man, but out there at night he'd put on another overcoat, and did the things that make people heroes. We loved him...." recalled Able Seaman Tim Blaiklock, 459's foredeck gunner.<sup>129</sup> Similarly Cdr Tony German, who served with Law after the war, thought him "soft-spoken and introspective" and had difficulty reconciling his friend's demeanor with "the hero of those blazing, suicidal, point-blank battles."<sup>130</sup>

As the spring of 1944 approached, preparations for the Normandy invasion were undertaken in earnest and the concentration of activity in the English Channel intensified. *Canadian Tribal Destroyers in Action* is an example of the intensity of the action and depicts the evening of 25-26 April, when HMC and RN ships engaged in a fierce battle

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<sup>127</sup> Lt Jacques Trepanier, "Lt 'Tony' Law Tells How Navy Inspired Art". *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*, 11 December, 1943.

<sup>128</sup> Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 144. An estimated 230 enemy surface ships were in the Channel area including 16 destroyers, 50 E-boats, 60 H-boats, armed trawlers, minesweepers, etc. In the four months which ended August 23, the 10th Flotilla sank 35 surface vessels, including four destroyers, and damaged 14 others.

<sup>129</sup> "Cool commander inspired confidence", *Halifax Mail Star*, 10 January, 1997.

with three German Elbing-class destroyers off the coast of France. Law creates a deceptively calm evening eerily illuminated by star shell casting a greenish glow off centre of the canvas. “The brighter they were, they must have been German,” Law said about flares.<sup>131</sup> “It’s very hard to paint night actions...star shells coming down...you felt naked when they put them over you...they were on little parachutes, and took a while to come down,” he added.<sup>132</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Canadian Tribal  
Destroyers in Action, 1946  
CWM 19710261-4057  
Beaverbrook Collection of  
War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

*Annotation on crossbar on  
reverse:  
CANADIAN TRIBEL [sic]  
DESTROYERS IN ACTION  
OF [sic] BREST  
(FRANCE); 6th AUGUST  
1944 - AGAINST  
GERMAN CONVOY SUNK  
9 ENEMY SHIPS*

In the foreground, HMC Ships *Haida*, *Huron* and *Athabaskan* and Royal Navy ships *Ashanti* and *Black Prince* bear down on the enemy in a long sweeping arc towards a high horizon. Calmness is reinforced by the rhythmic verticals found in the wave action, “foaming columns,” reflections and the masts and funnels of the ships. The quiet mood belies the reality of the scene as deadly rounds find their mark on the fleeing German ships afire in the distance. “They had quite a battle that night – drove the Germans right up on the rocks,” said Law.<sup>133</sup> *Ashanti* and *Huron* collided with each other during the action and were out of commission three days later when *Haida* and *Athabaskan* were

<sup>130</sup> Cdr Tony German, “Lives Lived: C. Anthony Law”, *Globe and Mail*, 12 November 1996.

<sup>131</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM Archives.

<sup>132</sup> Dean F. Oliver and Laura Brandon, *Canvas of War*, p. 113.

involved in another skirmish. In that encounter, *Haida* sank one Elbing, but a torpedo found *Athabaskan* and she sank with the loss of 128 of her crew.<sup>134</sup>

*Canadian Tribal Destroyers in Action* is a studio painting, created by Law in Ottawa after the war and “based on research and talking to Harry DeWolf”, *Haida*’s CO. When Cdr Law next saw the painting in 1994 at the CWM he pointed out that he had used Van Dyke brown in the foreground. “That is a colour I don’t use – don’t touch it nowadays, can’t stand it!”<sup>135</sup>

Dawn rose on 6 June 1944 to an armada of 5,300 ships and auxiliary vessels transporting 150,000 soldiers and 1,500 tanks to the Normandy coast. *Operation Overlord* had started which saw more than a million men and millions of tons of material move across the Channel in support of the Allied drive for victory in Europe.

Just east of the beachhead at Le Havre, Law led ten attacks on German E-Boats, R-Boats and four Elbing destroyers earning a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for “gallantry, skill and undaunted devotion to duty” against the enemy forces. In August of 1944 he received the following letter recognizing his valour:

Sir, I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that they have learned with great pleasure that, on the advice of the First Lord, the King has been graciously pleased to award you the Distinguished Service Cross<sup>136</sup> for outstanding courage, skill and determination shown when in command of Motor Torpedo Boat 459 in the initial landings of Allied Forces on the coast of Normandy in June 1944.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994.

<sup>134</sup> W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty and Michael Whitby, *A Blue Water Navy, The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1943-1945*, (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2007), pp. 222-229.

<sup>135</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994.

<sup>136</sup> <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=collections/cmdp/mainmenu/group01/dsc>, 7 March 2009. "DSC was awarded to naval personnel, from Warrant Officer to Lieutenant, for the performance of meritorious or distinguished services before the enemy. "

<sup>137</sup> W. Droop to Acting Temporary Lieutenant-Commander Charles Anthony Law, D.S.C., R.C.N.V.R. 31 August 1944. LAC RGMG30 Series E260, Vol. 1 Correspondence 1940 – 1954 and Canadian War Museum Artist File, Anthony Law.

For nine months the MTBs continued to engage the enemy close to the coasts of France, Belgium and Holland. Many 29<sup>th</sup> personnel were decorated for bravery and at a tremendous cost. Overall, the Flotilla suffered a 37 per cent casualty rate in the ongoing campaign. The crews were battle weary and “fatigued almost to the breaking point.”<sup>138</sup> In his *White Plumes Astern*, Law chronicles the "short, daring life of Canada's MTB Flotilla" speaking frequently of the courage and camaraderie of his crews.<sup>139</sup> This was particularly true as the invasion progressed and the war in the Channel continued to wage on relentlessly, weighing heavily on nerves. Jane Shaw would later recall that her husband would wake up in the night believing he was in the throes of battle. Little was available in those times to treat post-war stress and Tony Law suffered for years before he “could shake off” the nighttime memories.<sup>140</sup>

A particularly stressful evening occurred off Dunkirk on 13-14 September 1944 when 486 and sister MTBs 466 and 485 were ordered to intercept E-Boats delivering supplies to the German army on the Belgian coast. Law described the evening’s events as the boats crept towards Dunkirk, accessible only through a perilously narrow passage:

It was a long trip up the channel, and the boats glided quietly through the water at ten knots, with silencers...hearing the waves breaking on the shore, I ordered the unit to stop. The harbour was only about 500 yards ahead of us, and I thought we were too close to the shore... and just at that moment the enemy switched on a searchlight a mere 400 yards away. I was sure the end had come. Our boats were surrounded by steel obstructions, placed there by the Germans to prevent landings on the beach....Disengaging slowly under the powerful sweep of the searchlight, we held our breaths, hoping against hope that the batteries on the breakwater wouldn't open up. Luck was with us that night and we

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<sup>138</sup> Law, p. 119. Three MTBs were lost – two to mines, and a third from gun fire from shore batteries.

<sup>139</sup> Law wrote the book after the war but didn't publish until seven years before he died.

<sup>140</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with Dr. Paul Price, 3 September, 2008.

managed to tiptoe away safely.....we all thanked God that we weren't having breakfast as prisoners-of-war in Dunkirk.<sup>141</sup>

Two nights later the MTBs were at it again and almost upon Dunkirk when their mission was cancelled by the operations centre at Dover Castle. Frustrated, disappointed and bone weary, the boats turned about for the long passage back to port. Upon returning, the crews were taken aback when they learned that the Germans had strewn mines across the channel leading into Dunkirk and booby-trapped the obstructions that the boats had brushed against days earlier. Law recalled turning “grateful eyes to the heavens” and saying “a silent prayer of thanks.”<sup>142</sup> It seems that the gremlins were still watching over Tony Law and his crews.



*C. Anthony Law  
The surrender of the German E-Boats  
1945  
CWM 19710261-4118  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

In January 1945, as the war progressed inland and after the Channel ports fell to the Allies, the MTB flotillas established a base of operations in Ostend, Belgium. On 15 February of that year catastrophe struck the 29<sup>th</sup>. Sixteen of the boats, loaded with high-octane fuel, torpedoes and ammunition, were rafted together in a creek just off the main harbour. Earlier in the day, approximately fifty gallons of gasoline were accidentally

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<sup>141</sup> Law, p. 140.

discharged over the side when MTB 464 pumped fuel instead of water out of her bilge during repairs.



*The 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla  
rafted together in  
Ostend, 22 June  
1944.*

*Photo Courtesy of  
Mrs. Jane Shaw  
Law*

At approximately 4 p.m. fire broke out between two of the MTBs.<sup>143</sup> Fanned by a strong offshore breeze, the flames spread quickly throughout the creek area. Minutes later a massive explosion felt seventy miles away in England, spewed flaming debris over the waterfront, the wooden MTBs and sailors. Scores were injured and more than forty men were rescued from the burning waters. Quick action by the coxswain of MTB 485 saved several lives when he managed to move three of the MTBs upstream and out of danger.

Cdr M.A. Brind, RN, remembered the devastation:

...heavy explosions were taking place, possibly from torpedo air vessels exploding...Ammunition, including 6-pounders, were firing in all directions, rockets were exploding and depth-charges were burning, and there was a sheet of flame covering the whole area, covered by a pall of black smoke. LSTs, minesweepers, and MTBs were trying to get away and there were numerous men in the water all around the scene of action. At the same time a large number of aircraft were going overhead at 1500 to 2000 feet...one man even baled out in his alarm.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Law, p. 141.

<sup>143</sup> Naval scuttlebutt claims that a deliberately tossed cigarette was the culprit in starting the fire. It is believed that the sailor concerned knew that his actions would cause the fire but he had no intention of causing the explosions that followed.

<sup>144</sup> Cited in *Blue Water Navy*, p. 33. Brind to Commander in Chief (C.-in-C.) Nore, 16 Feb 1945, PRO, ADM116/5493. Cdr Brind, RN, was in charge of Coastal Force Mobile Unit 1 and was responsible for ship repairs and maintenance to the MTB Flotillas.



*MTB flotilla fire in Ostend,  
15 February, 1945.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

At the end of the day the lives of 60 sailors were lost, 26 of them Canadian.<sup>145</sup> A subsequent Board of Inquiry concluded that sludge in the harbour more than likely concealed the fuel making it indistinguishable from the water, therefore not raising any alarms or safety concerns. Fortuitously, Law had returned to England the day before for radar repairs on *486* and was not with his flotilla. The next morning he was summoned to the cabin of Cdr T. Kerr, the Commanding Officer of HMS *Beehive* at Felixstowe and offered a “stiff gin.” “Senior Officers do not ordinarily offer drinks to their juniors early in the morning, and my heart began to pound in dreadful apprehension,” Law recalled.<sup>146</sup> The news came like a body blow.

The loss of the 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla and its crew was felt across Canada. It was the largest single disaster to hit the Canadian MTBs and the 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla never recovered. Angus L. Macdonald, Minister of National Defence for Naval Services, had recently visited the 29<sup>th</sup> and sent his sentiments to LCdr Law:

I have been thinking much about you in the last few days, and should like to express my great personal sympathy over what has happened. I know how you must feel about a matter of this kind, but you may be sure that what you have accomplished is, in itself, sufficient to justify you and your officers for all time.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Fraser McKee and Robert Darlington, *Canadian Naval Chronicle, 1935-1945*, (St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing, 1996), p. 205. One officer and 25 men were lost.

<sup>146</sup> Law, p. 161.

<sup>147</sup> Angus L. Macdonald to Lt Cdr C.A. Law, D.S.C. 1 March 1945. LAC MG30, Series E260, Vol 1, Correspondence 1940-1954.

With victory in Europe imminent, the need for a large coastal defensive fleet dissipated and a decision was taken not to rebuild the 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla. For the first time in three years Law was without a command. An offer extended to the survivors to join the 65<sup>th</sup> Flotilla was declined by most, and the majority of the 29<sup>th</sup> sailors, including the commanding officer were repatriated to Canada.

Once home, Law was reassigned and formally appointed as “Special Naval War Artist, additional on the staff of Director of Naval Intelligence, Naval Historians Section”. He remained with the program until his release from war service on 14 July 1946.<sup>148</sup>

Greatly affected by the loss of his men and the MTB fleet, he worked prolifically "over the next nine months" as if "trying to paint the war out of his system,"<sup>149</sup> Law's work lost its "youthful confidence"<sup>150</sup> and took on an uncharacteristically sober and tragic tenor. *Graveyard Sorel*, is of paid-off corvettes awaiting disposal. An atypical stillness is in the air as the ships, no longer of use to the RCN, appear forlorn as they await their fate. Law achieved this quietness with deep reflections, a brooding palette of purples and repeated verticals. Dr. Laura Brandon observed that Law's use of colours traditionally associated with Easter as reinforcing the funereal mood of the painting of ships reaching the end of their useful life.<sup>151</sup> *Corvettes Sailing up the St. Lawrence to the Graveyard* is another example of Law's work during this melancholic phase.

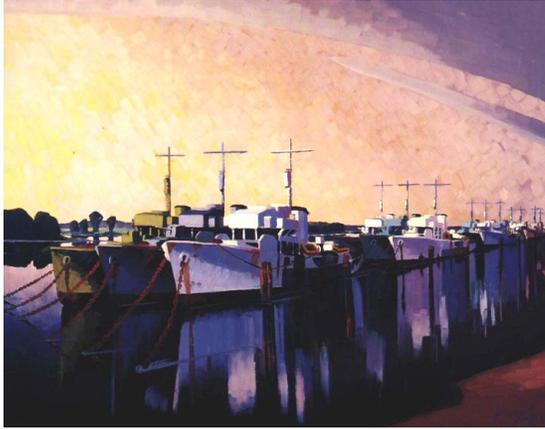
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<sup>148</sup> R.F. Wodehouse, Curator, War Collections, DND to Professor Ghislain Clement, Department of Visual Arts, Université de Moncton, 7 Aug 1969. Wodehouse was responding to Dr. Clement's query requesting validation that Peter Whyte, Charles Goldhammer, Charles Law, and Jack Shadbolt had been official war artists. LAC MG30, Series E260, Vol. 1, Correspondence.

<sup>149</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with Mrs. Jane Law, July 11, 2004.

<sup>150</sup> Brandon, C. *Anthony Law (1916-1996) Official War Artist*, p. 99.

<sup>151</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM.



C. Anthony Law  
*Graveyard Sorel, P.Q., 1946*  
CWM 19710261-4075  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum



C. Anthony Law  
*Corvettes Sailing up the St. Lawrence to the Graveyard, 1945*  
CWM 19710261-4062  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum

Law admitted to being challenged by figure drawing, professing that “his figures [were] too wooden.”<sup>152</sup> Similar to Paul Nash and A.Y. Jackson’s soldiers of WWI, Law used figures as markers to underscore perspective and scale as illustrated in his pen and ink sketch *Men of the 29th Relaxing on Ramsgate Beach*. However, in *Survivors, Normandy, Off Le Havre* Law makes an exception. The work is a reconstruction of the loss of MTB 463 after it set off a submerged mine in the Sword Beach area of Normandy. The MTB’s exhausted crew can be seen clinging to Carley floats in the foreground and alongside in the distance.<sup>153</sup> Apart from the conflagration consuming the sinking boat, the painting is shrouded in purples and dark blues contributing to a mood of despair. Law uses firelight to illuminate bent bodies and sinewy strokes to delineate tired muscles. Later, Law recalled the painting was a “product of my [his] vivid imagination” as he only had time to make brief sketches during the rescue effort.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Joan Murray, Exhibition Catalogue: “Canadian Artists of the Second World War”, *The Robert McLaughlin Gallery*, Oshawa, 27 October - 30 November 1981, p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> Law, pp. 106-109. MTB 463 was part of Law’s 29<sup>th</sup> Canadian Motor Torpedo Boat Flotilla. The boat was lost on the evening of 8 July, 1944.

