

ARGONAUTA



**The Newsletter of The Canadian Nautical Research Society /
Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique**

Volume XXXIV Number 3 Summer 2017

ARGONAUTA

Founded 1984 by Kenneth MacKenzie
ISSN No. 2291-5427

Editors

Isabel Campbell and Colleen McKee
Jean Martin ~ French Editor
Winston (Kip) Scoville ~ Production/Distribution Manager

Argonauta Editorial Office

e-mail submissions to:

scmckee@magma.ca

or

Isabel.Campbell@forces.gc.ca

ARGONAUTA is published four times a year—Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn

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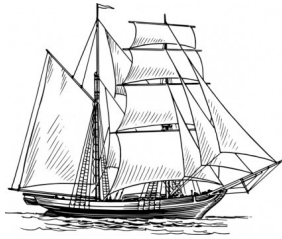
Membership Business:

200 Fifth Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 2N2, Canada
e-mail: fkert@sympatico.ca

Annual Membership including four issues of ARGONAUTA
and four issues of *THE NORTHERN MARINER/LE MARIN DU NORD*:
Within Canada: Individuals, \$70.00; Institutions, \$95.00; Students, \$25.00
International: Individuals, \$80.00; Institutions, \$105.00; Students, \$35.00

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In this issue of the *Argonauta*

Editorial	1
President's Corner	3
Sailing with the Admiral	4
The Loss of HMCS <i>Fraser</i> , 25 June 1940	11
Update: Conference & Annual General Meeting	21
Conference Registration	24
Response to The President's Corner	25
Call for Presenters 11th Maritime Heritage Conference & 45th Annual Conference on Sail Training and Tall Ships	28
Exhibit Opening September 8, 2017 at the American Merchant Marine Museum	29
Guidelines for Authors	34
CNRS Registration Form	36

Editorial

by Isabel Campbell / Colleen McKee



Greetings fellow readers. If you are perusing this editorial and have not yet joined the Canadian Nautical Research Society, we invite you to fill out the membership registration form located on the last page of each and every issue. You may also join the Society or renew your membership through its website at: http://www.cnrs-scrn.org/membership/index_e.html.

This summer issue includes another humorous article from the pen of William Pullen. We also are delighted to publish a carefully nuanced article about a particularly tragic moment in the Royal Canadian Navy's history by Michael Whitby, the senior naval historian at the Directorate of History and Heritage. We hope both authors will send us more of their outstanding work which we are certain will please all our readers.

As most of you already know, Rich Gimblett, a past President, has organized this year's conference in Halifax. The program is rich with interesting papers and activities and it is not too late to register! We urge as many people as possible to attend the conference and take part in the annual general meeting. The Council requires engaged members to serve and to volunteer with various activities and Chris Madsen brings this issue to the fore in his last column as President. Our members have many strengths and talents which could be used to enhance the Society – please contact Rich Gimblett, or anyone on the Executive if you are interested in serving the Society.

Those reading the President's Corner will note that our President is sharply critical of his recent experience publishing in the spring issue of the Society's peer reviewed journal *The Northern Mariner*. Chris also calls for greater engagement from outside Ontario in the Society's Council. Our issue includes a response from William Glover, also a former Society President, and the editor of Articles for *The Northern Mariner*. He addresses the specific complaints that Chris has raised and analyses how *The Northern Mariner* compares with other journals in the field.

We would like to broaden this discussion to address the key future difficulties facing our Society and *The Northern Mariner*. We offer the following points. During the last decades, some academics have suggested that the peer review system is broken. See for example: <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/23672/title/Is-Peer-Review-Broken/> Under "publish or perish" pressure, some prestigious scientific journals even published data that later turned out to be false. While complaints from authors are not uncommon and most regard the peer review system as flawed at best, no better system has appeared to replace it. Our Society's problems should not be looked at in isolation from wider issues in academia. It's something of a miracle that the Society has been able to publish a ranked journal like *TNM* exclusively with

volunteer help. Our membership is aging. How do we attract younger scholars when there are so few academic jobs available for them? These are broader issues which affect all the humanities and social sciences and not just our Society.

We ask you to think hard about these issues and about the value of research and peer review publication to academics the world over. We urge our members to engage in healthy open discussion at the forthcoming conference in Halifax. *Argonauta* is also the place to publish letters and comments from our readers on these broad and relevant matters and we invite you to send us your input at Isabel.Campbell@forces.gc.ca and scmckee@magma.ca .

