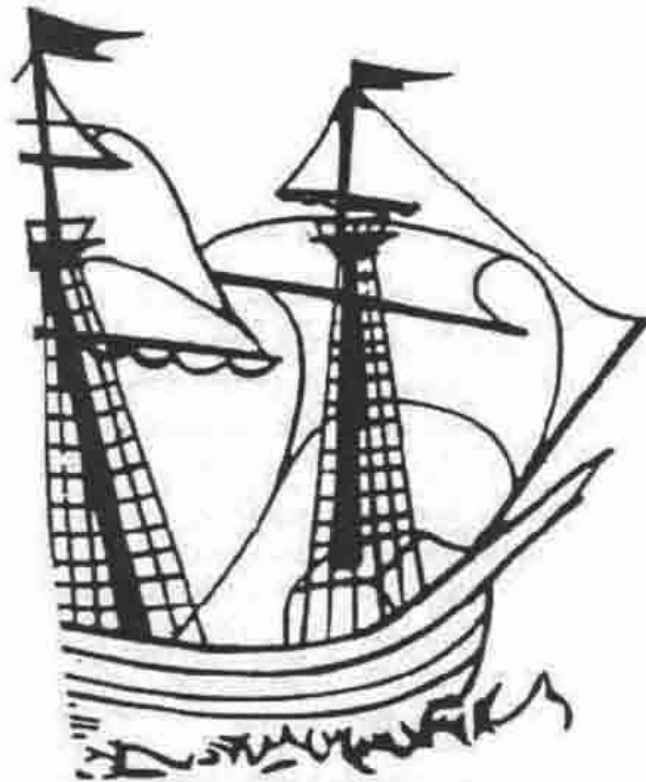


# ARGONAUTA

The Newsletter of



**The Canadian Nautical  
Research Society**

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## **ARGONAUTA**

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**Editorial**

There is often a gulf that separates the historians from the real sailors. The first example is taken from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings and drawings that show fleets of ships perfectly arranged in single line abreast or astern when in fact, higgly piggly was more the order of the fleet. The artists were giving their clients what they wanted to see rather than what in fact took place. Should historians be faulted for telling the story from the rulebook rather than from life? Do they have a choice? Another trap for the historian is forgetting that all ships, even modern ones are subject to the state of the sea, wind direction, currents, the hydrodynamic characteristics of the hull and for grand old sailing vessels, the inherent limitations built into the arrangement of sails and masts in term of weatherliness.

And then there are the people; the officers, crew, called out at all hours to take in sail or man a gun. Running, jumping, standing still, it all takes physical energy and good mental health to operate at maximum efficiency. How difficult it must be for the maritime historian to know the state of the

crew, the 'bods' who had to do the work while aboard ship those tasked to lead were intimately sensitive in their expectations as to how much to push the crew and when to pull back. Human muscles run out of steam. Old navies were probably never as efficient as their chroniclers would like us to believe while the merchantman was probably a little more so.

Perhaps in Canada we are a little more fortunate than most, in that we do not readily buy into a 'nationalist' agenda that requires a high order of mythology to sustain it. Does one of our national characteristics, an unwillingness to lay on too much boosterism bring us closer to an historical truth or are we like many, using a national mythology as a kind of blinker to avoid other stories. One circumstance is certain. We cannot escape the lens of the culture we live in.

'Tis a complex world where it is difficult to marry the physical world of action with that of written policies and institutional agendas that are generally found in archival collections. Sometimes historians are like Scrooge who attributed what he saw before him, the consequence of ill digested cheese while others soar with insight, the result of a

life earnestly lived. The only tools we really have to do the job is a fit mind and the historical method that brings us as close as we can get to an historical truth.

MDS

### President's Corner

This October is truly living up to the month's reputation as the cold shoulder between pleasant but fading memories of summer and the anticipation of Christmas. As I find myself waiting with growing impatience for things to happen, I take heart, however, in the other old adage, that good things come to those who wait.

In that respect, I have no news on the two major issues I reported to you in my last column. Our NASOH colleagues of course have not had the chance to finish voting on their opportunity to co-publish *The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du nord* in association with us as their refereed scholarly journal of note, although I have every confidence they will see the great advantage of so doing. The other issue is on-line publication of TNM, which I frankly had thought to be somewhat of a no-brainer, but instead has proven to elude an easy solution delivering both maximum accessibility and high scholarly standards – these are criteria that should not be in competition, so again I remain confident our goal is achievable.

At the great risk of torturing you with mixed metaphors, I prefer to look upon both of these issues as similar to the bulbs I planted last week in my garden – sure to blossom in glorious flower next spring.

Which brings me to the subject of the coming conference season. We have big events coming up in each of the next two years, and as such I would recommend earlier than usual planning to work them into your budget. Admittedly, they are somewhat out of our usual price range, in part because the cost of travel generally is increasing, but more because each of these takes us to somewhat exotic locales

with the tie-in of celebrations of special interest to Canadian nautical historians.

Next year is 2007, the International Year of the Arctic. Churchill, Manitoba has long laid claim as being the only prairie province with a salt water port (on Hudson Bay), and in August it will be the site of our first society foray into the Arctic. Bill Glover is the organizer, and he has pulled together an impressive list of speakers from North America and Europe, blended into a programme that allows for exploration of many local attractions, such as the trading post of Fort Prince of Wales and beluga whale watching. The numbers on the package tour are restricted due to accommodation availability, but there are still a few spots open. More details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter, or on our web-site ([www.cnrs-scrn.org](http://www.cnrs-scrn.org)), or you can call Bill at (613) 549-1900.

A year later, in August of 2008, we will be in Quebec City to participate in the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. That occasion is allowing for a number of interesting pairings: our call for papers is expected to draw a stellar line-up of scholars in both English and French (we intend to have simultaneous translation); additionally the designated cultural capital of the European Union that year will be Liverpool, making for a most natural examination of the transatlantic links; and finally our conference site is very near the Headquarters of the Canadian Naval Reserve. Again more details are on the web-site, and I am the point of contact – (613) 590-9508.

In closing, I wish you great happiness in the coming Christmas season and all the very best in the New Year.

*Rich Gimblett*  
President, CNRS

## News and Views

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ship Found in Lake Ontario

[AP 11 December 2006] A 19th-century commercial sailing ship, its twin masts still intact, sits upright in deep, frigid waters off the southern shore of Lake Ontario.

Shipwreck explorers Jim Kennard and Dan Scoville said they located the schooner *Milan* in summer 2005 about five miles off Point Breeze, 30 miles west of Rochester. They videotaped the 93-foot-long, square-stern vessel this year using an unmanned submersible built with the help of college students.

"It's not unheard of to have well-preserved ships, but this one is in so good a shape," Scoville said Monday. "It almost looks like it could be floated" to the surface.

The *Milan* was hauling 1,000 barrels of salt when it sprung a leak and sank in October 1849. Its crew of nine clambered aboard a yawl boat and was rescued by a passing ship along with a Newfoundland dog. The animal was carried down with the sinking ship but then popped to the surface and swam to the yawl.

The ship sits evenly on the lake bed more than 200 feet down. Its masts extend 70 feet upward in a dark, almost oxygen-free setting. And while its rigging and sails have long since disintegrated, much else appears largely undamaged.

Both anchors are firmly in place near the bow. The bowsprit - a large, tapered spar extending forward from the bow - is intact, as is the tiller, a large handle for turning the rudder.

"If a ship goes down in a big storm, it usually gets broken up," Scoville said. "If it goes down on a nice day, it usually breaks when it hits the bottom. This one looks like it just drifted down and set upon the bottom nice and easy.

"At those depths, and the water being so cold, there's not a lot of oxygen" or light, he

added. "It basically helps preserve the wood. If a shipwreck is in shallow, fresh water, the ice will get it or storms will beat it up."

Built in 1845, the *Milan* ferried corn, flour, wheat, salt and lumber to ports on lakes Ontario and Erie. It was sailing to Cleveland from Oswego, a port 80 miles east of Rochester, when crew members said they were awakened in the forecabin by splashing water, historical records show.

The inflow was already 18 inches deep when they started pumping out. They removed salt bags from the forward hold and steered south in an effort to get to shore. But the ship ran into southerly winds, made little headway and was abandoned soon before it went under.

While hundreds of ships have been wrecked in Lake Ontario's harbours and along its shores, fewer than 200 have been lost in the lake, which is 800 feet deep in places, Scoville estimated. About 100 of those wrecks have already been found, many in or near the St. Lawrence Seaway, he said.

The *Milan* is "the oldest and the prettiest" of at least five wrecks that Scoville and Kennard, both electrical engineers and deep-water divers, have discovered since teaming up five years ago. They undertook months of historical research before announcing their find this month.

"From the Niagara River up to the St. Lawrence, there's about a dozen that haven't been found that we think we are capable of finding," Scoville said.

An obscure newspaper reference to the sinking got the pair started on the *Milan's* trail three years ago, and they used sonar equipment to finally locate it.

Because many Ontario shipwrecks lie in water too deep to dive safely, they enlisted a team of seniors at Rochester Institute of Technology last fall to help them build a remote-operated vehicle equipped with cameras to explore the *Milan*.



Most wrecks and their contents found on the American side of the lake belong to New York. "It would be illegal to take anything off the ship without a permit from the state," Scoville said.

### **Historic Naval Airship USS *Macon* in NOAA Monterey Bay Sanctuary**

[Three Wire Magazine, 27 September 2006] Over the course of a five-day archeological investigation, researchers from the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI), the University of New Hampshire and Stanford University have documented two major debris fields associated with the submerged wreck site of the rigid airship USS *Macon*, a US Navy dirigible lost off California's Big Sur coast in 1935.

During the September 17-22 research cruise aboard MBARI's *Western Flyer*, more than 40 hours of deepwater surveys were completed utilizing MBARI's remotely operated vehicle *Tiburon*. The surveys recorded the visual wreckage USS *Macon* through high-definition videotape and still imagery that will be used to create a photo-mosaic of the two debris fields.

Distinguishable features included the airship's hangar bay containing four Sparrowhawk biplanes and their detached landing gear. Five of the *Macon*'s eight German-built Maybach 12 cylinder gasoline engines also were identified. Objects from the ship's galley were found, including two sections of the aluminum stove, propane tanks that supplied fuel for it, and the enlisted men's dining table and bench. A second debris field contained the *Macon*'s bow section including the mooring mast receptacle assembly. This field also contains aluminum chairs and desks that may have been in a port side officers' or meteorologist's office.