<sup>154</sup> Joan Murray, “Canadian Artists of the Second World War”, p. 74.



C. Anthony Law  
*Men of the 29<sup>th</sup> Relaxing on Ramsgate Beach*  
 LAC C127037  
 Illustration White Plumes Astern



C. Anthony Law  
*Survivors, Normandy, Off Le Havre*  
 1945, CWM 19710261-4119  
 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
 Canadian War Museum

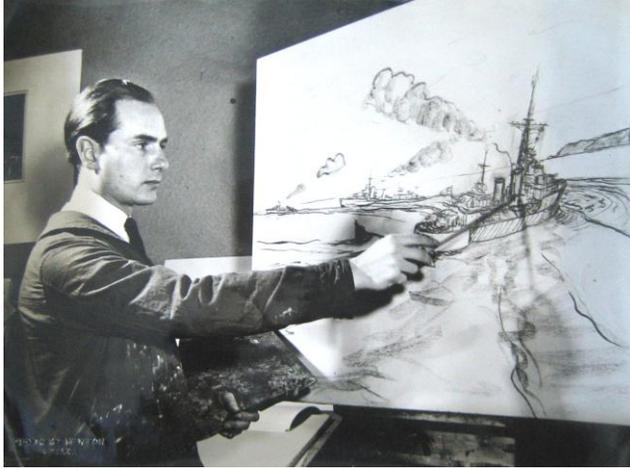
Within nine months<sup>155</sup> Law, rejuvenated, was back using his familiar bold style and vibrant palette. *Windy Day in the British Assault Area* shows his beloved MTBs, *white plumes astern*, riding herd on a slower moving assault force on D-Day. His especially lively palette of blues and yellows, coupled with powerful diagonals and broad sweeping strokes, energize the tiny Canadian ships as they boldly cut through the surging sea towards *Scylla* after an exhausting night on patrol.<sup>156</sup> Law described the scene:

The cold dawn broke over the sea still capped with ruffled foam. Overhead the clouds scurried briskly by. It was another miserable day for MTBs. The only thing which seemed to be in our favour was the clock, which having moved to around 0500 allowed us to leave the patrol. The four little boats pounded home to Mother *Scylla* relieved to see her once again.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with Mrs. Jane Law, July 25, 2004.

<sup>156</sup> Law, p. 74. HMS *Scylla* was the RN's Coastal Force Command and Control ship and the MTB captains would meet onboard daily to gather intelligence and plan the next night's operations.

<sup>157</sup> Law, p. 76.



*LCdr Law sketching Windy Day in the British Assault Area, in his Ottawa studio, 1945.*

*DND photo*

Law recorded scenes of the RCN's post-war "laying up" with a particular focus on the west coast which had seen little war art activity during the war. He recalled being sent to Prince Rupert as being forgettable. "Nothing but rain and fog," he noted.<sup>158</sup> Back in Ottawa and in a bull pen studio in the Militia Stores Building at Cartier Square, Law greatly enjoyed going to the supply cupboard to avail himself of the necessary supplies to "paint up" his Canadian and overseas sketches.<sup>159</sup>

Law looked back at his wartime service with candor and good humour:

We were a group of amateurs...We had to develop our own MTBs tactics throughout the war and learn and we became very competent in the end. We knew what we were doing. We knew how to use our boats to the best advantage. But in the primitive days it was fantastic! The boo-boos we made. I remember once I was yelling at one officer who was new at Dover, "Don't shoot your torpedoes." He said, "It's a tanker." I said, "No it's the Boulogne breakwater," and he fired. And there was a bang on the breakwater.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM.

<sup>159</sup> Joan Murray, "Canadian Artists of the Second World War", p. 12. Other war artists worked out of studio space at the Eglinton Hunt Club in Toronto.

<sup>160</sup> Hal Lawrence interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, 29 January 1986, p.42. DND Archives, DHH.



*The Laws attending exhibition of Canadian war art featuring 258 works created by CWR artists at the NGC, 1945. DND photo*

*While “thousands of Englishmen and Italians had seen the Canadian work,..there had been no opportunity for the people at home to see what heritage was being built for them in visual record of their nation’s place in the world conflict.” Globe & Mail, 15 February 1945*

Although relatively short, Law's period as an official war artist generated twenty-nine canvasses and 75 oil sketches, dramatically exceeding the requirements of the Canadian War Artists Committee and the output of the other full-time artists in the program. Law's work forms an important record of Canada's naval war, "doing justice to History, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at any time."<sup>161</sup> Like A.Y. Jackson's *Houses of Ypres*, his *Destruction of Old Chelsea Church (London)*, 1945 attests to the skill and talent of an artist to filter out adversity in order to portray beauty in the most horrific subjects and conditions. Anna-Marie Larsen and Jeff Viner argue that the “khaki” palette chosen by Law reflect earlier influences.<sup>162</sup> Indeed it can be said that *Destruction of Old Chelsea Church* and *V2 bomb damage – Portsmouth* harken back to his exposure to war-time camouflage and perhaps to the war-art of Jackson and Varley.

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<sup>161</sup> See Appendix A. Instructions to War Artists.

<sup>162</sup> Anna-Marie Larsen and Jeff Viner, “C. Anthony Law: A Retrospective, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, 12 May – 25 June 1989”, *Arts Canada* 36, Vol. 9, No. 4, (Winter 1990).



*A.Y. Jackson,  
Ablain St. Nazaire, 1917  
CWM 19710261-0835  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*



*C. Anthony Law,  
Destruction of Old Chelsea Church [London]  
by V2 bomb, 1945  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*

Law's wartime experience has to be considered unique in the extreme. While most veterans would take satisfaction in serving their country and surviving as a combatant, Law made an additional and remarkable contribution to his country as an artist. Law claimed that his art balanced the stress of warfare and perhaps it was this balance that allowed him to perform at such a high level over five hectic years.

## CHAPTER THREE - THE PAINTING COMMANDER



*C. Anthony Law  
Alaskan Glacier, 1947  
Naden Officers' Mess  
, CFB Esquimalt, BC  
Courtesy of DND*

*Caption:  
"Painted and presented to  
HMCS Uganda by Lieutenant  
Anthony Law, DSC, RCN,  
1947"*

In 1945, after victory in Europe and Japan, the Second World War ended. But world peace was to be short lived. With the emergence of the United States and Russia as super powers, a heightened state of military readiness replaced combat, as the one-time Allies against Hitler squared off against each other for the protracted Cold War. The conflict of ideologies as the superpowers jockeyed for supremacy dominated international affairs for the next thirty-five years. Canada was drawn into the fray in 1945 with the defection of Igor Gouzenko and the revelation that the Soviets were engaged in espionage in Ottawa.<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Mackenzie King regarded the Soviet intrusion as “a menace that needs to be stopped.”<sup>2</sup>

At the end of WWII, Canada had the third largest navy in the world. However, a large number of her ships were purpose-built corvettes, manned primarily by RCNVR. Members of the RCNVR had no post-war commitment to Canada, and most returned to civilian life after the cessation of hostilities. Similarly, the majority of the ships

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<sup>1</sup> [http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/national\\_security/topics/72/](http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/national_security/topics/72/), accessed 7 March 2009.  
On Sept. 5, 1945, Gouzenko a cipher clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa defected, carrying evidence validating Russian espionage in Canada.

constructed during the war, were paid off. By December 1947 the RCN was in a much-reduced state, left with only ten warships,<sup>3</sup> 7500 Regular Force personnel and only enough financial support from the government to maintain minimum capability.<sup>4</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
HMCS Crescent  
nd  
Collection of the  
Maritime Command  
Museum,  
CFB Halifax  
Courtesy of DND*

In 1946 and after completion of his contract as an official war artist, Tony Law felt that he had been away from mainstream Canadian art for too long and chose instead to follow a career with the RCN which he pursued for the next 20 years.<sup>5</sup> He was the only one of the war artists to follow this path. During his subsequent years in service, now engaged in a more subtle conflict of intelligence gathering, threat assessment and preparing for battle, Law kept up with his painting, earning the sobriquet the "painting commander."

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<sup>2</sup> Milner, *Canada's Navy, The First Century*, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel D.J. Goodspeed, *The Armed Forces of Canada, 1867 – 1967, A Century of Achievement*, (Directorate of History, Canadian Forces Headquarters, Ottawa 1967), p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> Peter T Haydon, "Canadian Involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis Reconsidered", *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*, XVII No. 2, (April 2007).

<sup>5</sup> When Law joined the Regular Navy in 1946 he reverted from the rank of Lieutenant Commander to Lieutenant, as was the procedure.



C. Anthony Law  
*HMCS Uganda Re-fitting, Esquimalt, 1945*  
 CWM 19710261-4097  
 Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
 Canadian War Museum



Lt Anthony Law painting at sea onboard HMCS Uganda.  
 Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law

While he served briefly in *Uganda*, Law's first command with the RCN during peacetime was the paid-off WWII frigate HMCS *Antigonish* in Esquimalt. *Antigonish* was taken out of retirement to train personnel in Canada's post-war navy and Tony Law was her captain from 17 August 1947 to 3 December 1948.<sup>6</sup>



*Strong Winds*  
 C. Anthony Law  
 1947  
 Photo courtesy of Mrs. Jane Law

STRONG WINDS - WEST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND B.C. OIL PAINTING - PAINTED ON 36" X 48" CANVAS. CAPTAIN KEN GRAHAM OWEN THE PAINTING. HE DIED IN THE 1950's.  
 PAINTED 1947  
 WITH FAMOUS PILOT, I TOOK HMCS ANITGONISH THROUGH A DIFFICLT CHANNEL WITH REEFS AND ROCKS AND STRONG WINDS. I NEEDED A DOUBLE SCOTCH WHEN I ANCHORED

Law captured on canvas port visits along the Pacific seaboard from Magdalene Bay, Mexico to Devil's Thumb, Alaska,<sup>7</sup> venturing ashore when he could, in his old

<sup>6</sup> Ken Macpherson and Ron Barrie, *The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces, 1910 – 2002*, Third Edition, (St. Catherines Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2002), p. 84. *Antigonish* spent 218 days at sea and steamed 23,552 nautical miles during the training program.

<sup>7</sup> "Naval Officer and Wife Display Paintings in City", *Victoria Colonist*, 24 September 1948.

painting clothes with his easel under his arm. In Mexico, heavily tanned from the southern deployment he was mistaken as a local by visiting sailors and asked if he could speak English. Law took great delight in responding to the young visitors in his best Queen’s vernacular. When asked how he could paint and still run a ship, he replied: “Simple, I just make use of sports days and the like and paint while the others are golfing, fishing or what have you.”<sup>8</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Devil's Thumb Alaska, 1947<sup>9</sup>  
Photo courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*



*C. Anthony Law  
HMCS Antigonish and the Devil's Thumb, 1948  
Maritime Command Museum, Courtesy of DND*

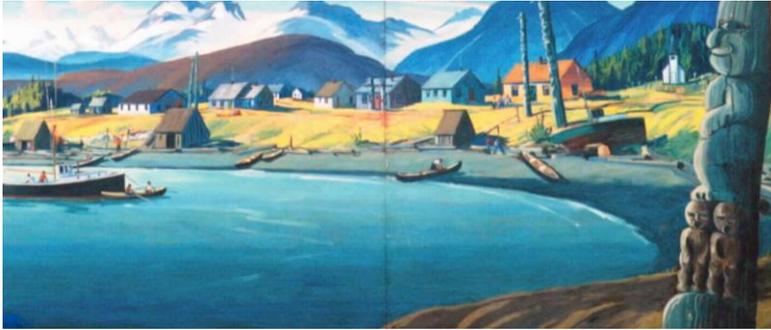


*C. Anthony Law  
Esquimalt Harbour, B.C., 1945,  
CWM 19710261-4071  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

As he did in the United Kingdom, Law left his mark in the officers’ messes of ships and shore establishments of the Canadian Navy. In Victoria, Law completed four

<sup>8</sup> “Sailor Painter Finds NS “Artist Paradise””, *Chronicle Herald*, 9 April 1952.

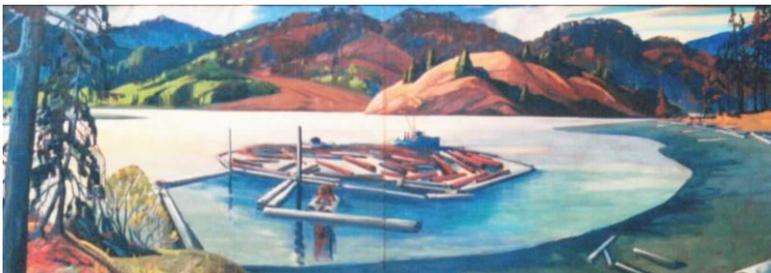
sweeping British Columbia-themed murals on birch plywood for the Naden Officers' mess at CFB Esquimalt. The paintings, measuring 4'x12'each, were transferred to the new mess over-looking the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 1998.



*C. Anthony Law  
Haida Indian Culture of 4000  
years  
1947  
CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess  
Courtesy of DND*



*C. Anthony Law  
The Fishing Industry  
1948  
CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess  
Courtesy of DND*



*C. Anthony Law  
The Logging World  
1948  
CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess  
Courtesy of DND*



*C. Anthony Law  
The Northern Fishing Fleet  
1948  
CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess  
Courtesy of DND*

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<sup>9</sup> Annotation from Law family album. "Given by the artist to Angus Morrison on his wedding day. The painting hung in the Rideau Club in Ottawa Ontario until fire destroyed the club in 1979".



*C. Anthony Law painting donated to the Officers' Mess, CFB Halifax. Painting whereabouts unknown.*

MESS DINNER - STADACENA WARDROOM - T. LAW'S PAINTING DONATED TO THE WARDROOM - IN MEMORY OF THE LATE LT. CDR BISHOP RCN. 1944.

In HMCS *Uganda*, Law decorated the mess with two large paintings that were relocated ashore when the ship was paid off. These works also hang in the Officers' Mess at CFB *Esquimalt* and are as fresh and vibrant as when painted over sixty years ago.



*HMCS Uganda Wardroom Windswept Pine upper left.*

*Caption:*

*Painted and presented to HMCS Uganda by Lieutenant Anthony Law, DSC, RCN, 1947*



*C. Anthony Law*

*Windswept Pine*

*1947*

*CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess*

*Courtesy of DND*

Meanwhile, Jane, at home, skillful at “watercolours...wood carving, making pottery” and most recently weaving, was teaching painting in Victoria.<sup>10</sup> Both artists were hard-working at their craft as demonstrated in an exhibition at the Little Art Centre

<sup>10</sup> “Victoria Couple Combining Seafaring with Painting”, *Vancouver Sun*, 2 March 1948. Typically most newspaper reports on Tony Law and Jane Shaw’s went to great lengths to describe Law’s wartime service.

in Victoria in September 1948 of 53 recent paintings. Media coverage drew attention to Tony's "vivid colours and bright tones" and his paintings being "typical of a wide group of Canadian painters." Jane's work they reported, was delicate in style.<sup>11</sup> The papers noted that Jane worked professionally under her maiden name, Jane B. Shaw.