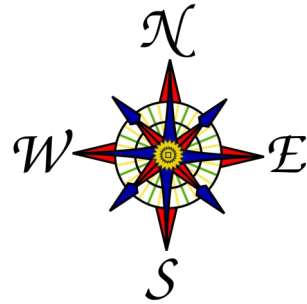
In closing, we wish all members a healthy, happy summer.
Fair winds,
Isabel and Colleen



We encourage you to join us on facebook and twitter where we post links to interesting articles and announcements from around the internet. Our social media channels are where you will find time sensitive notices that are not suitable for publishing here in the *Argonauta*.

President's Corner

by Chris Madsen



This will be my last communication to you as CNRS President. I will be stepping down from council after the August annual general meeting in Halifax. It has been a privilege to serve members the last three years.

Thank-you to all members who contributed to the President's Appeal. The monies raised reflect the level of commitment within the CNRS.

Many of you have asked me why *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* does not appear in the advertised month of issue. As outgoing president, I have lost confidence in the current editorial team to produce a clean, error-free journal on-time. The last April issue provides a good example, three months late and my own article botched by the two gentlemen editors. It is simply embarrassing and unprofessional. I had an article published in the *International Journal of Maritime History* earlier this year and received the opportunity to see page proofs and sign off on corrections before going to print, through an online submission process. Our *TNM* editors believe that is not necessary. The result is a product that does not live up to most quality assurance standards for published academic journals. I have heard complaints from some of you in regard responsiveness and editor guidance during the submission and review process for articles. Having experienced these myself, I commiserate with any member or author trying to submit to our journal. Things have to change. Make your voice heard to council and Chair of the Editorial Board, if you have had a bad or good experience with the *TNM* trying to get published.

It is my conviction that *TNM* must serve members first, as a membership funded benefit. The journal consumes a disproportional share of CNRS revenue that is brought in every year and takes considerable volunteer labour. The question has to be asked. Is *TNM* providing good value in its present form?

As the CNRS meets in Halifax this coming August to elect a new slate of executive officers, I believe that council should include members from the west and east coasts, and not just heavy on Southern Ontario, as has happened so many times in the past. As a nationally-focused institution for the study of maritime history in all regions, the CNRS is remarkably parochial. Quebec is entirely absent and beyond the Ottawa-Toronto corridor, the talent pool is thin because not enough attention is given to overcoming the Central Canada slant. A conference every few years on the "peripherals" is a poor substitute for a serious commitment to making the CNRS truly a national organization, which has representation from all regions on the executive. The proposed slate of executive nominations put before council must address this fundamental issue.

I wish the CNRS good luck as it moves forward with hand over to the next incoming president.

Chris Madsen
North Vancouver

Sailing with the Admiral

by William Pullen

For as long as I can remember my family had a sailboat. But we did not dwell in that part of the maritime universe containing beautiful sleek fibreglass yachts with Dacron sails and chrome winches. Not for us. Our maritime world revolved around an elderly wooden schooner named *Venture* and in this vessel we experienced all the pleasures and pains of sailing in Mahone Bay, on Nova Scotia's south coast.



Venture

Our sailing usually took place in the afternoon, after lunch, when the Admiral would say, "Right, now, who's for a sail this afternoon?" This would immediately silence all but the foolhardy, the drunk or the insane, or those on their second helping of my mother's fermented fruit compote.

Dealing with this question was terribly difficult, because sailing as we knew it was a throwback to Nelsonian times. Saying you'd rather stay ashore with a good book, curled up in front of the fire place while the autumnal gales howled outside was like saying to Henry Hudson that you had better things to do than search for the northern route to Cathay in the snow squalls off Baffin Island. It was a non-starter, and so we meekly agreed to spend the next four hours in a wet and cold welter of heavy canvas and manila rope.

A good sail was one which ended when you were stiff, soaking wet and had acquired only minor cuts and bruising. A not-so-good sail included these conditions but also moderate concussion and possibly first degree burns. I came to associate sailing with suffering and it was not until many, many years later that I sailed out of Kingston, Ontario with a family member and came to see that it could be comfortable and quite a lot of fun.

I should explain. Toward the end of his naval career, the Admiral purchased a schooner so he could so stay in touch with the sea he loved. The vessel was acquired in the mid-1950s and for several years was a fixture in Halifax Harbour as the Admiral inspected his fleet from his yacht.