"We are pleased to report that the first archeological survey conducted in NOAA's Monterey Bay Sanctuary was successful with all of our mission goals accomplished," said Robert Schwemmer, West Coast maritime

heritage coordinator for the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program and co-principal investigator for the expedition. "Most notably, the advanced cameras and computer imaging provided by MBARI's expert team allowed us to better survey and document the *Macon*'s historic wreckage, and over 10,000 individual Internet addresses from five continents signed up to view our live streaming video."

The USS *Macon*'s two debris fields, designated by scientists as debris fields A and B, measure 60 metres in diameter and are elevated several metres above the seafloor. The fields are separated by a distance of 250 metres and show an accumulation of several centimetres of sediment since initial surveys conducted in 1990. Scientists also have concluded that sections of the aluminum girder show signs of degradation after 71 years in the marine environment.

"We are extremely happy with the underwater survey results, the performance of the offshore equipment and operations team and the collaboration with NOAA and the National Marine Sanctuary Program," said Chris Grech, MBARI deputy director for marine operations and co-principal investigator for the expedition. "Visiting the site again was like visiting an old friend that you haven't seen in years."

The expedition was designed to build upon information gathered by the US Navy and MBARI, who first recorded the aircraft's remains during expeditions in 1990 and 1991. An initial survey involving NOAA, MBARI, US Geological Survey and Moss Landing Marine Laboratories was completed in May 2005 utilizing side-scan sonar deployed from the NOAA research vessel *McArthur II*.

The expedition was a collaborative venture involving the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA Office of Exploration, NOAA Preserve America Initiative, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, Stanford University, University of New Hampshire, US Navy, State of California, Monterey Maritime and History Museum, and Moffett Field Historical Society and Museum. Noah Doughty, an educator from Mission

College Preparatory High School in San Luis Obispo, Calif., participated as a NOAA "Teacher-at-Sea" and provided daily science and technology Web-based logs.

The mission of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute is to achieve and maintain a position as a world centre for advanced research and education in ocean science and technology, and to do so through the development of better instruments, systems, and methods for scientific research in the deep waters of the ocean. MBARI emphasizes the peer relationship between engineers and scientists as a basic principle of its operation. All of the activities of MBARI must be characterized by excellence, innovation, and vision.

The NOAA Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary stretches along 276 miles of central California coast and encompasses more than 5,300 square miles of ocean area. Renowned for its scenic beauty and remarkable productivity, the sanctuary supports one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, including 33 species of marine mammals, 94 species of seabirds, 345 species of fishes and thousands of marine invertebrates and plants.

The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program is committed to preserving historical, cultural and archaeological resources and seeks to increase public awareness of America's maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programmes. Today, the sanctuary programme manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument that together encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

In 2007 NOAA, an agency of the US Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. Starting with the establishment of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through

the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

### ***Ocean Yearbook Call for Papers - Volume 22***

The International Ocean Institute's major publication is the *Ocean Yearbook*, published by Transnational Publishers in cooperation with the Marine & Environmental Law Institute at Dalhousie Law School, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The *Ocean Yearbook* editors are now inviting submissions for Volume 22.

Articles on issues and prospects, ocean governance, living resources of the ocean, non-living ocean resources, transportation and communications, environment and coastal management, maritime security, military activities, regional developments, training and education, and ocean polar issues will be considered. The deadline for submission for Volume 22 is March 31, 2007.

Further details on the Call for Papers and Authors' Guidelines are available online at: [www.dal.ca/law/melaw/oyb](http://www.dal.ca/law/melaw/oyb)

Volume 21 is to be published c. March 2007.

### **Student Paper Prize 2007**

The *Ocean Yearbook* has initiated an annual competition for students writing research papers on marine affairs subjects. The deadline for submissions is 15 May 2007. Further details are available online at: [www.dal.ca/law/melaw/oyb](http://www.dal.ca/law/melaw/oyb)

**Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum  
Amsterdam – Fellowships**

Kattenburgerplein 1  
1018 KK Amsterdam  
T +31 (020) 52 32 222  
info@scheepvaartmuseum.nl

Research Fellowships

The Vereeniging Nederlandsch Historisch Scheepvaart Museum, an independent association, was founded in 1916 and is the owner of one of the world's leading maritime collections. The collection is on permanent loan to and managed by the Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam / Netherlands Maritime Museum, established in the former 17th century storehouse of the Admiralty of Amsterdam. The Vereeniging is primarily focussing on new acquisitions and research, and is sponsor of the Maritime Chair at Leiden University. With its Programme for Fellowships the Vereeniging aims to stimulate the use of artifacts in the collection as historic sources.

Candidates may consult the museum's collection on the website [www.scheepvaartmuseum.nl](http://www.scheepvaartmuseum.nl) and [www.maritiemdigitaal.nl](http://www.maritiemdigitaal.nl), the online catalogue of maritime museums in the Netherlands, the Vereeniging's Yearbooks and annual reports.

For 2007 the Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Fellowships Foundation offers two research fellowships:

**The Dr Ernst Crone research fellowship for academic graduates**, 6-12 months. This fellowship is a one-year award, primarily intended to support post-doctoral research. The Ernst Crone fellowship carries award of EUR 30.000 and is open for university-graduated scholars and museum professionals of all nationalities and disciplines.

Application forms must be joined by two academic referees and a proposal to make the results available (the Museum does not undertake to publish or assist with publications

of the results of work accomplished during the tenure of the fellowship). Stipends can be remitted to the candidates as well as their employers. Fellows will have use of the Museum's library and store-room facilities and may otherwise be provided with a space to work in and use of a computer. Formal start date is September 1, 2007.

**The Prof dr J.C.M. Warnsinck research fellowship for academic students**, 3-6 months. This fellowship is a one-year award supporting research in the Museum's collection by students, resulting in a special paper or publication. This fellowship is open for academic students of all nationalities and disciplines and offers a stipend of EUR2.500, which will be remitted to the student. Application forms must be joined by one academic referee. Candidates are expected to do a proposal to make the results available (the Museum does not undertake to publish or assist with publications). Formal start date is September 1, 2007.

Application

The final date for applications is March 31, 2007. Application forms can be downloaded from this website and sent by letter to:

Stichting Fellowships Nederland  
Scheepvaartmuseum  
Mrs Evelien Ros, administrator  
Postbus 15443  
1001 MK Amsterdam

**Italian Naval Association Naples' Division**

The "Lega Navale Italiana Sezione di Napoli" (Italian Naval Association Naples' Division: a Moral Institute by Public Law), set up the "Centro Studi Tradizioni Nautiche della Sezione di Napoli della Lega Navale Italiana" (Seamanship Traditions Studies "Bureau"), with its operative section in Via Sedile di Porto, 33 - 80133 Napoli (Italy).

Finally the Italian Naval Association Naples' Division has put into effect an ambitious programme which had been considered for long time.



The objectives of the Bureau are:

- to make thematic researches and a thought-out preservation of documents and objects of historical interest related to sail and engine navigations
- to promote anything which spreads international, national, regional, and local seamanship traditions throughout our Country, opening it to scholars, students and anyone willing to cultivate the subject
- to plan a researches' programme concerning sail and engine navigations, seamanship art and traditions, including any other argument related to the sea
- to coordinate working-teams of Italian Naval League's members or not, private and public institutes, associations, foundations, cultural and professional organisms.

The Bureau is equipped to arrange the important and numerous materials which have been donated. There are books, magazines, photo albums and videos. The related data was spotted in 35 thematic till now and allowed us to classify:

- 10,360 books either stored in the Bureau or stored in private collections linked with the Bureau
- 5,933 periodicals stored in the Bureau from 97 Italian and international magazines
- 250 videos stored in the Bureau.

After 6 years of activity the Bureau library was recognized 'of regional interest' by Regional Administration of Campania. Moreover the Provincial Administration of Naples included with a special software the Bureau library in the Provincial Library Database ([www.dba.it/napoli](http://www.dba.it/napoli)).

In order to support the social and cultural activities of the LNI Naples Division the Bureau also organizes conferences and seminars held by important and qualified lecturers.

Contacts:

Bureau web site: [www.cstn.it](http://www.cstn.it)

League web site: [www.lninapoli.it](http://www.lninapoli.it)

e-mail: [info@cstn.it](mailto:info@cstn.it)

### **Air University Library Index to Military Periodicals**

The AUL Index to Military Periodicals (AULIMP) is at:

[www.dtic.mil/dtic/aulimp/](http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/aulimp/)

The alternative site is:

[www.au.af.mil/au/aul/aulimp.htm](http://www.au.af.mil/au/aul/aulimp.htm)

Maritime history articles are also included.

### **Two Good Histories of SOSUS**

Two websites are devoted to the history and development of the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS):

[www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/n87/usw/issue\\_25/sosus.htm](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/n87/usw/issue_25/sosus.htm)

[www.ijnhonline.org/volume5\\_number2\\_august06/article\\_weir\\_sosus\\_aug06.htm](http://www.ijnhonline.org/volume5_number2_august06/article_weir_sosus_aug06.htm)

### **Laurence Dunn**

[December 15 2006 Lloyds List] Many readers will be saddened by the death of well-known marine artist and writer Laurence Dunn in his 97th year.

A man of encyclopaedic knowledge, he began his lifelong love of ships in Brixham, where he meticulously recorded passing traffic with the exquisitely accurate line drawings which later became something of a trademark.

While studying at London's Central School of Art his work was noticed by the Southern Railway, which commissioned profiles of its fleet, and this in turn led to work for Orient Line, where he also designed the well-known corn-coloured hull, and later Thomeycroft, where he helped with shaping draft plans for a new royal yacht. During the Second World War he worked for Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty, where his technique did much to improve recognition standards, and greatly expanded his shipping clientele, becoming personally known to many chairmen.

As well as the shipping press he worked for mainstream publications such as *Everybody's*, *Sphere* and the up-market comic *Eagle*. Through his many contacts he enjoyed going to sea in a great variety of ships from aircraft carriers to colliers.

Laurence wrote several books, starting with ship recognition titles which introduced new standards of layout, but his best known work was probably *Passenger Liners*, which was widely taken up by the travel trade.

His love of Greece, where he was an early publicist of island cruising, led to involvement in reshaping various passenger liners beginning with Greek Line's *Olympia*.