*Jane teaching watercolour in Victoria, B.C. circa 1947. Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law.*

From Victoria, Law was posted to Ottawa to serve as Defence Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Brooke Claxton. While at NDHQ in what he jokingly referred to as the "papier mâché basilica,"<sup>12</sup> Law won the Jessie Dow prize for the second time. The award's importance was not lost on the Minister, a fellow Quebecker and a forty-year member of the Montreal Art Gallery. Notably pleased that a member of the Canadian military and especially one of his staff was the recipient of this prestigious award Claxton wrote to Law: "...it is always a good thing that officers in the services, in addition to the efficient discharge of their duties, should also have the relations of good citizens with their own communities in all their civilian aspects...I congratulate you warmly...both in the service and in the arts...."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Victoria Colonist*, 24 September 1948.

<sup>12</sup> *Halifax Mail Star*, 18 January 1971. Interview with Gretchen Pierce during exhibition of his work at Gallery 1667.

<sup>13</sup> Minister of National Defence to Lieutenant-Commander C. A. Law, DSC, 4 May 1951. LAC, MG30, Series E260, Vol. 1, Correspondence 1940 – 1954.



*1951 Christmas cover of the RCN's monthly publication, the Crowsnest.*

In 1952 the Laws moved to Nova Scotia when Tony was posted to the East Coast. “This Province is an artist’s paradise,” he remarked. “I could spend months in just one spot painting all sorts of subject matter.”<sup>14</sup> The Law’s built their “dream house” in Boulderwood, off Purcells Cove Road, contracting the work themselves “for \$10,500. \$500 under our estimate!” Tony recorded.<sup>15</sup> After settling in, they traveled extensively throughout the province on painting expeditions with LeRoy and Marguerite Zwicker whose gallery in Halifax was one of only a few in the province. Years later, Ian Muncaster, Zwicker’s Gallery Director, remembered Law’s passion for his adopted province: “He was always fascinated by the coastline and its fishing villages...And his particular style lent itself well to those sorts of scenes. He was part of a group of painters who emerged here after the Second World War, working to develop a local market for local painters’ work. Before them [Jane Shaw and Tony Law], there was a colonial

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<sup>14</sup> *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax, 9 April 1952 and cited in “C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*, 12 May – 25 June 1989, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Law photograph album annotation.

attitude here; people preferred to buy British or European paintings.”<sup>16</sup> “Tony and Jane were part of an exciting stable of younger artists that were coming up which included Ruth SalteWainwright, Carol Hoorn Fraser, Joe Purcell”.<sup>17</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Nova Scotia Fishing Village  
c1952  
Courtesy of CFB Halifax*

*Nameplate:  
Presented to the Naval Nursing Officers  
by Lt.Cdr.(MN) Fay Rutledge A.R.R.C.  
Sept. 1954.*



*Jane and Cdr Tony Law attending student ball,  
HMCS Stadacona, 1955  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

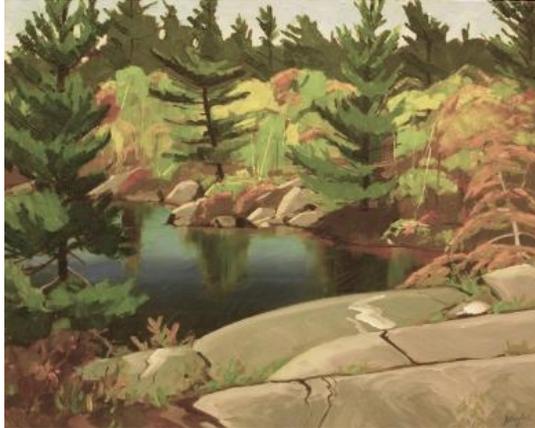
*I WAS TRAINING COMMANDER -  
HMCS STADACONA, 1953 TO 1955  
A STUDENT BALL STADACONA*

Jane and Tony embraced their new environment and integrated well socially in both the local and military communities. While never having any children of their own, they were readily adopted as surrogate parents by the neighbourhood children with Tony

<sup>16</sup> Andy Pedersen, “Artist Law continued work of ‘Groups of Seven’”, *Halifax Daily News*, 17 October 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Ian Muncaster, 9 January 2009.

building “Twinkle Class” boats for the children to sail on Williams Lake.<sup>18</sup> The lake was a never-ending source of material for Law and from the comfort of his studio he painted it throughout the year. When eleven-year-old Paul Price, a newcomer to the neighbourhood,<sup>19</sup> demonstrated an interest in learning how to paint, the Laws took him under their wing. The lessons and friendship lasted over thirty years.



C. Anthony Law  
*Spring on Williams Lake, nd*  
Courtesy of Zwicker's Gallery



C. Anthony Law  
*Summer at Williams Lake, nd*  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law



C. Anthony Law  
*Floating Leaves,*  
*Williams Lake, nd*  
Courtesy of Zwicker's Gallery



C. Anthony Law  
*Wet Snow, Williams Lake, nd*  
Collection of Dalhousie University Art Gallery

<sup>18</sup> Elissa Barnard and Jeffrey Simpson, “Law remembered as vivid”, *Halifax Mail Star*, 17 October 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Arthur Price, MD, *The Painting Surgeon, self-published*. Price’s father was the new American Consul General and the family moved to Purcell’s Cove Road, adjacent Boulderwood.

## MAGGIE'S DRAWERS



C. Anthony Law  
*Spithead Review, Portsmouth England*  
*HMCS Magnificent, c1953*  
Courtesy of the Shearwater Aviation Museum (SAM)



C. Anthony Law  
*HMCS Magnificent at anchor, Scapa Flow,*  
*c1953*  
Courtesy of SAM

In 1952 Tony Law was appointed First Lieutenant<sup>20</sup> in the aircraft carrier *HMCS Magnificent*, recently arrived in Canada after refit in Belfast, Northern Ireland. During a long deployment that brought the “*Maggie*” to the North Sea, Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean, Law formed an art class during after-duty hours, passing along lessons learned from Percyval Tudor-Hart and earlier classical training in Ottawa. Cdr Rowland Marshall, retired, fondly remembers Tony Law as a "gentleman seaman and artist: high standards in each profession. With my small oil paints box I joined the group. He started us painting small clusters of objects, so to comprise a still life. Mine included a Chianti bottle. He emphasized ‘light and shadow, and bold strong strokes,’ and my little painting still survives....”<sup>21</sup>

Guy Ouellet from Laretteville, Quebec recalls exchanging stories with LCdr Law regarding their home province of Quebec. Ouellet is a Francophone and despite this, all conversations were in English because Law struggled in French. Ouellette

<sup>20</sup> In an aircraft carrier, the First Lieutenant was second in command.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Rowland Marshall to Pat Jessup, December 2, 2005.

remembers Law as a strong, capable and considerate officer, who took very good care of the men in his command. He also remembers the painting classes were not his cup of tea, but he, as well as the ship's company, enjoyed seeing the progress made by the emerging artists.<sup>22</sup>

Three months into the deployment *Magnificent* was transformed into a floating art gallery and according to one seaman, the ship looked like “57<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City”<sup>23</sup> or “the Montmartre in Paris,” said another. Chief Petty Officer (CPO) George Green, a follower of Paul Cézanne, hung five of his paintings in the radio room while Able Seaman Gaston Boulanger's paintings were in the barbershop. “It's a good conversation starter for my customers,” claimed the barber, CPO Joseph Poirier. In the officers' flats, the passageway was renamed Greenwich Alley, and cabin doors were purposely left ajar to display artwork on the bulkheads.<sup>24</sup>



*Maggie's artists painting in their makeshift studio onboard ship.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

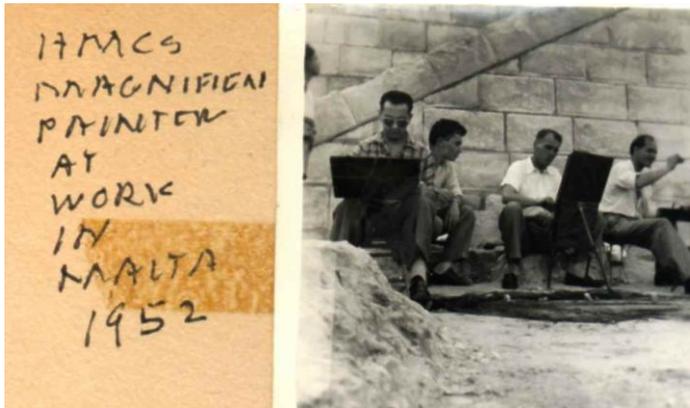
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<sup>22</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Guy Ouellet, 3 October 2008.

<sup>23</sup> “Maggie's Sea Going Artists Display Talent in Halifax Show”, *The Ottawa Journal*, 23 October 1952. CWM, Artist's File.

<sup>24</sup> “Magnificent's Art Club Makes Gallery of Carrier”, *Evening Tribune*, Welland Ontario, 10 December, 1952. CWM Archives, Law Artist's file.

As he had done with Varley, Masson and Hennessey, Law took his classes out into the countryside whenever *Magnificent* reached port. Renting cabs and buses and driving “until they found a good spot,” Maggie’s painters set up their easels from Greece to Scotland and went to work, giving a new meaning to “painting the town red.”



*Maggie’s sea going artists painting en plein air in the Mediterranean.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

Law was delighted with the progress of his class. “I’ve tried to let them develop their own style, and they have come along amazingly well. Right now we have some who lean towards the impressionists, the surrealists, the romanticists, and a few are trying non-objectives for a change.”<sup>25</sup> Regardless, he had little use for modern art. “It is too hard to tell a real artist in that field, and so many are posing as painters just to make a quick dollar from gullible socialites.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> “Maggie’s Sea Going Artists Display Talent in Halifax Show”, *The Ottawa Journal*, 23 October 1952.

<sup>26</sup> Bill Lovatt, “Sailor Painter Finds NS “Artist Paradise””, *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax, 9 April 1952.



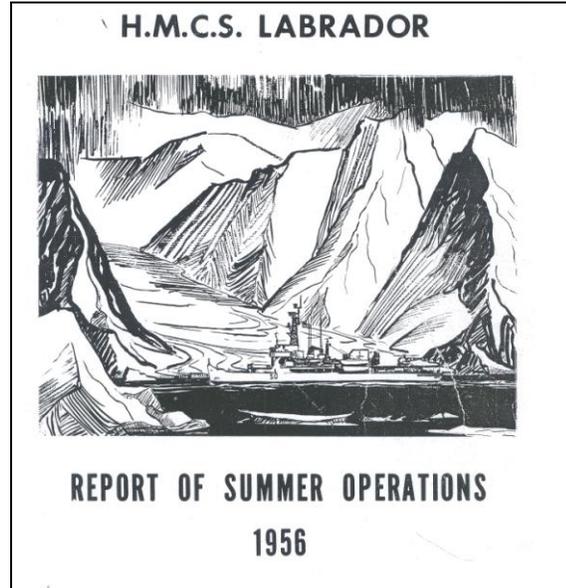
*C. Anthony Law  
HMCS Magnificent  
1952  
Courtesy of SAM*

When *Magnificent* returned to Halifax, LCdr Law organized an exhibition of 48 paintings by "Maggie's Sea-going Artists" at Zwicker's Gallery in Halifax. While it cannot be determined how many of the budding artists kept up with their painting, it is known that Rowland Marshall, who left the navy to be a Professor of Philosophy at SMU, exhibits to this day. "Tony, his wife Jane, and I, regularly entered about 3 paintings each, in the annual Saint Mary's Faculty, Alumni, Student & Staff Art Show, right from its inception. Tony referred to me as a 'Hard Edged Abstractionist.' Later when I entered more realist pieces, he would courteously suggest the need of shadows, depending on the location of the light source, of course. Subsequently, I tried to take better account of light and shadow, when painting representational pieces," recalled Dr. Marshall.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Email: Rowland Marshall to Pat Jessup, 18 Dec 2008.

## THE TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE



*C. Anthony Law  
Report cover page  
1954  
Courtesy of DND*

With the onset of the Cold War, the fear of a Soviet air strike from over the vulnerable north was very real. Canada and the United States aligned in the defense of North America with the construction of an air detection system of 63 radar and communications sites stretching from northwest Alaska to Baffin Island.<sup>28</sup> The system known as the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW Line) was built along the 70<sup>th</sup> parallel in remote territory primarily inaccessible over land. Servicing and re-supplying the sites posed a challenge and had to be done by water during the summer months. This proved to be no small undertaking because very little hydrographic information was available that would support seaborne activity in the Arctic.<sup>29</sup> From 1955 to 1957 both the Canadian and American governments were engaged in extensive surveys of the North

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.cfna.forces.gc.ca>, 7 March 2009. Canada Command-Joint Task Force North Fact Sheet; In 1970 Joint Task Force North was established in Yellowknife providing a modern Canadian military presence in the Arctic. Approximately 3500 Canadian Forces personnel, largely from the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, patrol the area in support of Canadian sovereignty. The Rangers, part-time reservists, are “the eyes and ears in the north”.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth B. Elliot-Meisel, *Arctic Diplomacy: Canada and the United States in the Northwest Passage*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998), pp 111-112. By 1956 the Soviet Union already had 15

West Passage to investigate alternate routes for supply ships to reach the sites during the impossibly short summer season.<sup>30</sup>

From 1955 to 1957, Law served as HMCS *Labrador*'s Executive Officer, and for two weeks in November 1957 before she was paid off, was her commanding officer. HMCS *Labrador* was commissioned into the Canadian navy in 1954 specifically to conduct hydrographic surveys of Canada's largely uncharted northern waters.<sup>31</sup> In 1956 the ship participated in an US-led Task Force of 23 ships transporting equipment and supplies needed for the construction of the eastern portion of the DEW Line. During this deployment, *Labrador* was at sea for 102 days with only a few days of recreational activity ashore on Arctic beaches. Law said of the ice-choked waters: "It was by no means the toughest ice passage experienced...but it did provide a good lesson to watch-keeping officers in ship-handling in ice and to the helicopter pilots in ice recce work."<sup>32</sup>

One of the challenges faced by an Executive Officer is to ensure the wellbeing of the ship's company, which on a particularly long sea voyage can be trying. In his 26 June 1957 Routine Orders for the day, Commander Law encouraged the crew to take up a hobby and help themselves to the arts and crafts supplies in the ship's stores. "The need for everyone to develop a hobby for this trip is obvious. One hundred per cent participation is recommended," he urged.<sup>33</sup>

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icebreakers, 100 ocean-going freighters, 150 patrol aircraft, 107 polar stations and 35,000 personnel working in the Russian Arctic.

<sup>30</sup> Law was not serving in the ship at the time.

<sup>31</sup> Ken Macpherson and Ron Barrie. *The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces, 1910 – 2002*, p. 283. After *Labrador* was paid off she was transferred to the Department of Transport Fleet as Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) *Labrador*. "Paying off" is a Royal Navy term to describe the decommissioning of a ship from military service. *Labrador* was the first warship to negotiate the Northwest Passage and the first to circumnavigate North America.

