

# OIC's son thanks DND for saving his life

On May 12, 1980 near-tragedy struck the lives of Barry Allison, Officer-in-Charge of Sable Island Upper Air Station and his wife Heather. Their eight-year-old son Todd had just been run over by a tractor and lay badly injured awaiting air evacuation to a hospital on the mainland. (Apart from gulls, ponies and five or six AES staff or contract people, the windswept island off the coast of Nova Scotia is uninhabited and minus medical resources).

Soon after the accident, radio contact had been made with AES Regional Office in Bedford, N.S. and arrangements made for Search and Rescue to pick the boy up, but bad weather forced the rescuers to turn back. Seven long hours later Armed Forces Base, Shearwater sent out two Sea King helicopters, one of which was again prevented from reaching Sable Island due to thick fog. The other, after circling around in the gloom, managed to lower the base surgeon and a medic by cable and reach the injured child.

By now little Todd, in great pain and deprived of medication, had been strapped to a cabinet door to rest his injured back and broken collar bone. AES staff had managed to keep the boy aroused and stop him going into shock by talking to him, and in the case of Rick Wadman (of Torbay, Nfld.) by playing to him on his guitar.

Meanwhile the last chopper had managed to penetrate the fog and make a landing. Todd was evacuated first to Shearwater



*Young Todd looks on as his father Barry Allison OIC, Sable Island (N.S.) shakes hands with Shearwater Base Commander Col. Ian Patrick. Also seen are Gordon LeBlanc, AES superintendent of Station Operations, Atlantic Region (left) and Capt. Penny King (DND).* \*

then to the Halifax IWK Children's Hospital.

A year later, completely recovered from his injuries, Todd was able to say an official thank you to his rescuers at Shearwater Base. At a special ceremony, he presented inscribed plaques to officers of 423 and 443 Squadrons and especially to Major Costello the base surgeon, who made the daring cable descent. Todd was

in turn made an honorary member of 443 Squadron. Also taking part in the ceremony were base commander Col. Ian E. Patrick, Gordon LeBlanc, regional superintendent, Station Operations, AES Atlantic Region and Todd's parents.

At last report Todd was still on Sable Island, taking a correspondence course under the supervision of his mother in lieu of school attendance.