In later life he designed several sets of shipping stamps for the Crown Agents, produced photographic volumes on Thames and Mediterranean shipping and still found time to enjoy the passing Thames traffic.

#### Archives and Collections Society

[Press Release, 15 November 2006] It is with great pleasure that the Archives and Collections Society (ACS) (a federal Charitable Organization established in 1998) and the Canadian Society of Marine Artists (a federal not-for-profit established in 1983) announce the signature of an agreement with Canada Post allowing the purchase by ACS of the building on Main Street that has housed the Post Office and Customs House since circa 1896.

This step forward for our two Societies represents a major expansion that has been in the making for some two years now. After an independent feasibility study that returned positive values, considerable planning activities have already taken place in the background. All the results returned thus far have confirmed the solid founding of our decisions to date.

Archives and Collections (ACS) Society  
2, Gladstone Avenue,  
Picton, Ontario, K0K2T0, Canada  
Telephone: 1 613 476 1177  
Fax: 1 613 476 7598  
AandC.org

### Sailor, Soldier, Rum-runner: Captain John Thomas Randell of Port Rexton, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland

by Francis (Frank) I. W. Jones, C.D.,  
B.A.(Hons.),  
Captain, Canadian Forces (Retired)

John Thomas Randell, who has been called "The Most Famous Rum-Runner of Them All", was captain of the rum-runner *I'm Alone*, sunk by the United States Coast Guard in 1929. He has been accused of glorifying and exaggerating his exploits in his autobiography. However, a decorated veteran of three wars who went to sea at the age of twelve can be forgiven if he embellished his extraordinary life. His wife, all too well aware of the veracity of her husband's less savoury exploits, not wishing them to be made public, destroyed as many copies of his autobiography as she could obtain.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, his brief rum-running career appears to be the sole activity for which he is remembered and has eclipsed his more legitimate, sometimes heroic endeavours.

John Thomas Randell, my second cousin three generations removed, son of John and Mary (Fowlow) Randell, was born at Ship Cove (Port Rexton), Trinity Bay January 2, 1877. Jack decided to run away to sea at the age of twelve after he and his chums, playing pirates, raided his mother's jam and cookie cupboard, washing their loot down with rum obtained illegally. Sick, ashamed and fearful of his parents' recriminations, Jack set off to find a ship. However, several miles and hours down the road, weariness and sobriety brought on homesickness. He returned, not to punishment, but to his worried parents' decision to let him

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<sup>1</sup> Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War 1899-1902* (Ottawa, 1993), 447; Robert Webb, "The Most Famous Rum-Runner Of Them All," *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, II (1982), 30, 37; *Halifax Herald*, 23 February 1944; *Liverpool Advance*, 24 February 1944, and *St. John's Daily News*, 21 February 1944; and Walter McLeod, Personal Communication (2 October 1998).

go to sea each summer in his father's schooner *Kitty Clyde* fishing cod off the Labrador coast.<sup>2</sup>

Jack fished each summer, until at the age of sixteen, he joined the barquentine *Belle of the Exe* engaged in the South American trade commanded by his brother Captain Issac Robert Randell. He sailed as an able seaman for nearly three years before signing on the steamship *Regulus* running between Newfoundland and the United Kingdom. In October 1899 he joined the bark *Arcot* as second mate and sailed

from St. John's to Sydney, Nova Scotia. Here, he joined "E" Battery of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery, which was recruiting for service in the South African War. They sailed for Cape Town aboard the Allan Line's *Laurentian* also known as "Rollin' Polly" arriving January 31, 1900. After marching 2,000 miles and fighting seven engagements, the most notable being at Faber's Put where it lost one killed and eight wounded, "E" Battery was ordered home, but Jack joined Howard's Canadian Scouts as a sergeant 30 November 1900.<sup>3</sup>

The ethos of Howard's Canadian Scouts, a mounted, guerilla unit which gained a reputation as an aggressive, fearless but often foolhardy band of men, can best be depicted by the subsequent enterprise of Captain Charlie Ross, the officer who assumed command following Howard's death. After the Scouts had been disbanded, he was discovered by the commanding officer of another unit:

*On a Dutch farm...engaged in the unique business of trading cattle. Whatever Dutch cattle he acquired he sold to the English and whatever English cattle he acquired in dubious ways he sold to the Boers. He was persuaded to rest from such precarious work and join the Unit where he was a very useful officer.*<sup>4</sup>

Jack was discharged in August 1901 and in the fall returned to Newfoundland where he was presented with South African War medals by

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<sup>2</sup> His year of birth and his mother's maiden name are incorrectly given as 1880 and Fowler respectively in: Allison C. Bates, "Randell, John Thomas," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, IV, 520.

Randell stated he was born 1 January 1879 and claimed to have lied about his age when he joined the Canadian Artillery in November 1899 saying he was twenty-one "although barely past twenty" but his Attestation Paper, dated 30 December 1899, just three days short of his twenty-third birthday, gives his age as twenty-three. Captain Jack Randell and Meigs Oliver Frost, *I'm Alone* (Indianapolis, 1930), 16, 42-43; and National Archives of Canada (NAC), South African War Service Files, RG 38 A-1 Vol.88.

His Naval Service File for the Second World War records his date of birth as 1 January 1877. NAC, Naval Service File for J.T. Randell, Second World War.

It may be safely assumed that his correct date of birth is 2 January 1877 as recorded in: PANL, *Register of Vital Statistics*, Trinity East, Church of England Baptisms, 1869-1892. His headstone confirms his year of birth as 1877. John Thomas Randell, Bog Road Anglican Cemetery, Liverpool, Nova Scotia, Monumental Inscription.

John Thomas Randell's mother's (Mary Fowlow born 1849) father (Thomas Fowloe born 1814) had a brother John Fowloe born 1792. They were the sons of Thomas and Elizabeth Fowloe. John Fowloe born 1792 had a son also named John born 1826 who had a son Abraham Fowlow born 1857 who was my great grandfather. In other words, John Thomas Randell's grandfather (Thomas Fowloe born 1814) and my 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather (John Fowloe born 1792) were brothers or John Thomas Randell is my second cousin three generations removed. Randell, *I'm Alone*, 11-19.

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<sup>3</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 22-24, 37, 38, 40, 42-55; Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 170, 203 & 285; National Archives of Canada (NAC), South African War Service Files, RG 38 A-1 Vol. 88, reel T-2083; and NAC, Nominal Roll of Canadian Scouts in South Africa, RG 9 II A-1. Vol. 340, docket 20142, 14 January 1901.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 446-447; and NAC, MG 30 E 76, Ross, Arthur Edward (1870-1952) Military Officer, *Kopje & Veldt Service for Three Years*.

the Duke (later George V) and Duchess of York at St. John's.<sup>5</sup>

Early in 1902 he went to sea once more and, until the outbreak of World War I, sailed on several ships in capacities from quartermaster to master in North and South America, the Far East and Africa. For several years he sailed out of Cardiff where he wrote and passed his examinations for his second mate's, first mate's and master's tickets before marrying Gertrude Lewis, daughter of the Chief Inspector of the Cardiff police. After a honeymoon of four months in Newfoundland, he returned to Wales where he left his wife

to return to his job in Lagos where, prior to his marriage, he had been master of the Southern Nigerian Marine dredger *Sand Grouse*. Later he went into business for himself as a marine surveyor, shipbroker and dredger specialist. Around the end of 1912, between cruises, while living with his wife and young son in Garelochhead [northwest of Glasgow in Dunbarton], Scotland, he accepted a job with the Russian government supervising the dredging at the new Russian naval base at Reval, Estonia. Shortly after Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated June 28, 1914, anticipating the outbreak of war, he left Russia for Scotland. Germany declared war while he was in transit. He took a floating grain elevator from England to Quebec for Lloyds before joining the Royal Naval Reserve.<sup>6</sup>



Captain John Thomas Randell and Gertrude Elizabeth Lewis (courtesy Trinity Historical Society)

Lieutenant Randell commissioned the armed trawler *Vidette* at Chatham and commenced his first patrol Christmas week 1914. In the spring of 1915 he assumed command of the trawler *Tenby Castle* at Scapa Flow and captured or sank "quite a number" of German merchantmen off the coast of Norway for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, September 13, 1915, which he received the following May from King George V at Buckingham Palace. In 1917, while in command of the armed trawler *Rushcoe*, he sank a submarine which had sank a French sailing ship and rescued the crew. After being promoted to Lieutenant-

Commander the same year, he drove off and possibly sank a submarine attacking the French cruiser *Artois* off the coast of Iceland, for which he received a British Mention in Dispatches and the French Croix de Guerre and two palms. In January 1918, Randell was trained in the use of the Fish Hydrophone, a new anti-sub device, and that June was appointed section commander of a Fish Hydrophone Flotilla with six ships under his command in his flag-ship *John Johnson*. In July 1919 he was demobilised and went home to Newfoundland.<sup>7</sup>

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his autobiography without access to his Master's and Mate's Certificate of Service and Lloyd's Captains' Registers which I have been unable to obtain to date.

<sup>5</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 88-91; and NAC, South African War Service Files, RG 38 A-1 Vol. 88, reel T-2083.

<sup>6</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 92-94, 98-99, 105-108, 112, 116-119, 136, 147-148 & 153-160. It is difficult to deduce the correct dates for or ascertain the veracity of the diverse events during this period of Randell's mercantile career as described in

John T. Randell appears in *The Navy List* as a Lieutenant (temp) in the Royal Naval Reserve April, July & Oct 1915; Jan, April, July & Oct 1916; and Jan, April & July 1917 with seniority from 7 December 1914.