<sup>32</sup> HMCS *Labrador*-Report of Summer Operations, 1956. ILR: 1650-572, 1 December 1956. LAC, MG30 E260, Vol. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



*HMCS Labrador*  
DND photograph

*Labrador* carried a crew of 225 and two helicopters. Powered by a diesel electric system, the ship could reach speeds of 16 knots and was well suited for icebreaking work with her round-bottom. Heeling tanks, installed on the port and starboard side of the ship, pumped water ballast at 40,000 gallons a minute from side to side allowing her to rock her way out tight situations by crushing the ice beneath her. Part of the RCN's Atlantic fleet, *Labrador* came under Rear-Admiral Hugh Pullen, Flag Officer Atlantic and the brother of her captain, Cdr Tom Pullen.<sup>34</sup> RAdm Pullen was the driving force behind the fledgling Maritime Museum of Canada (MMC)<sup>35</sup> located in the Citadel and his appetite for adding relevant marine artifacts to the collection was boundless. In addition to *Labrador's* important hydrographic work, the ship was tasked to recover "relics, parts of engines etc" from the nineteenth-century wrecks of HM Ships *Fury* and *Victory* abandoned in the ice.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Macpherson and Barrie, p. 283. *Labrador's* commissioning captain was Cdr Owen Robertson who drove the ship twice from 8 July 1954 to 20 October 1955 and again 1 December 1955 - 12 February 1956. Cdr Leeming was her second captain acting for an interim period from 29 October 1955 – 30 November 1955. Cdr Tom Pullen was captain of the ship from 13 February 1956 – 3 November 1957. *Labrador* was paid off from the Canadian navy on 22 November 1957 under Tony Law and transferred to the Canadian Coast Guard for icebreaking in the St. Lawrence.

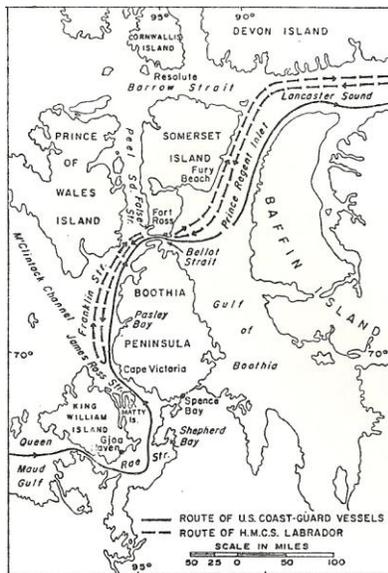
<sup>35</sup> The MMC was the precursor of the modern Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

<sup>36</sup> "MMC AGM minutes", Nov 15 1960, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic Archives and C. J. Marshall, "Operation Bellot", *Canadian Geographical Journal*, (September, 1958), p. 108 and Biographical Sketch:



*HMCS Labrador clearing a passage by riding up on the ice.  
DND photo.*

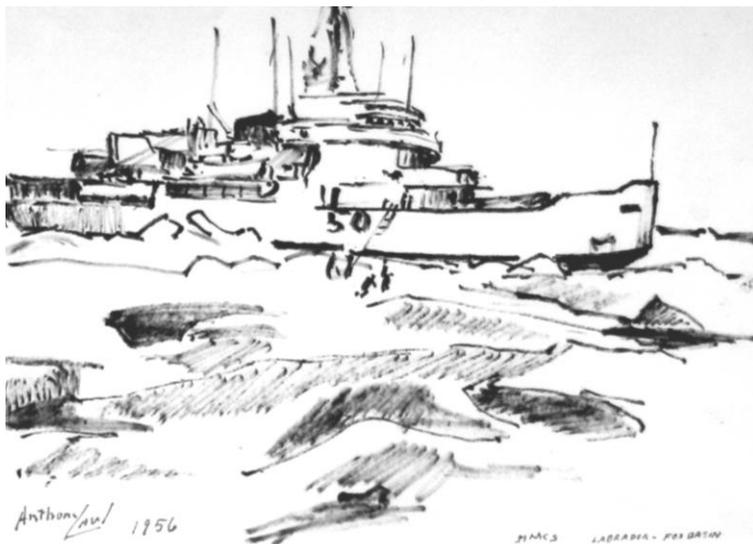
In August and September of 1957, *Labrador* and ships of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) set out from opposite directions to survey the Bellot Strait between Somerset Island and Bothia Peninsula, the last stretch of the uncharted east-west channel, in search of an alternate eastward route for ships servicing the DEW Line. While *Labrador* approached from the Davis Strait, the USCG vessels *Storis*, *Bramble* and *Spar* came from the Beaufort Sea via Seattle.



*Operation Bellot  
August – September 1957  
Canadian Geographical Journal*

RAdm Hugh Francis Pullen. The Pullens had more of a passing interest in the *Victory* artifacts as two of their great-uncles, Commander W.J.S. Pullen, RN and T.C. Pullen serving in HMS *North Star*, had spent two years trapped in the ice in the same area as HMS *Victory* during the Franklin search of 1852-54. *Victory* was on an Admiralty driven task group, searching for the Northwest Passage. Pullen describes his great-uncles' exploits in the north in his book, *The Pullen Expedition*. NSARM, MG100, Vol. 26, #44.

*Labrador* arrived in the area on 20 August and immediately established an operating base ashore for its scientists and hydrographers at Fort Ross, an abandoned Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading post on the southeastern tip of Somerset Island. The fort was still in very good shape after 15 years and the group settled comfortably into the manager's house. Much to the surprise of everyone who thought their only neighbours were polar bears, a loud rap at the door announced unexpected visitors – Inuit hunters! Seeing *Labrador* at anchor off shore, the Inuit had trekked across the tundra believing that the HBC had re-opened the post and had arrived to do business with white fox pelts to trade. After a hearty meal, the hunters, initially disappointed, left well provisioned with tobacco and food from *Labrador's* stores and with their furs still in hand.<sup>37</sup>



*Cdr Anthony Law  
Labrador  
Pen and ink sketch,  
1956  
Courtesy of the SAM*

For the next ten days, while her technical crew conducted survey triangulations and tidal measurements ashore, *Labrador* circumnavigated Somerset Island, becoming the first deep draft ship to sail through Bellot Strait. When the USCG ships arrived in the area, the mission was declared a success and much celebrated on 5 September when Cdr

<sup>37</sup> C. J. Marshall, "Operation Bellot", p. 108.

Pullen and his crew hosted a formal mess dinner onboard *Labrador*, at anchor in False Strait. Even though the ship had been without fresh food for three months, *Labrador's* cooks presented a five-course banquet to the visiting Americans. Appropriately, a report of the expedition was placed in a cairn at Fort Ross by the four captains before the ships weighed anchor and headed home.



*C. Anthony Law  
Watercolour sketch  
1957 Christmas Card to  
Adm Hugh Pullen  
Courtesy of the Pullen family*

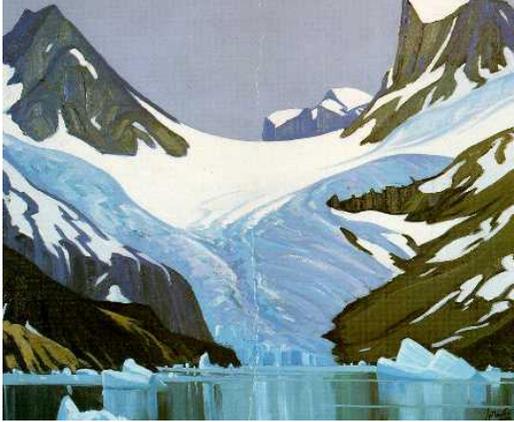
The primordial beauty of the north was not lost on Tony Law and he spent many hours painting the first images of the far north by a prominent Canadian artist since Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson visited Baffin Island in 1930.<sup>38</sup> Law was captivated and prefaced an exhibition of his Arctic work in London, England by saying:

The Arctic...presents to the painter a tremendous sense of timelessness and monumental simplicity. The beautiful rhythmic design of glaciers winding their way down from the mountain peaks to the sea, and breaking off to become icebergs, is most inspiring to capture and record. This austere and majestic world of ice and huge mountain ranges challenges the artist with its incredible abstract shapes and forms.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Hill, p. 268. Harris and Jackson sailed in the RCMP supply ship, *Beothic*, while on its annual trip to Greenland, Ellesmere Island, and Baffin Island.

<sup>39</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: "Paintings by C. Anthony Law", 6 – 17 November 1979, *The Mall Galleries*, London, 1979. Artist's Foreword.



C. Anthony Law,  
*Blue Glacier*, 1989  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law



C. Anthony Law,  
*Northern Glacier, Bellot Strait*, 1989  
Courtesy of Gerry Shortt

Capturing the splendor of the north was not always easy and came with some risk. During his off-duty hours, Law would make the treacherous climb up *Labrador's* mast to paint from the comfort of the enclosed crow's nest. "It was very nice up there because of the heated windows. The trick was remembering to shut the trap door. If you fell, my that would be an awful mess" recalled Law in 1996.

An exhibition of his northern works at the newly restored Cavalier Barracks Block in the Halifax Citadel<sup>40</sup> was favourably reviewed by the *Mail Star* with the following acclaim:

Bold in execution and with effective use of vivid colors the scenes of the northern fringe of this continent are eye-catching and give a real appreciation of the ruggedness of coastline and vast wastes of ice and snow encountered on such a patrol tour.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, a show at Robertson Galleries in Ottawa drew comparisons to Lawren Harris's middle period and described Law's work as being "vigorous" and leaning toward "geometrical simplification" with his "magnificent semi-abstract paintings."<sup>42</sup> The same

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<sup>40</sup> "Labrador's Captain Explores World of Art in Arctic", *Chronicle-Telegraph*, Quebec City, 27 September 1957. Simultaneous to the Citadel exhibition Law was showing watercolours from the Mediterranean at the Victoria Art Gallery, in British Columbia.

<sup>41</sup> "Paintings of Arctic are on exhibition at Citadel", *Halifax Mail Star*, 15 May, 1957.

<sup>42</sup> "Arctic Beauty Captured in Oils", *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 May, 1961.

article went on to say that there were already too many “reckless strippers of Nature” painting in the abstract, but suggested that Law demonstrated some promise as an artist. The naïveté of this comment revealed that the journalist was unaware of Law’s pedigree and national and international accomplishments.



*Cdr Anthony Law at Citadel Art Exhibit, 1957*  
*DND Photo*

Following his service in the *Labrador*, Law was posted to New York as staff officer with the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) from 1958 to 1960, to further plans to resupply northern defense sites.<sup>43</sup> MSTS was a component of the United States Navy (USN) and Law’s Arctic experience was invaluable to the project that improved access to American interests in Labrador and Greenland.

His contribution was praised by the Americans.<sup>44</sup> As noted by USN Admiral J.C. Dempsey, Commander MSTS, Law’s “drive, initiative, knowledge and zeal were largely responsible for the dredging of the channel at Goose Bay and for the installation of a

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<sup>43</sup> Law album, US Navy caption, nd.

<sup>44</sup> Cmdre O.C.S. Robertson, RCN, Canadian Joint Staff, Department of National Defence, Washington, to Cdr Law, 22 December, 1958. LAC, MG30, Series E260, Vol. 1, Correspondence: Reports: Notes 1958-1959. Robertson noted that a letter of commendation had been received from the US Navy regarding Law’s performance on the project which reflected well on the RCN.

compressed air ice prevention system at Thule, Greenland.”<sup>45</sup> The improved access significantly reduced the turnaround time for tankers delivering supplies to the bases, resulting in a considerable cost saving to the American government.



*C. Anthony Law  
Sondrestrom Fjord, Greenland  
1958  
Courtesy of AGNS*



*C. Anthony Law  
Godthaab, Greenland, c1959  
Pencil sketch, Courtesy of DND*



*C. Anthony Law  
Greenland, c1959  
Pencil sketch, Courtesy of the AGNS*

Missing the natural beauty of Nova Scotia, Law found little to inspire him in New York City. His cityscapes from this period are stilted, sterile and lack the colour, lushness and emotion of his Nova Scotia landscapes, leading AGNS’s Bernard Riordon to suggest

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<sup>45</sup> RAdm J.C. Dempsey, Commander, MSTs, Atlantic Area to The Naval Secretary, Dept of National Defense, Ottawa, 28 Nov 1958. LAC, MG30, Series E260, Vol. 1, Correspondence: Reports: Notes 1958-1959.

that the period had a ‘negative effect’ on Law’s painting.<sup>46</sup> However, project-related travel to the Arctic during this “negative” period resulted in *Grounded Iceberg* – the Chairman’s choice in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual exhibition of the Nova Scotia Society of Artists (NSSA) in 1962.<sup>47</sup> *Grounded Iceberg* was selected because of “its strength and bigness of feeling,” remarked Harold Beament, Law’s former naval war art colleague.<sup>48</sup>



*C. Anthony Law and untitled New York  
cityscape.  
c1958  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

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<sup>46</sup> Exhibition catalogue: “C. Anthony Law: A Retrospective”, *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia*. Halifax 12 May - 25 June 1989, p.14.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid and “Painting of Arctic are on Exhibition at Citadel”, *The Halifax Mail-Star*, 15 May 1957. *Grounded Iceberg* was the second time that Law was honoured by NSSA. In 1952 Law’s *Gatineau River* was judged outstanding painting during NSSA’s Spring Exhibition.

<sup>48</sup>“36<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition Catalogue”, *Nova Scotia Society of Artists*, April 7-18, 1962.

## HMCS SIOUX AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

By the early 1960s Canada had reformed with the largest peacetime fleet in its history of 64 commissioned ships and more than 20,000 sailors. With the sustained threat of the Cold War and a growing threat from Soviet submarines, the RCN focused on anti-submarine warfare and in conjunction with the United States established underwater Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) listening posts<sup>49</sup> on both coasts. In Atlantic Canada, Canadian Forces Station (CFS) Shelburne served as a joint RCN/USN Oceanographic Research Station that was pivotal in monitoring ocean activity from Greenland to Boston.

In 1961, Law assumed command of the destroyer HMCS *Sioux* and a year later, was appointed Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Escort Squadron. *Sioux* was at the end of a long and distinguished career having served on the Murmansk Run, the D-Day invasion, the Korean Conflict and the Cold War. As her last official duty before paying off, the vessel escorted the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland on his annual tour around the island. Plans to unfurl *Sioux's* 2472 foot paying off pennant<sup>50</sup> in St. John's Harbour were thwarted because of high winds and the ship returned to her home port of Halifax for the ceremony.<sup>51</sup>

While in St. John's, Law captured the essence of the port city in several paintings, two of which are found in the collection of SMU's Art Gallery. It is apparent from the

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<sup>49</sup> Milner, p. 150. In the early 1950s, with the increase in size of the Soviet Submarine Fleet, and underwater surveillance capability was developed to provide an early-warning system much like the DEW line in the north. SOSUS consisted of an expansive array of acoustic sensors or hydrophones, located in strategic locations on the ocean floor that tracked submarine activities in the North Atlantic Ocean. When the Cold War ended, Canada's underwater surveillance capability was transferred to Maritime Forces Atlantic in Halifax.

<sup>50</sup> *Sioux's* paying off pennant was six times the ship's length, one length for every two years she was in commission.

<sup>51</sup> "A War Artist runs a ship", *St. John's Telegram*, 8 October 1963.

SMU works that Law was more than likely painting from the comfort of *Sioux* while she was alongside.