<sup>7</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 162, 164-174, 180-187; and Admiralty Office, *The Navy List*, October 1915 & January 1916. The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is awarded "for meritorious or distinguished service before the enemy



September 1919 found Randell in Montreal where he took command of the *Canadian Miller* belonging to the Canadian Government Merchant Marine. Randell had been in Montreal previously (just prior to his marriage) as chief officer the Elder Dempster steamer *Montauk*. He relinquished command of the *Canadian Miller* in January 1921 and took over the *Canadian Fisher* at Halifax but made only one voyage before going into business "as a ship-broker and marine commission man" and being elected a Director of the Anglo- Newfoundland Mining

Corporation which had a gypsum mine in Newfoundland. Randell admitted to his lack of business acumen: "As a mining director I was a good sea-captain." Perhaps this led to his venture into the rum running business with Halifax and New York associates in the spring of 1922.<sup>8</sup>

His first forays into the trade were plagued by inclement weather and untrustworthy associates. His schooner *Madeline D.* was ice-bound at North Sydney by the "earliest and hardest winter in Nova Scotia history"<sup>9</sup> and in the summer of 1923 his attempt to salvage a sunken schooner with a valuable cargo of whiskey in Chesapeake Bay was foiled by weather. He then lost his share in *Madeline D.* allegedly through financial double-dealing by his New York partner. Subsequently he chartered the steamship *Dieuze* at New York on behalf of an American liquor-running syndicate and was hired as captain at \$500 per month plus a \$5,000 bonus to deliver 1,600 cases of liquor from St. John's to Rum Row. Late in December 1926, after arranging its purchase for another run-running syndicate at New York, he assumed command of his old schooner *Madeline D.* until it was sold at Nassau in 1927 and he returned to more legitimate and familiar enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

He assumed command of the Canadian government chartered *St. Ann* for an expedition commanded by the arctic explorer Capt J.E.

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performed by officers below the rank of Lieutenant-Commander." John T. Randell appears in *The Navy List* as an "Act. Lieut.-Com." in the Royal Naval Reserve Oct 1917; January, April, July & October 1918; and January, April & July 1919.

There is no record in *The Navy List* of Randell receiving the Croix de Guerre from France, being mentioned in British dispatches [sic], or being awarded two palms for his Croix de Guerre. *The Navy List* does list officers entitled to wear various foreign medals but there is no mention of the Croix de Guerre nor is there any record of mentions in dispatches. However, Randell's obituaries (see note 21) confirm his entitlement to the Croix de Guerre.

*The Navy List* confirms John T. Randell, D.S.C., Act. Lieut.-Com was demobilized but does not give a date. It should also be noted that, although he was an Acting Lieutenant Commander, his substantive rank remained Temporary Lieutenant. It is difficult to assess the accuracy of Randell's account of his World War I naval career as described in his autobiography without access to his Royal Naval Reserve service record which I have been unable to obtain to date.

*Vidette*, misspelled *Vedette* in Randell's autobiography, is listed as a trawler armed with one 10-pounder in service 1916-19; *Tenby Castle* is listed as a trawler armed with one 12-pounder hired for service 1915-19; *Rushcoe* is listed as a trawler armed with one 12-pounder hired for service 1915-19; and *John Johnson* is listed as a Mersey type trawler built 1918 in: J. J. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy: Navy-Built Trawlers, Drifters, Tugs and Requisitioned Ships From the Fifteenth Century to the Present* (Annapolis, 1987), 376, 354, 310, & 187 respectively.

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<sup>8</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 114, 188, 194, 196-210.

Although Captain Jack's son Edwin told me they lived on Duncan Street in Halifax in the 1920s (Personal Communication, Edwin Randell, 5 June 2001), the only trace of him I was able to find in the available Halifax phone books and city directories for this period was a listing for Captain J. T. Randell of Holloway Randell & Co. Ltd. in Windsor, Nova Scotia in: *McAlpines Halifax Directory*, 1922, 439. The nature of their business was not stated. Sometime in the 1920s, Captain Jack moved his family to Liverpool, Nova Scotia where he was living in September 1928 according to: Ted R. Hennigar, *The Rum Running Years* (Hantsport, 1981), 25. See also note number 33.

<sup>9</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 211-222, 233 & 254.



Bernier, whose purpose was to transport dredges and stores for the construction of a harbour at Fort Churchill. In July 1928 he sailed from Halifax as captain of the *Morso* owned by the Lindsley group of Canada on an expedition to stake out mining claims in the northwest territory between the northwest side of Hudson Bay and Great Slave Lake.<sup>10</sup>

After returning home from the *Morso* expedition, Randell was persuaded by "the representative of some Montreal business men" to take command of the schooner *I'm Alone* engaged in "the liquor trade with the United States." He sailed from Halifax for St. Pierre, Miquelon November 4, 1928. *I'm Alone* was sunk in the Gulf of Mexico by gunfire from the United States Coast Guard March 22, 1929; its captain and crew were jailed in New Orleans. The case against them was dismissed quickly but it took six years of diplomatic and legal wrangling before the United States paid reparation to the Canadian government and compensation to Randell and his crew.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 254-261.

In 1927, at the age of seventy-five, Bernier was commissioned by the Department of Railways and Canals to pilot a tug from Halifax to Port Burwell leading a convoy of barges loaded with coal for the use of ships operating in Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait the following summer, which Bernier called: "One of the most difficult voyages of his career." NAC, BR Collection, Yolande Dorion-Robitaille, *Captain J. E. Bernier's contribution to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic*, 107.

Randell claimed that his name appeared frequently in newspapers throughout Canada because of the success of the *Morso* Expedition.

<sup>11</sup> For a complete account of Randell's adventures aboard *I'm Alone* and its sinking see Randell, *I'm Alone*, 261-317; James Bannerman, "The Last Run of the *I'm Alone*," *Maclean's Magazine*, January 1, 1954, 27-30; Janice Patton, *The Sinking of the I'm Alone* (Toronto, 1973); and Robert Webb, "The Most Famous Rum-Runner Of Them All," *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, II (1982), 30-43.

Diplomatic correspondence between the Canadian Minister Vincent Massey and the United States Secretary of State Henry L.

Randell's whereabouts and adventures between the sinking of *I'm Alone* and the outbreak of World War II are obscure. He returned home to Liverpool, Nova Scotia before moving with his family to Toronto in the 1930s. He took a series of jobs, including command of a large motorboat on Great Bear Lake in 1932, before returning once again to Nova Scotia. His son Edwin, who told me he did not see much of his father when he was growing up because he was away from home most of the time, claimed they lived in North Bay in the 1930s before moving to Toronto. Although Edwin and his older brother Jack both attended Liverpool Academy, Edwin can't remember much about Liverpool, but did recall two of his father's schooners *Morso* and *Cote Nord* being alongside there.<sup>12</sup>

Captain Jack changed addresses in Liverpool frequently. Three senior residents, one a nephew of Captain Fred Inness and a friend of young Jack, remember Captain Jack's three-masted schooner, possibly owned by Captain Fred Inness, being tied up at Roger Inness's wharf, since filled in, located near the present Canadian Legion. One, who lived across from the Randell family on Main Street for two or three years in the 1930s, asserted that

Stimson can be found in: *The I'm Alone incident: correspondence between the governments of Canada and the United States, 1929* (Ottawa, 1929).

<sup>12</sup> Randell, *I'm Alone*, 316; James Bannerman, "The Last Run of the *I'm Alone*," *Maclean's Magazine*, January 1, 1954, 30; and Ted R. Hennigar, *The Rum Running Years* (Hantsport, 1981), 29-30; Personal Communications, Ed Randell, 19 November 1998 & 5 June 2001; and Personal Communication, Armand F. Wigglesworth, 28 June 1999. Armand F. Wigglesworth is a Liverpool resident who has published four volumes of *Anecdotes of Queen's County, Nova Scotia*.

*Cote Nord* was a 147 ton three-masted schooner which had been engaged in the rum-running trade in the 1920s according to: Jean Pierre Andrieux, *Marine Disasters of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Ottawa, 1996), 105. There is no mention of this vessel in Randell's autobiography.

the captain himself lived aboard; another claimed the whole family lived aboard. None of them could recall the name of the schooner but one remembered that the Captain wore wooden clogs "like a Dutchman" aboard his vessel and allowed the local boys to dive from his schooner to swim in the river.<sup>13</sup>

Except for the publishing of his autobiography in 1930, and two authors' statements that he commanded a large motorboat on Great Bear Lake in 1932, the only clue to Randell's movements during the 1930s is contained in a letter he wrote April 2, 1939 offering his services to Britain in the event of war. Here, he claimed that for each of the last few summers he had travelled hundreds of miles by canoe in the Canadian North, frequently carrying heavy packs over rough portages. He submitted this as evidence that, despite his sixty-two years, he was as fit for service as any man of forty-five.<sup>14</sup> Less than two and one-half years later, his elderly body would betray his youthful spirit.

He was called up and enlisted in the Royal Navy (RN) at Toronto August 26, 1939 for duty as Naval Control Service Officer (NCSO), responsible for controlling merchant shipping at St. John's, Newfoundland and was loaned to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) when it assumed command of naval operations including the Naval Control Service in Newfoundland June 1, 1941. Until then, when the Newfoundland Escort Force (NEF) was formed under the command of Commodore L.W. Murray, RCN, naval control of shipping at St. John's had been exercised by RN personnel attached to the Commander in Chief,

America and West Indies Station (C. in C., A. and W.I.).<sup>15</sup>

By October 1941, Randell was "no longer considered entirely suitable" as NCSO due to its "increased importance." His superior officer lacked the time to "supervise" his work. When asked if Randell could be "usefully employed" elsewhere, the RN requested he be sent to Bermuda when relieved. But before he could be relieved Randell suffered a stroke and was placed on the dangerously ill list. It was considered "most improbable" that he would ever be fit for service again.<sup>16</sup>

From Commodore Murray's opinion of and concern for Randell after his stroke, one can safely infer that his unsuitability as NCSO was due to ill health, not incompetence:

*When this marvellous old gentleman recovers sufficiently to want to get back to work we shall have to arrange a medical board that will recommend sick leave, (month by month until the cold*

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<sup>15</sup> NAC, Naval Service File WWII, History Sheet; Ibid., Secretary, Naval Board to The Chief Medical Advisor, Canadian Pension Commission, Ottawa, 4 June 1942; Ibid., Secretary, Naval Board to The Chief Medical Advisor, Canadian Pension Commission, Ottawa, 4 June 1942; Ibid., Medical History of an Invalid, 6 February 1942; G. W. L. Nicholson, *More Fighting Newfoundlanders* (Ottawa, 1969), 509; and Gilbert Norman Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada* (Ottawa, 1952), II, 13, 197. Refer to Tucker, 366-369 for a discussion of the duties and responsibilities of an NCSO.

<sup>16</sup> Randell's superior was Captain C.M.R. Schwerdt, R.N., who had been Secretary to the Governor of Newfoundland before assuming the duties of NOIC at St. John's when war was declared.

Nicholson, *More Fighting Newfoundlanders*, 509; Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada*, II, 188; NAC, Naval Service File WWII, N.S.H.Q. Ottawa to C. in C., A. and W. I., 31 October 1941; Ibid., C. in C., A. and W. I. to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 3 November 1941; Ibid., B.M.O. to C.C.N.F. (R) C.O.P., 16 November 1941; and Ibid., C.C.N.F. to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 18 November 1941.

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<sup>13</sup> Personal Communications: Doug Hemeon, 18 July 1998; Don Inness, 24 July 1998; Walter McLeod, 2 October, 1998; and Armand Wigglesworth, 28 June 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Hennigar, *Rum Running Years*, 29-30; James Bannerman, "The Last Run of the *I'm Alone*," *Maclean's Magazine*, January 1, 1954, 30; and NAC, Naval Service File for J.T. Randell, Second World War, (Naval Service File WWII) John T. Randell to The Admiral Commanding Coast Guards and Reserves, 2 April 1939.

*weather is over) followed by a recommendation that he be allowed to retire from active duty*<sup>17</sup>

Murray emphasized Randell's "exceptionally hard and responsible work" carrying out "his most onerous duties" which prevented him from taking leave.<sup>18</sup>

Randell's physical condition, aggravated by long hours without relief and advancing senility, began to deteriorate within months after he assumed his duties of NCSO. Since the day war was declared he didn't have one afternoon or evening off, working as late as midnight some nights. One night in December 1939, after midnight on his way home in a snowstorm, he slipped on the ice in front of the Newfoundland Hotel, where Naval Headquarters was located, and fractured his right ankle. He was hospitalised but returned to work on crutches. Late in October 1940 he came down with the flu but carried on until he was admitted to the hospital where he was confined for ten days that December with pneumonia and pleurisy. In September 1941 he experienced facial paralysis, temporarily lost sight in one eye and almost fainted which he attributed to problems with accustoming himself to a new set of dentures. He asked for leave but was persuaded by Commodore (later Admiral) Murray to carry on because there was no one competent to relieve him. Murray promised to obtain a relief so that he could take leave when the port of Montreal or Quebec closed up around the end of November. But by that time it was too late. On November 15, 1941 he was rendered unconscious by a stroke. He regained consciousness and was much improved by November 17<sup>th</sup>, but on November 20<sup>th</sup> he contracted pneumonia, which in turn was complicated by arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Both stroke and arteriosclerosis were deemed to have been caused by senile changes. He had recovered sufficiently by

November 30<sup>th</sup> be removed from the seriously ill list but was "still under treatment" at Christmas time when a "prolonged period of convalescence" was deemed necessary and a medical report suggested that he "may not be fit for further naval service." He was not discharged from the hospital until February 5, 1942.<sup>19</sup>

He was deemed unfit for further naval service. A Board of Inquiry was convened at the Royal Canadian Naval Hospital, St. John's, February 27, 1942 to determine if his disability was attributable to or aggravated by his naval service. It found that his disability was not attributable to but was aggravated by his naval service. He was invalided medically unfit for general service and discharged June 9, 1942.<sup>20</sup>

Thereafter he and his wife Gertrude continued their wandering ways. Gertrude was living in Port Rexton in June 1941 but had moved to St. John's by July. After being released from the hospital in February 1942, Randell's plans were to leave St. John's at the end of April for North Bay, Ontario stopping at Montreal and Toronto enroute. But later that month, he informed Admiral Murray that he would be remaining in St. John's "for the next few weeks" before moving to Port Rexton where he and his wife were living when he was discharged in June 1942. Transportation for Gertrude from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Toronto

<sup>17</sup> NAC, Naval Service File WWII, C.C.N.F. to C.O.P. B.M.O., n.d.

<sup>18</sup> NAC, Naval Service File WWII, F.O.N.F. to N.S.H.Q., Ottawa, 31 March 1942.

<sup>19</sup> NAC, Naval Service File WWII, Board of Inquiry, 27 February 1942; *Ibid.*, Case History Sheet, 5 February 1942; *Ibid.*, Medical History of an Invalid, 6 February 1942; *Ibid.*, C.C.N.F. to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 23 November 1941; *Ibid.*, C.C.N.F. to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 30 November 1941; *Ibid.*, C.C.N.F. to N.S.H.Q. Ottawa, 5 December 1941; and *Ibid.*, F.O.N.F. to N.S.H.Q., Ottawa, 26 December 1941.

<sup>20</sup> NAC, Naval Service File WWII, Base Medical Officer, St. John's to Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S. *Avalon*, St. John's, 11 February 1942; *Ibid.*, Board of Inquiry, 27 February 1942; *Ibid.*, F.O.N.F. to C IN C A & W I, 30 March 1942; *Ibid.*, History Sheet; and *Ibid.*, Secretary, Naval Board to The Chief Medical Advisor, Canadian Pension Commission, Ottawa, 4 June 1942.

at public expense was requested that September.<sup>21</sup>

On February 19, 1944, two years and two weeks after his release from hospital following his stroke, Lieutenant Commander John Thomas Randell died in Camp Hill Hospital in Halifax. He was buried with full naval honours in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. His widow Gertrude, once again living in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, inquired October 1, 1945 if she was entitled to receive any war gratuity for her late husband's service. A cheque in the amount of ninety dollars was issued to her at her Liverpool address the following February. She died in Spain and was buried in Alicante with her daughter-in-law.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Randell's stated addresses in North Bay and St. John's were: c/o Mrs. Francis Lewis [Possibly a relative of Randell's wife Gertrude nee Lewis], 210 Wylde Street, North Bay, Ontario; and, c/o Mrs. John Shears, 8 Cookstown Road, St. John's, Newfoundland.

NAC, Naval Service File WWII, History Sheet, n.d.; Ibid., Application for Payment of Marriage Allowance, 8 July 1941; Ibid., The Flag Officer Newfoundland Force (F.O.N.F.) [Rear Admiral L.W. Murray] to The Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa, 9 April 1942; Ibid., The Flag Officer Newfoundland Force (F.O.N.F.) [Rear Admiral L.W. Murray] to The Deputy Minister, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa, 27 April 1942; Ibid., Change of Address Form, 21 May 1942; Ibid., Allotment Stop Notice Form, 1 July 1942; and Ibid., F.O.N.F. to N.S.H.Q., Ottawa, 20 September 1942.

<sup>22</sup> *Halifax Herald*, 23 February 1944; *Liverpool Advance*, 24 February 1944; *St. John's Daily News*, 21 February 1944; NAC, Naval Service File WWII, Mrs. Gertrude E. Randell, Liverpool, Nova Scotia to Minister of Naval Affairs [sic], Ottawa, 1 October 1945; Ibid., Statement of War Service Gratuity, 5 February 1946; and Edwin Randell, Personal Communication (19 November 1998). Gertrude had been living with her eldest son

Jack, a mining engineer, who had worked for the Aluminum Company of Canada in British Honduras before taking employment in England. He moved to Spain to avoid high taxes in Britain.

## Admiral Sir Frederic Dreyer's Visit to Canada, January 1940

*edited by William Schleihauf*

*In January 1940, a sixty-two year old Commodore, Royal Naval Reserve, paid a visit to Ottawa. Sir Frederic Dreyer, retired Admiral and one-time Commander-in-Chief of the China Station, had returned to sea to serve as a Convoy Commodore. An intelligent and astute officer: Sir John Jellicoe's Flag Captain at the Battle of Jutland, noted gunnery expert (inventor of the Dreyer Fire Control Table), he had served in various important posts in the Admiralty and abroad. He would later become Inspector of Merchant Naval Gunnery and Chief of the Naval Air Services.*

*The observations he made regarding the protection of shipping on Canada's east coast are an interesting snapshot taken during the first winter of the war, long before the Battle of the Atlantic would reach a crescendo. Note Rear-Admiral Nelles' openness with regard to the acquisition of Tribal Class destroyers, and his worry about the precedent set by the ships presented to the RCN after the Great War.*

*These documents have been transcribed from ADM 1/10608 in the holdings of The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) in the United Kingdom. The "whale catchers" that Dreyer refers to are, of course, the Flower Class corvettes.*

[to] The Secretary of the Admiralty  
31<sup>st</sup> January, 1940

Sir,

Be pleased to lay before Their Lordships the enclosed memorandum on my visit to the Chief of the Canadian Naval Staff, Rear Admiral P. W. Nelles, Royal Canadian navy, at Ottawa from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

This visit was paid on the suggestion of Captain H. E. Reid, Royal Canadian Navy, commanding the Atlantic Coast, when I spoke to him at Halifax a week ago about the great anxiety I feel about the safety of shipping on



the Atlantic Coast of Canada and Newfoundland against attack by German Submarines.

When Captain Reid first made this proposal to me I said I thought I must first telegraph to Their Lordships to obtain their concurrence, but on reflection I formed the opinion that it would be best to go quite unofficially and place my personal opinion before the Canadian Chief of Naval Staff.

His Excellency the Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, whom I had known when he visited HMS *Iron Duke* in 1916, asked me to stay with him at Government House.

This gave me the opportunity of informing him of the situation as described in the enclosed memorandum.

The High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Sir Gerald Campbell, entertained me at lunch and afterwards I spoke to him about this important matter.

The Minister of Militia and National Defence, Mr Norman Rogers, was at this luncheon party and I took the opportunity of telling him how splendid the organisation of the North Atlantic Convoys is at Halifax. This gratified him very much. I then told him that a grave shortage of Anti-Submarine vessels exists on the Canadian Atlantic Coast and the Newfoundland Coast.

I was careful not to go beyond that with him as Rear Admiral Nelles is his adviser.

There is the danger to guard against that this serious weakness might become known to the members of the opposition and that it would then be publicly discussed in the coming elections and thus attract German naval attention.

I found Rear Admiral Nelles and his Staff just as willing to hear suggestions as are Captain Reid and his Staff at Halifax.

It seems to me from what he told me, that Rear Admiral Nelles is working to achieve two objects:-

Object I. To win the war.

Object II. Before the finish of the war to have a number of Tribal Destroyers in the Royal Canadian Navy, fully manned by Canadians.

These he feels could not be wiped off the slate by whatever Canadian Government is then in power, as might be the case if only worn out Canadian Destroyers existed.

Rear Admiral Nelles does not like my suggestion in the penultimate paragraph of my memorandum attached [*the following document*]. He considers that the Canadian Government would be very liable to refuse a gift of men-of-war at the end of the war, saying "We cannot afford now to embark on the expense of their maintenance."

I feel sure that Their Lordships will find a solution which will dispose of Rear Admiral Nelles' preoccupation with regard to Object II.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

[*signed*] Fred. Dreyer  
Commodore, RNR  
(Admiral (Retd.))