*C. Anthony Law  
St. John's Battery, c1955  
Collection of the Saint Mary's University Art  
Gallery*

*View from Sioux's starboard side.*



*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Escort Squadron alongside at  
foot of Battery in St. John's NL. Sioux (hull 225) is  
outboard of the three ships. DND Photo*



*C. Anthony Law  
Winter St. John's, Newfoundland (NL) c1955  
Courtesy of SMU's Art Gallery*

*View over Sioux's bow.*

Unlike Tom Wood in 1944, Law thoroughly enjoyed Newfoundland and was captivated by the people and rugged scenery. In appreciation of the hospitality shown to *Sioux's* ships' company during her last port visit, Law presented *Fresh Snow, Bellot Straits*, painted during his deployment to the Arctic in the *Labrador*, to the Joint Officers' Mess, CFS St. John's.<sup>52</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Fresh Snow, Bellot Straits  
1956*

*Courtesy of CFS St. John's, NL,  
DND*

*Sioux's* planned retirement was brief. In late September of 1962, and a year after the failed CIA-led Bay of Pigs Invasion in Cuba, American air reconnaissance revealed the construction of multiple missile silo-sites throughout the island.<sup>53</sup> Other photographs indicated that Caribbean-bound Soviet ships appeared laden with aircraft and armaments lashed to the upper decks. US President John F. Kennedy's immediate response was to order a naval blockade to prevent the delivery of further shipments of military weapons to the island and to demand the silos be dismantled.<sup>54</sup>

Canada played a significant part during those tense days in October 1962 and readied defences for nuclear war. On the east coast of Canada, under Rear Admiral K.L.

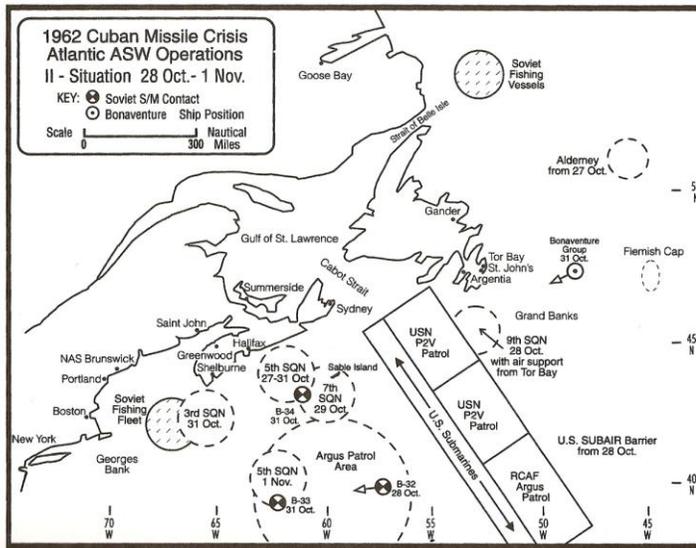
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<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/colc.html>, accessed 4 November 2008. Library of Congress archives.

<sup>54</sup> [www.jfklibrary.org](http://www.jfklibrary.org), accessed 4 November 2008.

Dyer, Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, a Task Group consisting of the aircraft carrier, HMCS *Bonaventure* and 24 other warships set sail on a “routine exercise” with the USN.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, SOSUS intelligence in Shelburne was monitoring a large number of underwater contacts offshore which included the Soviet submarine B-17, identified as being approximately 500 miles southeast of Halifax.<sup>56</sup> In the Bay of Fundy, the presence of a large number of Russian fishing trawlers and a Soviet repair ship raised alarms and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Destroyer Squadron was deployed to patrol the area. Law remembered standing off the fishing fleet during a very tense night during the crisis. “We were expecting the sub to surface and all eyes were on the water. Much like the night in Dieppe...except this time they were waiting ...<sup>57</sup> The situation finally abated when the Soviet Union withdrew its ships and ordered its fleet to return home.



*Area of responsibility for Law's 3<sup>rd</sup> Destroyer Squadron during Cuban Missile Crisis  
Courtesy of Commander Peter T. Haydon, RCN retired.*

<sup>55</sup> Milner, p. 234.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Haydon, “Canadian Involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis Reconsidered”, *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*, XVII No. 2, (April 2007), p. 129 and Pat Jessup interview with Peter Haydon, 20 September 2008. Early scholarship indicated that upwards of 125 Soviet submarines were off the Eastern Seaboard during the crisis. Most recent information indicates at most there were 15 Russian submarines in the area and the remainder included boats from Great Britain and the United States.

## THE MIGHTY HMCS CAPE SCOTT



*HMCS Cape Scott (101) during Canada's Centennial Fleet Review, Halifax Harbour. HMCS Chaleur (164) is passing Cape Scott in the foreground. DND photo*

After five years in the thick of battle during WWII, followed by a solid career serving Canada during the Cold War, Tony Law's final naval appointment came as commander of the navy's fleet repair ship, *HMCS Cape Scott*, in Halifax from 5 November 1964 to 4 October 1966. It was a fitting appointment for Law, given that the *Cape Scott* and her sister ship the *Cape Breton* on the West coast, were Second World War veterans having served with the RN as Escort Maintenance-Ships.<sup>58</sup>

Because of *Cape Scott's* unique repair capabilities and cargo capacity, she was tasked to support a McGill-led World Health Organization expedition to Easter Island in 1964. In addition to delivering and recovering the medical expedition to Easter Island (METEI), *Cape Scott* had diplomatic calls to make in Chile and Peru built into her program.

On 16 November 1964 *Cape Scott* sailed out of Halifax harbour "laden to the gunnels" with scientists<sup>59</sup> and supplies for the four-month deployment. "It was an interesting trip," recalled Law and "the first time in history that the Canadian navy took a

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<sup>57</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM Archives.

<sup>58</sup> Macpherson and Burgess, p. 181 The *Cape Scott* was originally *HMS Beachy Head* and the *Cape Breton*, *HMS Flamborough Head*. Both were modified Fort type cargo ships built in Vancouver, B.C.

<sup>59</sup> *Preliminary Report, METEI and HMCS Cape Scott*, Stanley C. Skoryna, M.D., PHD, Director, Medical Expedition to Easter Island, p. 2. Thirty-eight scientists, medical personnel and research assistants, under

lady to sea.”<sup>60</sup>The purpose of the voyage was to study the role of environment and heredity on an isolated community, which included “an investigation of ecological, sociological, anthropological, genetical, microbiological and epidemiological factors.”<sup>61</sup> Of particular interest to the scientists were preliminary reports that noted an absence of cancer, mental difficulties and obesity in the island population.<sup>62</sup> Time was of the essence because of the National Aeronautics and Space Agency’s (NASA) plans to build an emergency runway for the space shuttle.<sup>63</sup> Once the runway was constructed, the island population of 948 natives of Polynesian origin (Pascuenses) and 150 Chileans would be exposed to contaminants from the outside world and no longer be suitable for the study.

As he had in the *Magnificent* years before, Law offered painting classes during the long trip south, this time to a class of twelve. “Last night I issued all the art material to my art group. I have Petty Officer (PO) Chambers as a member...I hope I will be able to help them and bring them up to a standard where [where] they can enjoy painting,”<sup>64</sup>he wrote to Jane.

Spanish lessons for all started immediately upon departure and Law was admittedly exasperated by yet another linguistic challenge. “I guess I will have just as

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the direction of the Dr. Skoryna participated in the expedition. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METEI/HMCS *Cape Scott* –; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

<sup>60</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM Archives.

<sup>61</sup> *Preliminary Report, METEI and HMCS Cape Scott*, Stanley C. Skoryna, M.D., PHD, Director, Medical Expedition to Easter Island p. 2. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METEI/HMCS *Cape Scott* –; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

<sup>62</sup> *Sun Life Review*, July 1965, p. 15 and Gretchen Pierce, “Salt Water, Oil Paints Mix”, *Halifax Mail Star*, 18 January 1971.

<sup>63</sup> “NASA and Chile Carve Up Easter Island”, *New York Times*, 30 April 1987 and <http://www.mundoandino.com/Chile/Mataveru-International-Airport>, accessed 4 November 2008. Scheduled flights to the island started in 1970 with a weekly service to Chile. The runway was extended to 10,885 ft in 1984 to accommodate a space shuttle in an emergency landing. Tourism increased accordingly.

<sup>64</sup> Tony Law to his wife Jane, 20 November 1964. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METEI/HMCS *Cape Scott* – Notes; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

much difficulty with Spanish as French,” he wrote to Jane. Even so, he grudgingly attempted to converse in French with three of the scientists on board but admittedly made little progress.<sup>65</sup> Law’s fracturing of the language was legendary and he would take great delight in speaking his version of vernacular “‘Franglais’ – especially after a stiff scotch,” recalled his student, Dr. Paul Price.<sup>66</sup>

Even though communication was limited while *Cape Scott* was at sea, Law faithfully wrote Jane long and endearing letters about his daily activities, which he would post at the next port of call.<sup>67</sup> The first was penned three days out and en route to Bermuda. This leg of the journey was not without incident and Law related the details of an encounter with very heavy weather:

I can ashore [assure] you it was most unpleasant and a great worry with all the upper deck cargo. The seas built up into huge angry mountains and the winds blew up to hurricane force. I decided that the only safe course that I would do the least damage – to run before the wind – heading on a course towards Africa. At the pick [peak] of the storm the seas were the length of the ship and the storm area covered North America to Europe and Iceland to Bermuda. I went through the eye of the storm or the I should say that the storm and its eye went through me...<sup>68</sup>

He continued tongue in cheek:

We came out of the storm pretty well considering the seriousness of the situation. Though we had everything secured for sea – my cabin was a mess. The poor rubber plant has had it. We buried it at sea...<sup>69</sup>

In another letter posted from San Juan Puerto Rico, Law wrote that the Queen, the King of Norway and the King of Sweden had each extended good wishes and greetings to

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Tony Law to his wife Jane, 20 November 1964.

<sup>66</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Paul Price, 15 September 2008.

<sup>67</sup> In each of the letters, Law remembered his Boulderwood neighbours and signed off with “heaps of love and kisses” for his beloved Jane, and a few barks for Cheemo and Peter his Alaskan Malamutes. Prior to his leaving, Law’s neighbours hosted a rousing departure luau complete with Hawaiian lei, grass skirts and poetry to celebrate his Easter Island deployment. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METEI/HMCS *Cape Scott* – Notes; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Tony Law to his wife Jane, 20 November 1964.



Additionally, heavy surf at the anchorage and changing winds made the transportation of 150 tons of METEI equipment ashore “a very tricky proposition.”<sup>72</sup> Cape Scott’s crew worked tirelessly, but after six 12-hour days the base camp, affectionately nick-named the “Rapa Nui Hilton,”<sup>73</sup> began to take shape. The cargo consisted of pre-fabricated living quarters and scientific laboratories along with the associated solar and electrical generators, water desalination stills, sanitary facilities and refrigeration units required to support the operation. Law reported that the construction phase of the project “provided a very interesting and different sort of challenge for a ship’s company that is normally involved in a rather unexciting role of fleet maintenance.”<sup>74</sup>



C. Anthony Law  
*Easter Island, c1964*  
Courtesy of Zwicker’s Gallery,  
Halifax

The scientific expedition understandably attracted worldwide media attention and was even featured in *Life Magazine*. Interest was high in Halifax, with regular updates appearing in the *Mail Star* on the progress of the project and *Cape Scott’s* scheduled visits to Chile and Peru while the scientists conducted their research.

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<sup>72</sup> Pat Jessup interview with VAdm Ralph Hennessey *retired*, 23 October 2008. Prior to the voyage to Easter Island Hennessey and Law studied charts of the area to plot the safest approach and anchorage off the island.

<sup>73</sup> Report of HMCS *Cape Scott* Participation in Medical Expedition to Easter Island by Cdr C. Anthony Law, p.6. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METEI/HMCS *Cape Scott* –; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.



*HMCS Cape Scott at anchor off Easter Island with METEI scientists in foreground.*

*Courtesy of George Goodwin*

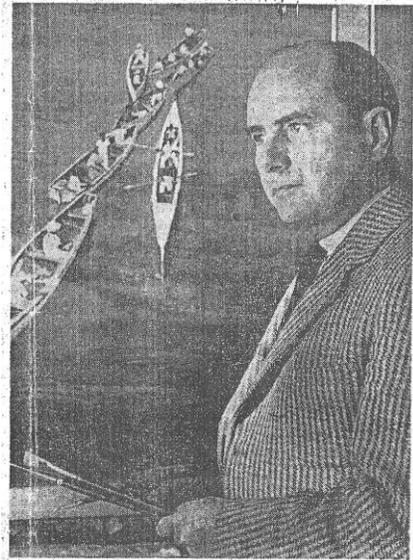
When the ship was not busy, Law went ashore and painted. The following year, Halagonians came out in droves to attend an exhibition of his paintings at Zwicker's Gallery. Law's direct, crisp and sublime visual record of the voyage "attracted considerable attention," with his *Pascunses Fishing* being a favorite. His particular use of blue to depict the sea, which had appealed so much to Queen Elizabeth (now the Queen Mother) in London in 1942, was again a crowd pleaser. While on Easter Island, Law admitted being somewhat challenged by the limited and barren scenery which had substantiated the author Helen Evans Reid's claim that it "is the loneliest island in the world."<sup>75</sup> He did, however, find the native population delightful despite the fact that very few ships stopped there. The people he observed "enjoy everything."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Cyril Robinson, "Cdr Anthony Law, RCN, is a sea-going Artist", *Daily Mail*, 24 December, 1965.

<sup>76</sup> *Sun Life Review*, July 1965



Commander Anthony Law, RCN, with one of his paintings based on the Easter Island expedition.

*Halifax Daily Mail*, 24 December, 1965.



C. Anthony Law

*Easter Island Volcano*, c1965

Courtesy of Cmdre Charles and Jane Westropp<sup>77</sup>

Four days before Christmas and with her initial work on the Island complete, *Cape Scott* weighed anchor to “tearful songs of farewell in Rapa Nui” and set sail for Valparaiso, Chile. Onboard were 41 Pascuenses passengers, twenty-five of which were children and 70 tons of wool.<sup>78</sup> The ship was escorted out of the harbour by small boats filled with weeping relatives of the passengers.

*Cape Scott* was well prepared for Christmas at sea complete with gifts for everyone on board. By all accounts the celebrations were grand as described in a letter to Jane:

On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus arrived (PO Chambers with his beard) on the boat deck. Here we had a real Canadian pine tree. All the Chilean children and the Polynesian teenage islanders were gathered...the Polynesian kids danced and sang their Rapa Nui songs. Afterwards we had a Church service. Our choral group did extremely well under the directions of our Doctor...The next day the navy carried on the old tradition of the youngest member dressing up and being the Captain for the day. It was an Ordinary Seaman and wore the many string[s] of sea

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<sup>77</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Cmdre Westropp, 1 Dec 2008. Tony Law would often give paintings as wedding gifts. On the occasion of Charles and Jane Westropp’s wedding he gave them this painting of Easter Island.

<sup>78</sup> LAC, MG30, Series E260, METI/HMCS *Cape Scott* - Notes; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

shell beads the Rapa Nui teenager gave me as a Christmas present. With the beads on and my boswain's pipe I led the Captains rounds and we wish[ed] all a very Merry Christmas...At Christmas Dinner, we the officers served the Ship's Company, but this time they had given me a chef's hat and I was away to the races serving the sailors.

Law missed being at home for Christmas and was moved to receive a hand knit vest from Jane. "I have never owned such a beautiful vest...I am thrilled to death with it and intend to sport it at Valparaiso. There the evenings are cold like Halifax owing to the Humbolt Current,"<sup>79</sup> he wrote to his wife.