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MEMORANDUM

To Rear-Admiral Percy W. Nelles,  
Chief of the Naval Staff,  
Royal Canadian Navy



Attached hereto is a brief Memorandum on the subject of the Defence of Shipping on the Atlantic Coast of Canada and Newfoundland as discussed by you and me at Naval Headquarters, Ottawa, on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

I am glad to take this opportunity of informing you how greatly I appreciate the willingness to hear suggestions which is shown by you and your Staff at Ottawa and Captain Reid and his staff at Halifax.

This is one of many reasons which render it a very great pleasure to co-operate with the Royal Canadian Navy.

[signed] Fred. Dreyer  
Commodore, RNR  
(Admiral- Retired)

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Remarks by Commodore Sir Frederic C. Dreyer, RNR, on the Defence of Shipping on the Atlantic Coast of Canada and Newfoundland.

In December 1939 on my arrival in England with Halifax Convoy HX10 I visited the Admiralty and expressed personally to the First Lord and the First Sea Lord and the Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, my concern at the small numbers of Destroyers and other Escort and submarine hunting craft and Minesweepers for the protection of the Harbours and Shipping in the waters of the Atlantic Coast of Canada and Newfoundland.

In January 1940 I took Liverpool North Atlantic Convoy OB69 to sea and on my arrival at Halifax I spoke to Captain Reid, RCN (Commanding the Atlantic Coast of Canada) on the above subject on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1940.

He then asked me if I would be so good as to go to Ottawa and lay my views before Rear-Admiral Nelles, the Chief of Naval Staff of the Royal Canadian Navy. I agreed to do so unofficially and, arriving at Ottawa on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> January, I had interviews with the Canadian

Chief of Naval Staff on that and the following day.

At the first meeting I stated that when the waters of the St Lawrence were used for shipping, I thought the following Naval vessels were required as a minimum to protect the Shipping in the waters of the Atlantic Coast of Canada, against Torpedo and Mining Attack:-

Types of Craft Required.	(a) Escort & Hunting
	(b) Patrol & Hunting
	(c) Sweeping & Hunting
All to have gun armament, asdics & depth charges.	

HALIFAX - (& Patrol off Cape Sable from Yarmouth)	(a)	12 Destroyers
	(b)	6
	(c)	12

SAINT JOHN New Brunswick	(b)	2
	(c)	2

SYDNEY -	(a)	6 Destroyers
	(b)	12 - Six of these for patrol on S. Coast of Newfoundland from Cape Ray Eastward.
	(c)	10

LOUISBURG	(c)	6
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GASPE -	(a)	2 Destroyers
	(b)	6.

NATASH-QUAN	(a)	2 Destroyers
	(b)	6

RED BAY-	(a)	2 Destroyers
	(b)	6

ST JOHNS - NEW-FOUNDLAND	(b)	2
	(c)	4

CABOT STRAIT PATROL-NE of St Paul Island -	(b)	18 (to maintain 6 on patrol)
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SW of St Paul Island - (b) 6 (to maintain 2 on patrol)

Totals - 24 Destroyers  
58 Patrol & Hunters  
34 Minesweepers

GRAND TOTAL - 116

If the Cabot Strait Patrol is omitted then the totals become

24 Destroyers  
34 Patrol & Hunters  
34 Minesweepers

GRAND TOTAL - 92

If the Red Bay and Natashquan patrols are also omitted, the totals become

20 Destroyers  
22 Patrol & Hunters  
34 Minesweepers

GRAND TOTAL - 76

In 1918 the Auxiliary Craft operating on the East Coast of Canada comprised:

10 Auxiliary Patrol (Yachts - 12 pdr gun)  
12 Canadian Trawlers (12 pdr gun)  
7 Trawler Sweepers  
36 Trawlers  
36 Drifters  
4 United States S/M Chasers  
1 United States Torpedo Boat (allocated to Air Service, Halifax)  
—  
106

It will be noted that no destroyers were included.

It appears that approximately the following numbers of vessels will be available in 1940.

Until April 1940 - 7 Destroyers  
8 Minesweepers  
2 Anti-submarine

Total. 17 (All armed and with depth charges and asdics).

April 1940 to December 1940 7 Destroyers  
8 Minesweepers  
12 Yachts (Patrol & Hunt)

Total - 29 (All armed and with depth charges & asdics).

1<sup>st</sup> December 1940 to end of that year 7 Destroyers  
8 Minesweepers  
12 Yachts  
15 Whale Catchers\*

Total - 42 (All armed and with depth charges and asdics).

\* This assumes 14 built on East Coast and 8 on West Coast. Total 22 of which 7 go to Great Britain on own order.

In 1942 - the numbers will grow to

8 Destroyers (1 TRIBAL bartered for 5 whale catchers)  
20 Minesweepers  
12 Yachts  
30 Whale Catchers

Total 70 (All armed with asdics and depth charges).

In 1942 - the numbers will grow to

9 Destroyers (1 TRIBAL bartered for 5 Whale catchers)  
28 Minesweepers  
12 Yachts  
45 Whale Catchers

—  
Total 94 (All armed and with asdics and depth charges).

The Minesweepers are Twin Screw Admiralty 1939 type, with one 4" and asdics – 17 knots – depth charges.

The Whale Catchers (can also sweep) 1 or 2 guns, asdics – 17 to 18 knots – depth charges.

12 Armed Yachts – asdics and depth charges – 12 – 15 knots, one or two up to 21 knots, 4 up to 20 knots, ie fast enough for Duchess Liners.

There are also to be 3 Armed Merchant Cruisers of 20 knots with 4 - 4" on centreline.

AIR PATROLS are arranged for the East Coast of Canada and the Newfoundland and South Labrador Coasts. These will help by reporting and harassing enemy submarines and will visit creeks to guard against supply ships for enemy submarines functioning on these coasts.

—  
I gather that the sums of money being spent or lent by Canada for 1940 amount approximately to:

Air	-	750 million dollars
Army	-	180 " "
Navy	-	100 " "

1,050 million dollars

—  
Taking the year 1940, (the critical year)

January, February, March: Low temperatures will make it hard for S/Ms to work off Halifax. Perhaps more likely to work from the Gulf Stream (200 miles off).

April: More likely for S/M operations off Halifax.

May, June July: Bad fogs – certain amount of protection.

August: Also some fog.

September, October, November, December: Best months for Submarines.

—  
In discussion at Halifax with Lieutenant-Commander Hibbard, RCN, I said that in view of the paucity of A/S vessels, it seemed to me that, in the face of determined submarine attacks off the Canadian Atlantic Coast, a necessary first step would probably be to treat the situation as though the St Lawrence was in its winter state, ie ice bound, but making use of Sydney as well as Halifax.

One has only to read the Life of Parson Niemoller (ex German S/M Officer) to see how, in the last war, the Germans could voyage and carry on S/M warfare over 11,000 miles, in ocean going submarines.

According to our most recent NID printed reports since the outbreak of this war, their modern submarines are stated to have an endurance of some 14,000 miles.

the menace to the Canadian and of our North Atlantic trade line is a very real one.

Mining Operations, with the help of one or more small mine supply ships, are to be feared as well as Torpedo Attacks.

If the German Submarines make really determined attacks during 1940

In February and/or March: The Naval Staff will have to do the best they can with their 17 A/S craft to protect Halifax.

In April: Do the best they can with their 29 A/S Craft to protect Halifax.

---

The Naval Staff have in mind to endeavour to arrange that the St Lawrence is not opened, ie to continue with winter routine but open Sydney as an alternative, or additional to Halifax.

In December 1940 - a total of 42 A/S craft will be available, rising to some 70 by end of 1941.

So in 1941 the use of the St Lawrence with ships in small convoys out of the St Lawrence River to Sydney, should become a feasible proposition in the face of German S/M attacks.

Some points to have in mind are:-

The Southern base line of the Canadian Atlantic Coast area, from Cape Race to Cape Sable is some 600 miles.

From the Cabot Straits to the entrance of the St Lawrence River (inside Anticosti) is some 300 miles and to Belle Isle is also about 300 miles.

From Cape Race to Southern Labrador is some 500 miles.

(In Southern British waters the C in C Western Approaches operates some 40 destroyers.)

I cannot say that I feel happy about the above, until the A/S Craft reach a total of 70, ie in about 2 years time, but it is to be hoped that means will be found long before them to accelerate the programme. I think that at least 30 A/S craft are required for the outer seaward protection of Halifax alone, and even this low figure of 30 is not acceptable unless 12 destroyers are included.

Captain Reid informed me that Fixed Harbour Asdics are on order for the Halifax Boom.

I am strongly of the opinion that more A/S Craft must be bought out of Canada, as I understand Canada's building capabilities will not stand more than at present arranged.

I have not the information at my disposal to enable me to suggest as to where else in the Empire or the World, we can get small seaworthy craft of about 20 knots, ready-made, ie at once and capable of being fitted with asdics, mounting a 4" gun and carrying depth charges.

The Empire cannot sit still and wait for the blow to fall before taking the action so urgently required.

Consider the 35 mile long lane down which shipping steams in and out of Halifax.

It is buoyed and the inner 17 miles is swept daily and an exploratory search (Oropesa) of the outer 18 miles is carried out occasionally.

It may be said - "When someone is sunk we will shift the direction of the passage."

More than that is required.

The laying of minefields and announcing their presence, perhaps largely exaggerated, appears to be worthy of consideration. The entrance to Halifax should be always alive with small craft carrying asdics and depth charges and gun armament, both inside and outside the boom. Even 8 - 10 knot vessels with asdics and depth charges would be valuable close in to Halifax. Some 30 are available at Boston and more at Portland, Maine and Gloucester.

Important men of war such as the DUNQUERQUE, REPULSE, FURIOUS, WARSPITE, &c, &c, are to be found at Halifax from time to time.

If no other way exists of getting money than surely some of the 750 million dollars, Canadian Air Estimate, can be temporarily shifted to the Naval Estimate.

Off Halifax Aircraft should always be patrolling by daylight and moonlight over a large sector extending to seaward and surface vessels by day and night.

Perhaps some barracks difficulties could be met by having some of the expanding personnel in steamers.

It was only in the late August and September 1918 that the Germans, who were then nearly expended, started S/M attacks on the Canadian end of our Trans-Atlantic Convoys.