While *Cape Scott* was at sea en route to Chile, Canadians nationwide celebrated as their new flag was raised on Parliament Hill. Not to be left out of this auspicious occasion, Law had plans drawn up from the flag's description and a makeshift facsimile sewn together by the ship's sail maker [Fowler]. Law described Proclamation Day as dawning bright and clear following a miserable transit to the Galapagos Islands. "Divisions and a short service were climaxed at noon by the raising of Canada's National Flag and the lowering of the White Ensign."<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, he oversaw a poignant ceremony on the upper decks of the ship timed to coincide with official event on Parliament Hill in Ottawa overseen by Governor General Georges Vanier and Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. During the ceremony he read:

Almighty God, who has brought us to this great day in the history of our country, ... we beseech Thee,...and in so doing make us worthy of the many worldly bounties Thou has bestowed on our Country, the Flag of which we do earnestly dedicate to Thy divine guidance and protection....

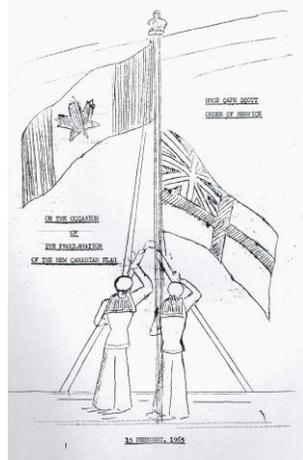
And in remembrance of those lost during the First and Second World War, he added:

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Tony Law to Jane Shaw, 4 January, 1965.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Report of HMCS *Cape Scott* Participation in Medical Expedition to Easter Island by Cdr C. Anthony Law, p. 14.

...that we may be ever remindful of the Red [sic] Ensign, a proud symbol of honour that has graced Her Majesty's Canadian Ships these many years; and let us not soon forget those of our comrades who have fought and died under this Flag which today we lay aside...<sup>81</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Order of Service, Proclamation Day,  
HMCS Cape Scott, 15 February 1965.*

Shipmate George Goodwin would later recall sailing into Valparaiso, Chile flying the new ensign: “It actually looked pretty good although I have my doubts that when we entered harbor anyone would know just exactly where we were from!”<sup>82</sup> Prime Minister Pearson took a broader view and commended Law on his patriotism:

It is a very fine flag indeed the hoisting of it must have been a moving a stirring occasion. May I congratulate you and Mr. Fowler on its design in spite of the fact that you had not had an opportunity of seeing the authentic pattern which was used.<sup>83</sup>

*Cape Scott* assumed her normal duties with the fleet upon her return to Halifax and deployments to Plymouth England and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil followed. The ship's primary function was to act as a floating ship repair unit to manufacture spare parts when breakdowns occurred. “We were a factory and would have the ship ready the next morning to go to sea,” said Law. But much to his disappointment, “the ship was not built

<sup>81</sup>Ibid. Order of Service, Proclamation Day, HMCS Cape Scott, 15 February, 1965.

<sup>82</sup> Email: George Goodwin to Pat Jessup, 26 June 2008

<sup>83</sup> Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to Cdr Anthony C. Law (sic), 14 April, 1965. Pearson included an autographed copy of the Proclamation as an expression of thanks for Law's “patriotic gesture”. LAC, MG30, Series E260, METI/HMCS *Cape Scott* - Notes; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964-1965, 1972, 1976.

for speed. *Cape Scott* was the only ship that I ever been in that went full speed ahead only to be overtaken by seagulls swimming by. If the wind blew too hard – there would be no knots,” he bemoaned.<sup>84</sup>

“It was always an occasion on leaving harbour when Tony rang for full revs and we braced ourselves for the breath-taking surge to top speed of 11 knots!” recalled Cdr Ralph Fischer, retired.<sup>85</sup> *The Ballad of Cape Scott* speaks affectionately of Cdr Law as well as his last command.

### **The Ballad of *Cape Scott* - The Atlantic Cannonball**

Oh listen to the engine, the rumble and the roar  
As Tony Law and *Cape Scott* crash into Jetty Four  
She’s winding up to ten knots  
She’s using all her steam,  
But she just don’t handle like an MTB.

She is handsome, she is tall  
She’s the proudest of them all  
She’s old and quaint, needs lots of paint,  
But any job she’ll do.  
She’s the Queen of the Repair Ships,  
the best in all the Fleet  
And when she’s in harbour our factory doesn’t sleep.

She’s been to Easter Island, to Rio and San Juan,  
She’s traveled o’er to England  
Through stormy sea and calm.  
Her engine groans, it’s old and slow,  
It never goes too fast,  
Except when we are homeward bound to good old Halifax.<sup>86</sup>

*Anonymous*

C. Anthony Law retired from the Canadian Navy in 1966.

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<sup>84</sup> Dr. Laura Brandon video interview with Cdr C. Anthony Law, Ottawa, 12 November 1994. CWM Archives. Tony Law enjoyed going fast and in this interview with Dr. Laura Brandon he complained about how slow *Cape Scott* was in comparison with the MT Boats.

<sup>85</sup> Email: Ralph Fischer to Pat Jessup, 18 Oct 2008.

<sup>86</sup> METI/HMCS *Cape Scott* - Notes; Reports; Orders; Correspondence 1964 -1965, 1972, 1976, LAC, MG30, Series E260.

It is a tradition in the Canadian military to name buildings after members who have made a significant contribution to the Canadian Forces. Tony Law is remembered in Her Majesty's Canadian Dockyard - Halifax, in The Commander C. Anthony Law Combat Systems Repair Facility, an annex to the Fleet Maintenance Facility *Cape Scott*. Paul Price believes that Cdr Law would have been pleased by the accolade. “Tony once spoke of getting bits in his letters past the censors & letting Jane know he was giving Jerry "a bit of a rough time. How very appropriate that an attack simulation center [in HMC Dockyard] now bears his name”, he observed. “May our Forces keep the bright light of his mind, decisive, creative, in their vital work.”<sup>87</sup>

Law’s twenty years of naval service after the war proved almost equally adventurous and varied. With the exception of his time in New York, his appointments took him literally about the world giving him remote and powerful subjects suited to his preference to landscape painting. In the shipboard milieu his naturally engaging personality and talent resulted in “all hands” painting and reveling in art.



*C. Anthony Law*  
*The Desert of Antofagasta and the foot hills of the*  
*Andes, Chile, 1965*  
*Courtesy of SMU's Art Gallery*

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<sup>87</sup> Email: Dr. Paul Price to Pat Jessup, March 09.

## CHAPTER FOUR – A PAINTER’S PARADISE



*C. Anthony Law  
A Rugged Coast  
1966  
Courtesy of the AGNS*

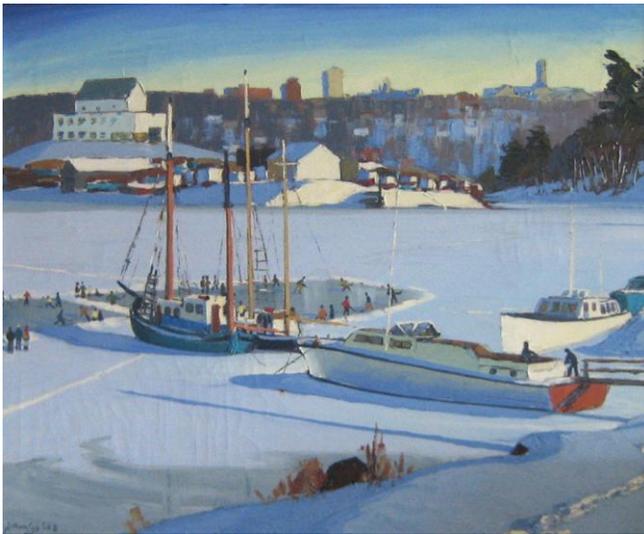
Law loved painting. “It is a disease with me, I can’t give it up” he remarked when he first moved to Nova Scotia. To him, painting was an “arduous hobby” requiring physical fitness and intestinal fortitude to “travel into Northern Quebec at the time of the spring breakups... Winter painting is hard – your nose runs and your eyes water, your fingers are numbed.” Characteristically he added: “when all the advantages are there it is too easy and my paintings suffer.”<sup>1</sup>



*C. Anthony Law, Winter Fish Huts  
nd.  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

<sup>1</sup> Bill Lovatt, “Sailor Painter Finds NS “Artist Paradise””, *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax, 9 April 1952.

Tony Law followed a code of ethics that he readily shared with his students and colleagues. In addition to teaching the basics of painting, his advice included never walking past a good subject, cutting up “stinkers” for kindling, and only allowing one sherry when working or you would fall asleep under your easel. Law called his “off” work stinkers and would annually take an axe to them to stoke winter fires. When wishing a fellow artist well before a show, Law’s version of break a leg was to hope that the show developed a case of the measles – and that all the paintings would quickly have red, sold dots on them.<sup>2</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Armdale Yacht Club, Melville Cove, 1968  
Courtesy of HMCS Scotian, DND*

*Caption:  
Commissioned by the UNTD<sup>3</sup> Class 1968  
for HMCS Scotian*

In 1967, one year after his retirement, Law was appointed Saint Mary's University artist-in-residence and quickly became an integral part of Halifax's cultural scene, actively promoting the arts. While plans were in place for a new gallery before Tony Law's formal appointment, he and Edmund Morris, SMU's Vice-President of Finance and Development "designed it and that's the gallery that is there now."<sup>4</sup> During this time,

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<sup>2</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Paul Price, 15 September, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> University Naval Training Division – the old Reserve Officer Plan.

<sup>4</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives. Mr. Morris served as Interim President, SMU, 1971-1972, following Dr. Labelle's tenure from 1967 - 1971.

Tony and Jane began their long involvement with the university's fledgling Drama Society, working as scenery artists and designing sets with family friend and colleague, Father William Stewart, SJ. The volunteer company ambitiously presented the plays *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*, to name a few, to a Halifax audience hungry for live theatre. Until 1968, Saint Mary's was an all boys' school and for early theatrical productions "we had to borrow girls...from Mount Saint Vincent," recalled Law.<sup>5</sup> "We had a lot of fun...and won an award for our designs of the sets." One was so convincing that after the show a member of the audience tried to buy the wood stove on the set. "He was surprised to learn the 'stove' was made of masonite and wood," recalled Father Stewart.<sup>6</sup>



*Tony Law and Jane Shaw had an established tradition as set artists with the RCN before SMU. Tony Law, second from left, Jane Shaw Law, lower right. HMCS Stadacona c1952. Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

In October 1971, the Saint Mary's Gallery as it is known today was opened as part of a new multi-million dollar 23-storey Loyola academic/residence complex. Tony Law became the gallery's first curator. The Minister of Northern Development, Jean Chretien,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: "C. Anthony Law – A Retrospective", *Saint Mary's University*, 1980, Foreword.

presided over the opening exhibition, a display of Inuit art sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Under Law's direction, the university hosted a number of important and frequently eclectic exhibitions often featuring local handicraft exhibits alongside nationally acclaimed artists. Law's objective was to provide the students with a more liberal education by introducing a variety of artists including "the Impressionists, high realists, abstract painters, conceptual art of any kind and avant guard (sic) work." One textile exhibition featuring an embroidered ecclesiastical stole especially commissioned by Archbishop James Hayes caused the curator momentary angst. It was All Saints Day and the prized garment went missing. Unbeknownst to the concerned curator, the person responsible for gathering the Bishop's accoutrements for the service "had someone nip" it from the display for a few hours without telling anyone. Typically, Law took this in stride, and years later commented on how this incident had made the exhibition "special." The Archbishop, while recalling the commissioned piece was unaware of the associated story. When told of Tony Law's reaction, the Archbishop said "that Tony would have found it amusing" which indeed he did, but only after the garment was recovered.<sup>7</sup>

Under Tony Law, SMU embraced the art scene and it is probably no coincidence that several of the artists featured at the gallery were fellow war art colleagues Molly Bobak, Miller Brittain, and Alex Colville. Opening nights included dinner parties hosted by the President, Dr. Henry J. Labelle, S.J. and the Vice President, Father Fogarty. "We'd

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<sup>7</sup> Pat Jessup telephone interview Archbishop James Hayes, 4 February, 2006.

have a lovely opening and the most pleasant...people would come and so this was a way of introducing the artist to the community and to the university," Law reflected.<sup>8</sup>

Paid an annual salary of \$2,400 as artist-in-residence, Tony Law was often assisted by Jane, who took responsibility for decorating the new reading room on campus. A collection of 17 of her linoleum sculptures and watercolours was the first exhibition held in the 'diminutive' quiet area.<sup>9</sup>



*Jane Shaw sculpting in the Law's Williams Lake home.*

While Tony Law was at SMU, Jane Shaw taught watercolour at the Nova Scotia College of Art (NSCA) and Halifax Ladies College.<sup>10</sup> Working side by side, the Laws set up exhibitions in the SMU gallery and offered painting workshops. The classes were very popular and usually involved en plein air painting "all over the city." At one point Tony and Jane offered life drawing using live models and described this as an exciting time for the Jesuits and the university because "Halifax was fairly prim and proper in those days."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.

<sup>9</sup> *This Week*, 7 January 1971, p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Soucy and Harold Pearse, *The First Hundred Years, A History of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*, p. 177. Jane (Law) Shaw is listed as teaching Fine Arts from 1965-1971.

<sup>11</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.



*C. Anthony Law  
Skating Saturday Morning  
Brunswick Street Area, Halifax  
1978  
Courtesy of Gerry Shortt*

In the early 1970's Law vigorously promoted legislation that ultimately led to the founding of the AGNS. This work arose from his involvement in the 1967 Centennial Visual Arts program which had amassed a large collection of Nova Scotian art. The collection would likely have dissipated had Law not petitioned the government for a permanent institution to house the Centennial collection.

The notion of a permanent facility to house the collection of the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Art (NSMFA)<sup>12</sup> started in 1908 and minutes from the 1953 Annual Meeting reiterate the underlying and pervasive desire for a permanent facility:

“The aim of our society is constantly to be kept in the back of our minds, that someday we will be the proud owners of a museum of our own...”<sup>13</sup>

This aim was fulfilled in 1967 when nationalism gripped Canadians from coast to coast during Centennial year. That year and under the guidance of Tony Law, the appropriately named Centennial Gallery was established in a 200 year old powder magazine in the Halifax Citadel to display the NSMFA's wide-reaching collection of 200

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<sup>12</sup> The NSMFA was the precursor of the AGNS.

<sup>13</sup> NSFMA AGM minutes, 1953, p. 6.

pieces, previously scattered and stored around the province. A NSMFA presence was resident at the Citadel until 1978, when Parks Canada started restoring the old fort.

Encouragement from the community at large - now used to seeing the permanent collection on display - gave the NSMFA membership the “raison d’être” to establish a permanent art museum for the provincial collection. Tony Law provided the leadership to make this objective a reality. In December 1975 under the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act, the AGNS became the principal caretaker of the Crown’s collection.

Since 1985, the AGNS has occupied the Dominion Building across from the House of Assembly on Hollis Street. Law served AGNS further as a member of the Board of Directors, as Chairman from 1977 to 1979 and also as a benefactor. Over the years both he and Jane bolstered the gallery’s collection with personal paintings, sculpture and pottery, as well as a substantial contribution of native art acquired during his many visits to the Arctic.

Tony Law retired as artist-in-residence in 1980 and in 1981 the Saint Mary’s University Senate bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. His good friend and colleague Father Stewart read the citation at his convocation:

...his many talents and accomplishments as a naval officer and war artist, as painter of renown, and as promoter of the arts, he has contributed beyond telling to the cultural life of this University, this city, this province and this nation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Honourary degree Doctor of Letters Citation to Anthony Francis Law, DSC, CD, RCN (Ret’d), 11 May 1981.

Similarly in 1993, SMU honoured Jane Shaw Law with the same degree in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the institution. Law found amusement in the fact that neither he or his wife could spell, but now held "honourary doctoral letters!"<sup>15</sup>

Jane Shaw and Tony Law were generous in turn. On their departure from SMU they established scholarships for deserving students at Saint Mary's.<sup>16</sup> The C. Anthony Law Scholarship and the Jane Shaw Law Scholarships are among the most prestigious awards offered to undergraduate students and are valued at \$2300 and \$2100 respectively. Coincidentally, the 1988 recipient of the C. Anthony Law scholarship was LCdr Laurence Hickey, a serving member of the Canadian Navy. In a congratulatory letter Law wrote: "I am delighted that a naval officer has won my small scholarship...I served in the Royal Canadian Navy for 27 years and then artist-in-residence at Saint Mary's University for 14 years which was a lot of fun."<sup>17</sup>



*Cdr C. Anthony Law and LCdr L. Hickey.  
Courtesy of Cmdre Laurence Hickey*

After retirement for Law the call of the Arctic proved irresistible and he made frequent painting trips to the north with friends. In the Hickey letter, he mentions having

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<sup>15</sup> Transcript: C. Anthony Law and Jane Shaw Law interview with Angela Baker, 22 June 1993. SMU Archives.

<sup>16</sup> Jane Shaw's scholarship is awarded to "two deserving Arts students... who demonstrate an interest in the arts, for example: creative writing, music or visual arts".

just returned from a "fantastic expedition" in MS *Polaris* during which he explored the coasts of Greenland, Baffin Island and Labrador before venturing into Hudson's Bay. On this particular voyage, while wading ashore amongst the growlers and bergy-bits, Law lost his footing and slipped into the frigid water. Drenched from the waist down he hung his wet gear including his pants on the nearest tree, and he tucked into the job at hand – his painting. Later in the morning a boatload of Arctic sightseers happened upon the artist-at-work in his reduced state of dress. Unabashed, Law returned their hails with a hearty greeting and carried on with his work. Similarly, Law found himself in a bit of trouble when ashore in Mexico in the fifties. Deeply engrossed in his art making he looked up to find a bull thundering across a field at him. Self-preservation and fitness came into play as he sprinted to safety behind a nearby fence.<sup>18</sup>



C. Anthony Law  
*Melville Bay, Greenland, 1996*  
Courtesy of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery

Retirement offered Tony more time to spend sailing and he purchased a two-masted ketch that he named *Cheemo* but referred lovingly to as the “stinkpot.” Each spring he conducted the obligatory Captain’s rounds to determine her sea readiness for the upcoming summer season and to effect necessary repairs. These usually included

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<sup>17</sup> C. Anthony Law to LCdr Laurence [Hickey] 13 September 1988. Collection of Pat Jessup. Laurence Hickey has since reached the rank of Commodore in the Canadian Navy and is currently serving at NDHQ in Ottawa.

scraping and painting her barnacle-encrusted bottom, the bane of all sailors, and Law swore that *Cheemo* grew longer each year as he and Paul Price tackled this arduous task. Jane would measure their daily progress by the colour of paint that the two sailors wore on their return after a day's work. Red would indicate that they were only at the early stages of readiness in the application of anti-fouling paint. Blue was more promising as they painted the hull overcoat. White, used for the plumb line, meant that the job was almost done and his beloved *Cheemo* was finally ready to take to the water.



*Cheemo alongside Cross Island  
nd  
Courtesy of Dr. Paul Price*

Often accompanied by Leighton Davis, his successor as curator at SMU's Gallery, Law continued to venture out into the country in much the same way that he had done fifty years earlier with Hennessey and Varley. His energy was legendary and despite becoming ill with cancer he "undertook painting trips to Mexico and Bermuda...renovated his house and built a Japanese Garden" and visited Northern Ontario sites favoured by A.Y. Jackson and Joseph Casson.<sup>19</sup> Leighton Davis, who curated Tony and Jane's final joint show in 1996, coincidentally held at SMU's Art Gallery, remembered Law as "a master of painting technique... he had a wonderful way

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<sup>18</sup> Bill Lovatt, "Sailor Painter Finds NS "Artist Paradise"", *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax, 9 April 1952.

of putting paint on canvas.”<sup>20</sup> Paul Price remarked on Law’s ability to add texture with his skillful application of paint to the canvas.<sup>21</sup> Bernard Riordon described Law as a “pioneer in the development of the arts in this area” whose work was a “religion to him.”

22



*Opening Ceremony of Sixty Years  
Painting from Nature - Anthony  
Law and Jane B. Shaw,  
SMU Art Gallery,  
16 May to 23 June, 1996.*

*LtoR:  
Jane Shaw, Tony Law and  
Leighton Davis*

*Photo courtesy of AGNS*

Both Davis and Price accompanied Tony Law on a 1985 painting expedition to the Queen Charlotte Islands. The trip was aboard the *Singlejack*, a 32 foot sailboat outfitted specifically for artists. Law was in his element painting ancient totem poles, abandoned villages and rugged cliffs. “You could sense the spirits of the ancient Haida watching over us as we painted the great forest of Tanu. After a few days of painting we had begun to capture the greens, the spirit and the characteristics of this majestic land,” he recorded in his log of the painting expedition.<sup>23</sup>

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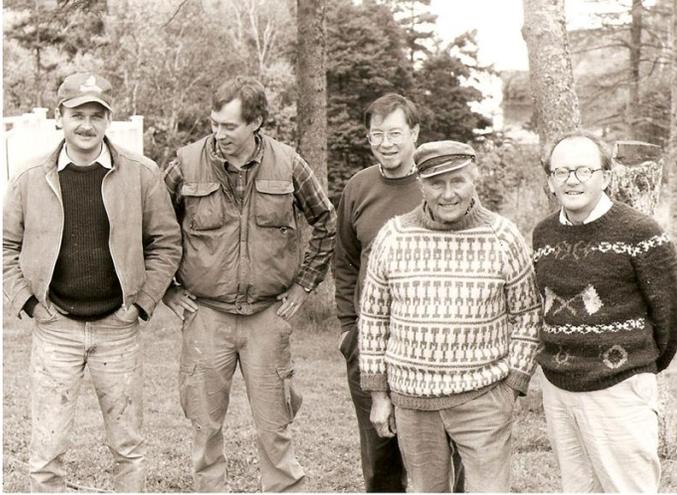
<sup>19</sup> “One Man Show in Quebec City”, *Between Times*, Saint Mary’s University, 13 November 1973.

<sup>20</sup> Andy Pederson, “Artist Law ‘continued work of Group of Seven”, *Halifax Daily News*, 17 October 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Pat Jessup interview Paul Price, 15 September, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Elissa Barnard and Jeffrey Simpson, “Law remembered as vivid”, *Halifax Mail Star*, 17 October 1996.

<sup>23</sup> C. Anthony Law, “From Law’s Log: reflections on the west coast. A Painting Trip to the Queen Charlotte Island with Tony Law, Paul Price and Leighton Davis”, *Visual Arts News*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (April 1986).



*Painting colleagues enjoying expedition to New Brunswick, 1990.*

*L to R:*

*Lorne Ried, Dr. Paul Price, Leighton Davis, Tony Law and Ross MacCulloch.*

*Photo courtesy of AGNS*

Law worked religiously, up at dawn and painting through the day. On Hot Spring Island, called Island of Fire by the Haida, Price and Law experienced painting in the rain and later in the fog in Joan Perez Sound: “Tony made me acutely aware of nature. He taught me a way of life... Those quick sure brush strokes. Boldness. Like in thick fog and surf when he’d put *Cheemo*’s wheel over, right into that slit of a channel to Cross Island.”<sup>24</sup> Law was famous for his clean decisive manner and for “reproducing only the bare facts,”<sup>25</sup> a style that he learned from his studies with Hennessey and his painting expeditions with Varley and Masson.

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<sup>24</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Dr. Paul Price, 15 Septemer 2008.

<sup>25</sup> “Anthony Law’s oils on display in capital”, *This Week*, Vol. 1, No. 29, 15 April, 1971, p. 4.



C, Anthony Law  
*Abandoned, Cross Island*  
1965  
Courtesy of Gerry Shortt

Tony Law loved to go fast. Paul Price recalled with great affection painting adventures in Law’s Volkswagen “sketch mobile” with Tony wielding the steering wheel as if he was at the helm of his beloved MTB 459.<sup>26</sup> The van was fully appointed like a well-run warship, with bunks, water, art tables and even quarters for his dogs. Leighton Davis recalled “painting bus” outings in the darkest days of winter, brightened by a full and productive day capped off with a “well deserved happy hour.”<sup>27</sup> Working with Tony Law in this environment gave him a firsthand appreciation of the “stamina, determination and patience” needed to work outdoors. Law believed that you had to experience nature if you were going to paint it. “You’ve got to just sit and observe – watch the clouds blowing by, hear a bird’s song,” he said.<sup>28</sup>

A week before he passed away, a deteriorating Tony made a final sailing trip around Deep Cove with Paul Price. Hoisting the spinnaker, Paul brought the boat up to a lively speed and Tony’s “stinkpot” danced across the water. Tony was ecstatic. “He had

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<sup>26</sup> Pat Jessup interview Paul Price, 15 September, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Sixty years of Painting from Nature”, *Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery*, May 16 through June 23, 1996. p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Shared Passion”, *Halifax Daily News*, 25 May 1996.

a genuine connection with the ocean,” recalled Price and that last day at sea invigorated him to face the days ahead.



*C. Anthony Law  
Mood of Tranquility, Cross Island,  
1990  
Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Shaw Law*

## CHAPTER FIVE – REMEMBERING TONY LAW



*Tony Law in his Williams Lake Studio  
1995*

*Courtesy of AGNS*

Ironically and despite his productivity during the war, Tony Law felt that he had lost five years of professional development as an artist and as a result chose a naval career with the RCN permanent force after demobilization.<sup>1</sup> What was remarkable about Law was his deep conviction to Canada. When given the opportunity in 1943 to join the Canadian War Records Program full time, he declined, feeling that he could better serve his country at war as a combatant.<sup>2</sup>



*Winston H. Elliott  
C. Anthony Law, 1945  
CWM 20020115-004  
Beaverbrook Collection of War  
Art© Canadian War Museum*



*C. Anthony Law  
Merchant Ship and Frigate Re-fitting, Sydney, N.S., nd  
CWM 19710261-4104  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

<sup>1</sup> Pat Jessup conversation with Mrs. Jane Shaw Law, July 11, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> James B. Roe, "Painter Anthony Law Commanded Flotilla", *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 February 1946.

In the post-war era, the Nazi menace was replaced by a new threat to world peace as the Soviet Union grew in military power. Working closely with NATO Allies in the Atlantic and Pacific during the Cold War, the RCN stood watch over the surface and subsurface fleets of the Soviet Bloc. Law kept up with his painting, garnering the label the "painting commander"<sup>3</sup> while at sea scouring the North Atlantic for "enemy" ships. Despite the fact that Canada did not have a sanctioned art program until 1968, Law on his own, recorded this important period of the history of the RCN. In essence he returned to his status as an unofficial war artist as he recorded Canada's naval efforts during the Cold War.



*C. Anthony Law  
HMCS Algonquin entering the  
Narrows, St. John's, NL*

*Courtesy of  
Cmdre Charles Westropp*

*Inscription on reverse of painting:*

*"Special commission for Captain  
Charles Westropp. For my  
navigator who navigated HMCS  
Cape Scott to Easter Island,  
1964/65 under the command of the  
artist."*

Law was duty bound to his painting and to the navy. He served both well with distinction. Excelling in composition, balance, colour and mood, his drawings and paintings mirror a man who led by example in a calm, decisive manner. During his professional career, Law participated in 28 major exhibitions<sup>4</sup> and scores of smaller shows that he proudly shared with his life-long painting partner and wife Jane. Leighton

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<sup>3</sup> Nickname received from his days at sea in the RCN. Pat Jessup conversation with Mrs. Jane Shaw Law, July 11, 2004.

Davis claimed that the only time he had ever seen the Laws argue was over which was the better medium to work in - oil or watercolour. “And then it’s [it was] really just a joke...The main thing is that they’re [were] such good critics of each other’s work. And they do [did] it without killing each other in the process.”<sup>5</sup>



Jane Shaw Law c1952  
Boulderwood, N.S.



Jane Shaw Law at work in the front seat of the  
sketch mobile, c1996.

Tony Law’s paintings can be found in the Canadiana Collection, at the Canadian War Museum, National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, the Shearwater Aviation Museum, Confederation Art Gallery, the Naval Museum of Halifax, in hospitals, universities, military establishments and messes. Most recently, when Stéphane Dion served as the Leader of the Opposition, his wife Janine Krieger, selected Tony Law’s *Lake Reflections*, 1956 from the Canadiana Fund to hang in Stornoway, their official residence at the time. The painting “reminds me

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B – List of Exhibitions

<sup>5</sup> Marilyn Smulders, “Shared Passion”, *Halifax Daily News*, 25 May 1996.

of my cottage up north in the high Laurentians. It's the same nature, untouched. The same sort of calm. And it's represented by a feeling, not by details," she said.<sup>6</sup>



C. Anthony Law  
*Lake Reflections*  
1956  
Courtesy of the Canadiana Fund

Frequently Law would donate his work to cheer up a hospital ward as he did in Ottawa where his old 29<sup>th</sup> Flotilla shipmate, Lt John Shand was convalescing.<sup>7</sup> Many newlyweds were the recipients of his paintings including his surrogate son, Dr. Paul Price, renowned photographer Sherman Hines and his former shipmate Cdr Tony German, who wrote:

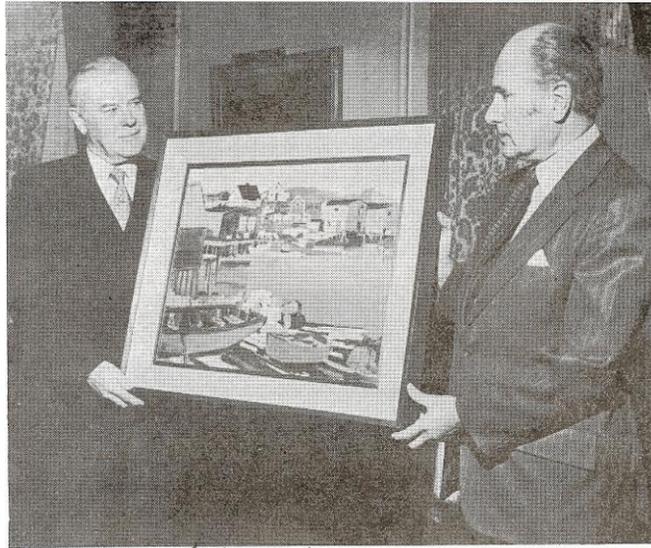
Tony and I were very good friends, served together in the cruiser HMCS *Uganda* in mid 40's. I have two of his outstanding paintings hanging on walls in my house--one fine oil depicts a stream running out across a beach on the east coast of Vancouver Island with Mount Arrowsmith in the background. Half a dozen of us had gone up-island to Qualicum for a weekend, object for the majority was to shoot some geese. Object for Tony and Jane was of course to paint--which they did--and I watched Tony for a while painting a sketch of the scene. When Sage and I married

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<sup>6</sup> Maria Cook, "House of Uncommons", *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 April, 2008, Janine Krieger gives Citizen readers an exclusive peek at the eclectic paintings and unique objets d'art at Stornoway. Ms. Krieger, selected 81 works of art from the Canadiana Fund, including Tony Law's *Lake Reflections*, 1956.