These latter now bring Great Britain vital stores such as Airplane parts, munitions, oil, lumber, food, metals, &c, &c.

Perhaps the Government of Great Britain could now be asked whether they would promise Canada some six modern destroyers at the end of the war to replace wornout Canadian destroyers as the nucleus of the Canadian Navy.

Such an assurance it seems to me would enable Canada to concentrate now on obtaining cheap, mass production anti-submarine. patrol boat types of craft during this war.

[signed] Fred. Dreyer  
Commodore, RNR  
(Admiral - Retired)

OTTAWA, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

---

[The following are the associated Admiralty minutes discussing Dreyer's Memorandum]

The redistribution of our A/S vessels has recently been discussed on OD 1014/40. It was there agreed that no allowance could be made from our meagre forces for increased protection of Canadian waters since our requirements in waters where attack by U-boat was actually taking place absorbed all our available vessels as well as those completing during 1940.

2. British building capacity is fully occupied with RN and Merchant Service orders and no increase in our programme is possible. Nor is it considered likely that the exchange situation will allow purchase of vessels in USA.

3. In consequence it is considered that we must accept the admittedly unsatisfactory hand-to-mouth policy of disposing our available craft according to the immediate menace.

4. It is proposed that Admiral Dreyer be thanked for the copy of his memorandum outlining Canadian requirements and informed that, though TLs are well aware of the potential danger to trade in the Western Atlantic, their present means do not allow them to strengthen A/S forces in areas which have not yet been attacked. If and when the threat develops plans are ready to meet it, but our meagre resources at home cannot be dispersed so long as attack is concentrated in home waters. New construction should enable us to improve the situation in the latter half of this year.

[signed] ?? Daniel  
D. of P.  
15.3.40.

—  
Concur with DofP.  
Sir Frederick Dreyer's recommendations to the Canadian Government may bear fruit. They can never do any harm [?].

[signed] Ralph Edwards  
for DoD  
17/3/40

—  
Concur with DofP  
[signed illegibly]  
for D ???  
20.3.40

—  
Concur with DofP  
[signed illegibly]  
Director of Trade Division  
23<sup>rd</sup> March 40

—  
Submitted for approval.  
[illegible]  
24.3.40



## West Coast Letter

By John Crosse

Propose to approve.

[initialled] ?? B.  
30/3/40

Admiral Dreyer suggests that if Canada did not go in for Tribal destroyers now, they might get more patrol craft for this war. Will Controller please say whether this is correct. If it is there is considerable force in the suggestion that Canada should try on getting [???] modern destroyers from us after the war and concentrate on small craft now.

PSSS [??]  
2/4

The Canadians are building some 50 whale catchers in Canada and we [?] would not like to build any over here. On the other hand we can build 2 Tribals.

2. I think the present arrangement is the best compromise, and it also helps us in dollar exchange.

[initialled illegibly]  
4/4/40

Concur.

[initialled and dated illegibly]

---

### Additional Sources:

Dreyer, Admiral Sir Frederic C, *The Sea Heritage* (London, 1955).

*World War II Unit Histories and Officers:*  
[www.unithistories.com/officers/RN\\_officersD2.html](http://www.unithistories.com/officers/RN_officersD2.html)

Barry Gough's return to BC was bound to flutter the doves, and almost before you could say *presto subito* he was calling a conference, admittedly only a brief symposium, but albeit one that naturally attracted some top overseas scholars. With characteristic aplomb he threw the bait to the masses - 'What's New to Say About George Vancouver'. Booked into that lovely old building in Bastion Square in Victoria, the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, a packed audience heard a full day of informed speakers. Unfortunately for *Argonauta* the event took place just too late for inclusion in our last issue, thus accounting for the absence of this normal column.

The difficulty was to schedule all that's new into one twenty-minute paper. Thus this writer was left with the onerous task of extensive pruning if slides were to be included as well. Nervousness meant that he had little recall of what was said before presenting his paper and virtually nothing afterwards. With this proviso one can only reconstruct as best one can.

The previous evening Barry and Marilyn had thrown a delightful cocktail party at their family home. There were so many familiar faces and much catching up to do. The symposium honoured Andrew David, whose name needs no introduction to members and who had flown out specially for the occasion from England.

Christon Archer, from the University of Calgary, opened with a paper derived from his profound knowledge of the role the Spanish played in the history of the Pacific Northwest. He was followed by John Lutz, from the University of Victoria, who spoke on the sexography of the Pacific, and then that fine scholar from Down Under, Robert King, delivered a beautifully-crafted paper delving far back into the evolution of British plans for a settlement at Nootka. Dee Longenbaugh, from Juneau, spoke of Vancouver's achievements in Alaska from the native point of view, and

Brenda Gillespie, author of the historical novel on George Vancouver *On Stormy Seas*, assessed Vancouver's achievements in the modern context.

In the final session Robin Inglis examined the unfamiliar role of diplomat that George Vancouver was required to play in his negotiations with Bodega y Quadra over the settlement at Nootka, emphasizing that the hindsight of later scholars is not necessarily a fair judgement of performance. Poorly briefed by the Admiralty, the British captain wisely stuck to the inadequate instructions he had received before leaving England. Eric Groves, who joined us from the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, spoke of Menzies botanical achievements. And Andrew David concluded with an fine account of Galiano and Valdes's survey activities during the time the two expeditions were working together.

We were indeed honoured to have had so many speakers come from so far; undoubtedly due to the charismatic influence of the chairman. Alas the day was over far too soon, but this was alleviated by many adjourning to a neighbourhood brewhouse for supper, and the proceeding ended the following morning with a refreshing visit to the RCN Dockyard at Esquimalt. Malaspina University-College plan to publish the proceedings in due course, and Barry is hoping to follow up with another conference next year.

All this puts Victoria very much back on the map. Meanwhile Jim Delgado, whose TV programme on the History Channel brought him international recognition has left the Vancouver Maritime Museum to become executive director of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A & M and in Bodrum, Turkey; the plum job in an organization founded by Dr George Bass. He has also recently completed his Ph.D. at Simon Fraser University.. A double congratulation to Jim!

On a different note Tom Ladner, the last of 'The Three Musketeers', the much decorated motor gun boat skippers from World War II, sadly passed away on June 23rd, thus closing a historic chapter in Canadian naval achievement.

His old navigator, Sir Derrick Holden-Brown, flew out from England especially for the occasion, and having been with Tom from start to finish, was able to give a first hand account of his achievements. Early on he been torpedoed in an armed merchant cruiser off Iceland, but by 1943 Tom found himself an experienced commander of a 72-foot motor gun boat with Coastal Forces off the East Coast of England, and with his promotion to a larger craft, his career rapidly took off. Together with Doug Maitland and Cornie Burke, the three Canadians were assigned to the new 120-foot D Class Fairmiles with a flank speed of 34 kts, then building in Southern England. Tom was given *MGB 663*, Doug had *657* and Cornie *658*.

First assigned to Portsmouth, at that time a grossly overcrowded anchorage, Tom fouled a mooring on entering, damaging his starboard propeller. Unbelievably he apologized to the crew! But Tom was no softy. He honed his crew to the peak of efficiency by a rigid insistence on discipline, *naval* discipline, and training. With Malta besieged and Rommel in Africa, they were rushed to the Mediterranean with scarcely time for working up. Sailing in convoy, they were routed 1,000 miles out into the Atlantic to avoid U-boats in the Bay of Biscay, but nevertheless were attacked by two, damaging Doug Maitland's boat. In the *melee* the two Germans collided, both sinking! After 24 hours in Gib, the MGBs were on their way to Algiers, operating out of there night after night. By May of '43 they were in Malta, and off Sicily in June for the Invasion. *663* operated inshore off the beaches, and then carried out similar activities off Magdalena, Corsica and Elba. By July of '44 they were in the Adriatic, working with Tito and his partisans. But by October, Tom was totally burnt out and requested an immediate shore appointment. He was down to under 100 pounds, and went direct into hospital in Malta.

Under Tom 's command, *663* had taken part in four major landings, participated in forty or fifty surface engagements, shot down several enemy aircraft, and undertaken no less than ninety-nine operations, each one fully completed. By comparison an RAF Bomber Command tour of duty was normally only

twenty-seven operations, motor gun boat operations were certainly as harrowing. Under Tom's command, 663 never suffered a single casualty, but shortly after he left she was sunk in action, with some loss of life. It was Tom's relentless insistence on training, efficiency and a rigid sense of discipline that achieved his remarkable results. He was awarded a well-earned DSC with bar, and was four times Mentioned in Dispatches. After the war he qualified for the bar and established one of the largest legal practices in Western Canada. Of the Three Musketeers, Tom rode 'tail-end-charlie', covering his buddies. He would have reveled in the singing of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot', which concluded his memorial service.

The Inside Passage between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy, on Vancouver Island, is the longest in the BC Ferries system, and runs mostly through two lengthy channels with high mountains on either side. In places the passage is so narrow that the shoreline on either side is less than a couple of cables abeam. As complex as any in the world, running at 19 knots for 15 hours, demands constant concentration and an infinity of course corrections.

Shortly after midnight last March 22nd, about four hours into her southbound run, the *Queen of the North*, flagship of the BC Ferries fleet, all 9,000 tons of her, hit Gil Island at full speed, apparently having failed to make a course correction after leaving the Grenville Channel. Holed beneath the waterline she was abandoned, and sank about an hour later. Rescuers from the Hartley Bay Indian Reserve were first on the scene, and survivors were later picked up by a Coast Guard cutter. Two passengers were missing, believed sleeping in their camper on the car deck.

The Transport Safety Board is conducting a full inquiry and has already issued its preliminary findings; a full report is expected in September. Investigation appears to be concentrated on navigational equipment on the bridge, some only recently installed. Questions have been asked as to whether bridge personnel were fully trained in their use.

Early, a former master voiced the belief that the cause was human error, but despite all the *brouhuha*, very little has been said about the failure of the bridge personnel to keep a sharp lookout. Both have been advised by their lawyer to say nothing. In these circumstances the ferry corporation are leaving no stone unturned to fault equipment. But all these, GPS, auto-pilot, etc, are but *aids* to navigation, and overlook the simple importance of two pairs of eyes. It was left to an elderly lady, shortly before impact, to warn "There's a mountain right ahead!"

The loss of this ferry has had a serious effect on the tourist trade in to Northern BC; some communities finding themselves virtually cut off. A replacement vessel will not be in operation until next summer. In the meantime the route has been taken over by a smaller vessel, which also has to service the Queen Charlotte Islands.

And by the way, nearly 75 years after the last race, the *first full account* of *Bluenose's* victories in the International Fisherman's Cup races has just been published. Written by Keith McLaren, who sailed in *Bluenose II*, it is published by Douglas & McIntyre, and is a snip at \$29.95.

## Members' News

The editorial staff of *Argonauta* are pleased to inform our members that Dr **Bill Glover**, editor of *The Northern Mariner / le Marin du Nord*, was elected in November as one of Kingston Ontario's City Councillors.

## Museums and Ships

### The *Melik*

[*The Times*, 25 November 2006] She led the British flotilla at the Battle of Omdurman, and she's been a haven for expatriate gin drinkers. Now the rusting *Melik* has become an unlikely symbol of Anglo-Sudanese co-operation

The mighty gunboat deployed by General Kitchener at the Battle of Omdurman

may soon sail again, more than a century after she blasted its way up the Nile to crush rebellion in Sudan. For the past 20 years, the 145ft *Melik* has been slowly rusting on the muddy bank of the Blue Nile at Khartoum. But after years of being lobbied for her preservation the Sudanese authorities have now agreed in principle to the establishment of a joint Anglo-Sudanese charity whose task will be to restore the ancient vessel.

"We are hopeful in the next month that we will be able to get this show on the road," says Anthony Harvey, secretary of the *Melik* Society, a British-based group that has campaigned for 12 years to save the boat. "There is no reason why the *Melik* should not be fully restored and able to go back in the water."

In some ways, the *Melik* is an unlikely symbol of Anglo-Sudanese co-operation. The gunboat was a Victorian weapon of high technology and fearsome power, intended to terrorise the Sudanese rebels and to kill as many as possible. She was built in Chiswick in 1896, then shipped in pieces to Egypt, taken by rail across the Nubian Desert and reassembled at Abadieh on the Nile. From there she led a flotilla of heavily armed gunboats, a vital element in Kitchener's re-conquest of Khartoum in 1898.

Searchlights were mounted on the *Melik*'s roof to ward off a feared attack at night by the Mahdist forces. The *Melik*, commanded by General Gordon's nephew, Major W. S. "Monkey" Gordon, was also the first warship to carry a film correspondent: Frederick Villiers, of the Illustrated London News, brought a cine camera with him — which broke before a single inch of footage was shot. The ensuing battle, however, was reported by Winston Churchill, then a young journalist riding with the 21st Lancers.

Against the British force, the Mahdi's successor (the Khalifa), Abdullah al-Taashi, deployed 50,000 holy warriors, known as Ansar but sometimes referred to as Dervishes, mostly armed with spears, muskets and ancient rifles.

The Khalifa had two machine guns; Kitchener's troops had 55.

In the course of the engagement, the 21st Lancers mounted one of the last cavalry charges in history, earning three Victoria Crosses. But the battle was essentially won by modern military methods and brutal firepower, including the *Melik*'s ferocious battery of guns. The Ansar, with their chain-mail armour and crocodile-skin shields, were no match for the Maxim guns, which could fire 500 rounds a minute.

Churchill wrote that the Battle of Omdurman was "the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians. Within five hours the strongest and best-armed savage army yet arrayed against a foreign power had been destroyed." At least 10,000 Ansar died; many more were wounded and taken prisoner. Only 48 were killed on the British side.

The *Melik* transported Kitchener (who was soon to be ennobled as Lord Kitchener of Khartoum) in triumph from the field of Omdurman to the governor's destroyed palace in Khartoum. The Mahdist forces were finally defeated the following year, and the Khalifa was killed at the Battle of Umm Diwaykarat.

In 1926, the *Melik* was moored to the riverbank at Khartoum and became the clubhouse for the Blue Nile Sailing Club. From her deck, refurbished as a comfortable bar, expatriates would gather to drink pink gins and watch the sailing races on the Nile. She emerged briefly from retirement in 1938 to play a starring role in the Alexander Korda film *The Four Feathers*.

## Conferences and Symposia

**"Northern Navigation"  
Churchill, Manitoba  
2-7 August 2007**

The Canadian Nautical Research Society will host its annual conference for 2007 in Churchill, Manitoba, on the theme of



"Northern navigation." Topics may include exploration, trade, war, ships, individuals, indigenous peoples, and any other topic related to the practice of navigation in high latitudes. To provide comparisons, papers examining similar subjects in the high latitudes of the Antarctic are also invited.

For more information, or to submit a proposal for a paper or a session, contact either: Dr William Glover:

williamglover@sympatico.ca or  
Professor Barry Gough bgough@wlu.ca

The conference is planned for the period 2-7 August, 2007. Travel arrangements are being made by The Great Canadian Travel Company of Winnipeg, [www.greatcanadiantravel.com](http://www.greatcanadiantravel.com), or call Samantha Buffie, (800)661-3830. They are northern travel experts of more than twenty-fives years' experience. Packages including return air travel from Winnipeg, hotel in Churchill, select conference activities, tours to the eighteenth century Hudson's Bay Company stone trading post Prince of Wales Fort, and a "tundra buggy tour" will start at approximately C\$1,800 plus taxes. Extra options will include a rail/air travel package, and an air charter (limited space) to visit York Factory.

**Call for Papers / Appel de communication  
Quebec / Québec 1608-2008  
Four Centuries of North Atlantic Crossings  
/ Quatre siècles de voyages transatlantiques  
06 – 09 August 2008**

To celebrate the quatercentenary of Samuel de Champlain's founding of Quebec, the Canadian Nautical Research Society will host its annual conference for 2008 in that city.

Papers topics may include exploration, trade, war, ships, individuals and any other topic related to marine activity in and around Quebec and the North Atlantic over the past four centuries. Proposals should be directed to:

Professor Serge Durlinger  
CNRS 2008 Conference Programme Chair

History Department  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5  
Telephone: 613-562-5800, x1277  
e-mail: sdurflin@uottawa.ca

The conference venue is the Auberge Saint-Antoine, very near the site of Champlain's original *Habitation*. Located on an important archaeological site, in 300 year-old buildings, the Auberge Saint-Antoine offers a unique introduction to New France. Artfully displayed artifacts throughout the hotel provide a fascinating glimpse into the life of Quebec's first inhabitants. The Auberge Saint-Antoine has created a succession of 94 stunning rooms, many offering a view on the Saint-Lawrence River, others of Quebec's renowned fortifications or the Musée de la civilisation. A block of rooms is reserved for "CNRS 2008."

**Auberge Saint-Antoine, 8, rue Saint-Antoine,  
Québec, QC G1K 4C9  
(418) 692-2211 Fax : (418) 692-1177  
<http://www.saint-antoine.com>**

Other conference activities will include a guided tour of the historic city and a dinner boat cruise on the St Lawrence River to Île d'Orléans.

Administrative enquiries should be directed to:

Dr Richard Gimblett  
CNRS 2008 Conference Coordinator  
49 South Park Drive, Ottawa, Ontario,  
K1B 3B8  
Telephone: 613-590-9508  
e-mail: richard.gimblett@rogers.com

### **Call for Papers**

#### **2007 Naval History Symposium – Call For Papers**

The History Department of the United States Naval Academy invites proposals for papers to be presented at its 2007 Naval History Symposium in Annapolis, Maryland, from 20-22 September 2007. For decades, the Naval History Symposium has been a hallmark of the Academy's History Department, though



curtailed in recent years due to the 9/11 attacks. The 2007 Symposium will mark its full resumption. We anticipate its robust continuation well into the future.

Proposals dealing with any aspect of naval and maritime history are welcome. Paper proposals should include an abstract not exceeding 250 words and a one-page vita. Proposals for panels are also encouraged and should contain an abstract and vita for each panelist. Mail proposals to Dr. Maochun Yu, History Department (12C), The United States Naval Academy, 107 Maryland Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21402-5044, or send electronic proposals to [yu@usna.edu](mailto:yu@usna.edu). The deadline for submitting proposals is 19 January 2007. The programme committee expects to finalize the programme in March 2007 and final versions of papers are due by 1 August 2007.

A limited number of travel stipends are available to scholars residing outside the United States and to graduate students living within the United States. Please indicate your desire to apply for a travel stipend in the cover letter or e-mail that contains your proposal.

The programme committee will award prizes to the best papers presented at the Symposium. As in the past, we will publish selected papers at a later date.

All inquiries should be sent to [yu@usna.edu](mailto:yu@usna.edu). For more details and updates, see:

[www.usna.edu/History/Symposium.htm](http://www.usna.edu/History/Symposium.htm)

**9th Annual Society for Military and Strategic Studies Student Conference  
WAR AND SECURITY: THE COSTS OF  
CONFLICT 2 & 3 March 2007 □ University  
of Calgary**

This conference is dedicated to facilitating discussion, debate and contributions to the knowledge of military, security and historical events that have influenced the international arena. Students are given a multi-disciplinary forum within which they can engage academic, military and corporate

communities dedicated to the study of these important topics.

The SMSS welcomes undergraduate and graduate paper submissions from all disciplines. Due to a high volume of submissions, limit proposals to 250 words. Presentations should conform to a 15-minute format.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to: War and Economics, Conflict throughout History, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping, the European Union, the African Union, the "Revolution in Military Affairs", Terrorism, Intelligence, Insurrection, Revolutionary War, Counter-Insurgency, Warfare in Literature, Military Anthropology, Empires and Occupation. This list is by no means exhaustive. Original ideas are encouraged.

**PAPER PROPOSAL DEADLINE:  
20 DECEMBER 2006**

Please submit proposals via e-mail or regular mail to:

[stratnet@ucalgary.ca](mailto:stratnet@ucalgary.ca)

Society for Military and Strategic Studies,  
Centre for Military & Strategic Studies,  
University of Calgary

MLT 701, 2500 University Drive NW  
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4

Phone: (403) 220-4030

Fax: (403)282-0594

Website: [www.smss-uofc.com](http://www.smss-uofc.com)

For information, contact:

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[njmackie@ucalgary.ca](mailto:njmackie@ucalgary.ca)

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Winter months: berthed at HMC Dockyard – visitors welcome, by appointment (winter phone: 902-427-0550, ext. 2837)

e-mail: [secretary@hmcssackville-cnmt.ns.ca](mailto:secretary@hmcssackville-cnmt.ns.ca)  
<http://www.hmcssackville-cnmt.ns.ca>

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