<sup>7</sup> David Brown, "Hot Painting", *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 September 2000, and David Brown, "Missing Art is likely in house, office", *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 October, 2000. The painting was the subject of several newspaper articles when it was stolen during renovations from the Cancer Clinic at the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

the following March, lo and behold a large and lovely oil painting of the Qualicum scene was our wedding present from Tony and Jane.<sup>8</sup>



HALIFAX PAINTER, retired Commander Anthony Law, presented this "sketch" of Terence Bay and a larger scene of Portuguese Cove to Lieutenant-Governor, Hon. Clarence L. Gosse, and Government House in a brief ceremony at the Lieutenant-Governor's official residence late last week. The two paintings, the first completed in 1967 and the second done in 1966, have been on loan to Government House for seven years. Arrangements for the presentation by the St. Mary's University artist-in-residence were made by Art Gallery of Nova Scotia curator Bernard Riordon. (N.S. CIC Photo)

“His paintings have provided us with a vision of Nova Scotian and Canadian landscape in vigorous and bold realism,” wrote Bernard Riordon.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Leighton Davis compared Tony Law’s style to the Group of Seven “who demonstrate[d] a distinctive Canadian point of view by their fresh and robust approach to landscape and by their honesty of purpose.”<sup>10</sup> Law remained honest to his purpose throughout his career and is remembered as “one of the most consistent performers among the painters of Nova Scotia.”<sup>11</sup> By his own account, his goal as a painter remained unchanged since his first one man show in 1937 – “to create a true conception of [the] Canadian landscape.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Email: Tony German to Pat Jessup, 14 July, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> “The Landscape Artistry of Cdr C. Anthony Law & Friends”, News Release: *Cumberland County Museum*, 15 October, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Leighton Davis, “Remembering Tony Law”, *Maroon & White*, (Summer 1967), p.6. Law was a life long student of the Group of Seven. Before he passed away in 1996, he donated his library of 135 books, a large number on the individual members of the Group to Saint Mary's University Library.

<sup>11</sup> Exhibition Catalogue: “Centennial Art Gallery”, *Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts*, (November 1968).

<sup>12</sup> “One Man Show in Quebec City”, *Between Times*, Saint Mary's University, 13 November 1973.



*C. Anthony Law  
Edge of the Woods  
and  
Courtesy of Gerry Shortt*

Tony Law passed away at his Boulderwood home on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. A teacher and mentor to the end, Law offered a friendly critique of an oil sketch by his long time student Dr. Paul Price and bequeathed him his paints and brushes in parting. Price recalled regarding Law's art materials as almost sacred and never borrowed anything from him. However, just before he died, Law offered a few...“because in a few days you are going to have it all anyway,” he recalled. "I don't need a tombstone," he told his wife and Paul Price, "it's all up there on the walls."<sup>13</sup>



*C. Anthony Law  
Windy Afternoon, Williams Lake  
1975  
Courtesy of AGNS*

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<sup>13</sup> Bill Twatio, “A Sailors Legacy, C. Anthony Law (1916-1996)”, *Esprit de Corps*, Vol. 5 Issue 10, p. 11.

In the days and months to follow, tributes flowed in and appeared in Canadian newspapers and journals across the country and Saint Mary's University marked his passing by lowering its flag to half-mast. His career as a war artist was covered elegantly by Dr. Laura Brandon in the *Canadian Military History Journal*<sup>14</sup> and by Cdr Tony German in the *Globe and Mail*. German, described Law as a "small, soft-spoken and thoughtful man" possessing the requisite qualities of "quick thinking, innovation and leadership" to take men into battle.<sup>15</sup> Longtime friend Leighton Davis, wrote with passion of Law's post RCN career at the helm of the cultural community.<sup>16</sup> The editorial in the *Chronicle Herald* praised Law for having:

...exemplified all that is fine and noble in the best traditions of the Navy and of the arts" and noted especially his work encouraging young artists. His "work will be perpetuated...through the talents of those in whose training and education he played a part...All are the richer for his presence among us and for the impressive gifts of a man whose greatest delight was in sharing those gifts with others."<sup>17</sup>

And a saddened Ian Muncaster described Law's passing as the "end of an era" and a "great loss to a struggling culture in Nova Scotia." "He was always an anchor. There are eddies and currents that affect most art communities; Tony was always one of our most stable elements."<sup>18</sup>

Tony Law was laid to rest on 18 October 1988 following a Service of Thanksgiving at St. Augustine's Church, in Jollimore, Nova Scotia. The service, a loving tribute to a life lived well, paid tribute to Law's love of the navy and the sea with Psalm 104, 'Eternal Father, Strong to Save' – the Naval Hymn and from I Corinthians:

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<sup>14</sup> Laura Brandon, "C. Anthony Law (1916 – 1996) Official War Artist", *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 6 No. 1, (Spring 1997), pp. 97 –100.

<sup>15</sup> Tony German, *The Sea is at our Gates*, p. 166.

<sup>16</sup> Leighton Davis, 'Remembering Tony Law,' *Maroon & White*, (Summer 1997), p. 6. Davis was Director and Curator, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery at the time.

<sup>17</sup> "Anthony Law", *Chronicle Herald*, Halifax, 17 October, 1996.

I feel the winds of God to-day  
Today my sail I lift,  
Though heavy oft with drenching spray,  
And torn with many a rift,  
If hope but light the water's crest  
And Christ my bark will use,  
I'll seek the seas at his best,  
And brave another cruise.

Tony Law's "mortal remains are interred in Sackville, Nova Scotia," but as he pointed out before his death, "his real remains are on the walls," wrote Paul Price.<sup>19</sup>



*C. Anthony Law,  
MTBs Leaving for Night Patrol off  
Le Havre  
1945  
CWM 19710261-4107  
Beaverbrook Collection of War Art©  
Canadian War Museum*

*"On and on skimmed the saucy MTBs,  
creating plumes like the spread tails of  
haughty peacocks, and leaving wakes like the  
powerful wings of seagulls."<sup>20</sup>*

*White Plumes Astern*

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<sup>18</sup> Andy Pederson, "Artist Law 'continued work of Group of Seven'", *Halifax Daily News* 17 Oct 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Email: Dr. Paul Price to Pat Jessup, March 09.

<sup>20</sup> Law, p. 76.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

Nationally recognized early in his career, for over sixty years Tony Law articulated the landscape of Canada in a style that echoed the Group of Seven's avant-garde style of the 1920s. For forty-six of those years Law resided in Nova Scotia capturing what he called "paradise" on board, canvas and paper. While the Group of Seven through their art, introduced the backcountry to the Canadian public, Law's images of Atlantic Canada, brought the Maritimes to the same audience.

Tony Law was known for his energy, character, commitment and deep sense of duty to his country. Most do not know about the role of Canada's flotillas of motor torpedo boats in the English Channel during WWII, but his visual records during that particular and extended battle exist as a tangible reminder of the heroism of his crews. Recalling that Law's roots that go back to Albert who defeated the Danes and freed England, Paul Price has suggested that "to leave active duty in 1942 to join the war art program would have cut against his unalterable sense of duty".<sup>21</sup> Law's commitment is exemplified in the final stanza of his poem to Jane shortly before returning to returning to England:

... So the time will come, When I must return,...  
To take up my battle post again,... To fight for right...

Law's sense of duty led him to follow a career in the peacetime navy after the war where he continued to document Canada's role in a different kind of operational theatre where he served at sea in the Arctic, British Columbia, Atlantic Canada and the South Pacific. His innate sense of doing what was right, that could be attributed to his solid

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<sup>21</sup> Email: Dr. Paul Price to Pat Jessup, March 09, 2009.

upbringing in the Audette and Law households, carried through to his days as a cultural advocate. During this period in his post-navy years, the laying of the groundwork for Saint Mary's University Art Gallery and the AGNS were the result, in a large part, of his inspired determination and gifted intervention. Guy Ouellet from HMCS *Magnificent* recalled that "as an officer Cdr Law was very good. He looked after us very well".<sup>22</sup> The artistic community of Nova Scotia can say the same.

Tony Law's approach to life was never tentative. "Whether at the helm of a MTB, as probably the most dashing young SLt in the RCN, or when he took command of a paint brush, there was no lack of decision", remembered his Navigating Officer, Charles Westropp.<sup>23</sup> Law's place among the great Canadian painters is still a matter of discussion, however in recent years his paintings have become much sought after and prices for his works are steadily on the incline.<sup>24</sup> Law is remembered today for this strength of character, leadership and as an exceptional artist who worked in a style that we know as uniquely Canadian.

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<sup>22</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Guy Ouellet, 3 October 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Pat Jessup interview with Cmdre Westropp, 1 December, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> On 22 November 2008, Crowther & Bradley Ltd. offered 5 Tony Law paintings for auction. All paintings sold in the range of \$5000 - \$15,000.

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## APPENDIX A

### CANADIAN WAR ARTISTS COMMITTEE

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR WAR ARTISTS

##### 1. Purposes:-

As a War Artist appointed to one of the Canadian Services you are charged with the portrayal of significant events, scenes, phases and episodes in the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially those which cannot be adequately rendered in any other way.

##### 2. Portrayal:

You are expected to record and interpret vividly and veraciously, according to your artistic sense, (1) the spirit and character, the appearance and attitude of the men, as individuals or groups, of the Service to which you are attached - (2) the instruments and machines which they employ, and (3) the environment in which they do their work. The intention is that your productions shall be worthy of Canada's highest cultural traditions, doing justice to History, and as works of art, worthy of exhibition anywhere at any time.

##### 3. Methods:

To help you to carry a full measure of conviction into your work, officers responsible will, whenever possible, arrange for you to share these experiences, particularly in active operations: for you must know and understand the action, the circumstances, the environment, and the participants.

##### 4. Projected Uses:

The uses to which your pictures are to be put are embraced in:-

- (i) works for contemporary exhibition,
- (ii) canvases suitable for permanent exhibition in public places, galleries, etc.
- (iii) presentations suitable for development into murals and architectural decoration,
- (iv) cartoons and sketches for the re-creation of atmosphere, topography, and details of arms, vehicles, equipment, clothing, participants and terrain, of aircraft and ships.

Every sketch and picture must be directly related to a Canadian Service at War. Each must be dated, described, and fully annotated according to character and subject.

##### 5. Media:

There are no restrictions as to media - oils, water-colour, paint of any sort, pencil, crayon, metal, stone, clay or any plastic.

All work produced by you during tenure of your appointment as War Artist will be the property of the Government of Canada, including the copyright.

##### 7. Production:

The following production or equivalent is expected during a six months period:-

###### Oil paintings

- 2 - 40" x 48" canvases
- 2 - 24" x 30" canvases
- 100 field sketches

8. Classification:

The above production may be classified, by subjects, as follows in order of importance:-

- (a) Action Episodes.
  - 1. Eye Witness Records.
  - 2. Reconstruction
- (b) Transportation Aspects. (Ferry Command, Convoy, Rail, etc.)
- (c) Personalities. (Portraits to be specific commissione.)
- (d) Training Documentaries, including recreation, etc.
- (e) Technical Documentaries.

9. Treatment and Procedure:

Except on special commission, portraits will not be painted; but generally, personnel of the forces should appear in pictures, therefore sketches of characteristic types are very necessary. Whenever possible, participants in the action depicted should pose as models: requests for this or other facilities should be made to the Commanding Officer of the unit concerned who will meet them as far as circumstances may permit.

Accuracy in delineation and presentation of clothing, equipment, weapons, vehicles and craft is essential. Details of arms, equipment and vehicles, whenever shown, should be checked against contemporary photographs.

General direction as to subjects and field to be covered will usually be given and suggestions as to medium, treatment, and composition may be offered, but the final choice will rest with the artist.

Since it is intended that much of the material currently obtained may later be translated into murals, it is desirable that subjects treated broadly should be accompanied by detailed sketches, dated, and with colour notes on the main items portrayed.

The comments and criticism of participants may often be of value - whether or not they know anything of art - and should be obtained, if possible, when the picture is nearing completion.

10. Control:

War Artists are carried on the establishment of the Historical Section of their Service. While serving overseas they will be attached to Service Headquarters in the United Kingdom for work with the Historical Officer, U. K. as occasion may demand. Employment and field to be covered are regulated and determined jointly by the Canadian War Artists Control Committee.

Approved  
March 2nd, 1943.

## APPENDIX B

### List of Exhibitions

1935 to37	Ottawa Art Association
1937	Le Salon de Quebec, du 10 au 25 Mars
1938	Portland Society of Art
1938	Art Association of Montreal, 17 March to 10 April
1938	55 <sup>th</sup> Exhibition, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 18 Nov to 18 Dec
1939	Art Association of Montreal, 9 March to 2 April 2
1942	Cross Country Tour of Naval Art
1942	National Gallery of London
1944	Canadian Service War Painting Show
1945	Exhibition of Canadian War Art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
1946	Exhibition of Canadian War Art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
1947	68 <sup>th</sup> Exhibition Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 6 Nov to 30 Nov
1951	41 <sup>st</sup> Annual Exhibition, British Columbia Society of Artists, April to May
1951	68 <sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Show Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2 to 30 May
1951	Annual Exhibition Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, The Art Gallery of Toronto, 26 Jan to 04 Mar
1952	26 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 24 to 29 March
1953	27 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists
1955	Nova Scotia Pictures Travelling Exhibition, Department of Education
1956	30 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, 9 to 21 April
1956	Nova Scotia Pictures Travelling Exhibition, Department of Education
1957	31 <sup>st</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 1 to 12 April
1962	36 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 7 to 18 April
1963	37 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 4 to 15 March
1963	Dalhousie University Art Gallery, 18 March to 6 April
1964	Maritime Art Exhibition, Beaverbrook Art Gallery
1964	38 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 9 to 21 March
1966	40 <sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists
1967	First Centennial Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Nova Scotian Artists, Centennial Art Gallery and tour throughout Nova Scotia
1967	41 <sup>st</sup> Annual Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, 20 March to 8 April
1967	Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Second Atlantic Award Exhibition, 16 to 30 November
1968	Summer Exhibition by NS Society of Artists & Craftsman, Centennial Art Gallery
1968	42 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Exhibition, NS Society of Artists, SMU Art Gallery, 5 to 30 March
1969	Retrospective exhibition, Centennial Art Gallery, November
1969	NS Society of Artists, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery 1 June to 31 August
1969	Atlantic Awards Exhibition
1970	90 <sup>th</sup> Exhibition, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts 30 Jan to 28 Feb
1971	91 <sup>st</sup> Exhibition, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts 25 Jan to 25 Mar

- 1971/72 Exhibition of paintings by Anthony Law sponsored by Heritage Museum  
Dartmouth, toured to APAC institutions (APAC Show)
- 1972 Acquisition Exhibition UNB Art Centre, 3 to 16 April
- 1972 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1922 -1972 NS Society of Artists at SMU Art Gallery
- 1974 "Know Your Artist," Dalhousie University Art Gallery, March to April
- 1974 Naval Paintings of WW2, Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery
- 1976 C. Anthony Law, The Mall Galleries, London England, 6 to 17 November
- 1980-87 Faculty, Alumni, Student, Staff Art Exhibition, SMU Art Gallery
- 1989 *C. Anthony Law, A Retrospective*, AGNS, 12 May - 25 June
- 1996 Sixty Years Painting from Nature - Anthony Law and Jane B. Shaw, SMU  
Art Gallery, 16 May to 23 June
- 2000 Canvas of War, National Tour