The general retirement scenario was for the family to live mostly on the South Shore of Nova Scotia. What better thing for a retired Admiral to have than a small Nova Scotia Fishing Schooner moored off his property?

True to our tradition of doing things the hardest way possible, the Admiral bought an ancient black fishing schooner. The *Venture* was a 30ft gaff-rigged schooner, built in 1949 by the famous Heisler brothers on Tancook Island, at the mouth of Mahone Bay. She was, I think, the last one they built before they moved to the mainland and set up their boatyard in Chester.

Venture was small, dark, smelly, and extremely uncomfortable. There wasn't a piece of synthetic material in her. She had canvas sails, wooden masts and genuine ironwood dead-eyes with tarred hemp dead-eye lanyards to secure the standing rigging (secured, of course, with Double Matthew Walker Knots - anyone still know how to tie one?).

Venture was completely, totally, certifiably authentic, and the Admiral loved her almost as much as he loved his wife. For years, he would row out to her mooring at dusk to light the oil-burning riding light and hold silent communion with the sea. He spent countless wonderful hours sailing in *Venture* and, on what was to be his final afternoon of sailing, I watched him sail that boat up to the mooring single-handed and bring her to a dead stop with the mooring bridles within easy reach. Not bad for a man aged 79 with a long history of heart disease.

But you must appreciate that authentic means that everything, absolutely everything, was done pretty much the same way they did it during the great days of naval sail. The standard was: would this have been approved by Nelson? Would Anson, Howe, or Hawke nod approval at the way a line was belayed or sail furled? Was the mooring picked up in a way that Jervis or Collingwood would find acceptable?

The masts were stayed with wire shrouds, each strand of which was lovingly coated every year with a horrid smelly mixture of fish oil and tar, *because that's the way it's done!* The running rigging was all manila or hemp, properly spliced and served where needed with tarred marlin and canvas. Everything was secured per ancient tradition: the higher up it went, the farther aft it was secured. Even numbers to port, odd numbers to starboard. The bitter ends of every single line were coach-whipped or French-whipped with sail maker's twine drawn through genuine beeswax *because that's the way it's done!* The sails, all seven of them, were canvas. The mainsail and foresail were secured to the masts with bamboo hoops, and to the gaffs and booms by rope tricing lines - none of your fancy modern tracks and bronze fastenings here! In addition to her massive lead keel, she had something like a ton of movable ballast stowed, of course by hand, in the bilges - *because that's the way it's bloody well done!*

You will appreciate that fresh from turning in a wire long splice or re-reeving the main topsail downhaul, we contemplated the sight of Neil Armstrong walking on the moon with scepticism. Manned space flight might be all the rage in Cape Kennedy, but for us the real world revolved around tarred marlin and hemp rope.

There wasn't a single modern convenience in the vessel for many years. She was basically a working boat with a fish hold amidships and two masts. When the Admiral bought her the only mod con was an engine. I don't think there was anything resembling a cabin except for a dank little cuddy up in the bows where two people could squat like maritime toads. A regular cabin was added later; I think after the

Admiral's wife successfully led the family in one of our few known mutinies. It even had a tiny little cast-iron wood burning stove with the coy name of "Little Cod". Not that the cabin was anything fancy, mind, just two wooden benches that could serve as bunks (or pallets for the wounded) and about four feet of headroom. A permanent souvenir of a regular crew member was a lot of scar tissue on the crown of the head and an ability to walk like a duck.

Venture had an engine, a make-and-break, the kind made famous by Stan Rogers in his song Make and Break Harbour. Technically extremely simple and almost indestructible, it was simply a large flywheel connected to a huge cast iron cylinder containing a single massive piston connected directly to the propeller via the crank shaft. It was true direct drive - there was no gearing and the only form of control was a very crude throttle.

My memory is that these engines were started by pouring gas into the top of the cylinder, a tricky thing to do if you were a smoker or had been drinking a lot of rum. Once the gas had been splashed, you rolled over the massive flywheel as hard as you could. Once there was some momentum, you flipped over a compression lever and the engine would usually start with a huge flatulent bang, and sometimes catch fire if the gas splashing had been liberal. Thereafter, it would run forever with its characteristic loud but-but-but-but sound.

When the Admiral retired, he invested in a new twin cylinder diesel engine. This engine was of good old British design - which meant that it would usually refuse to start unless assaulted repeatedly with a blunt instrument. We referred to this activity as "adjusting the engine."

You would think he might have invested in an electric starter. Nope. Not going to happen. To this day, I can go through the sequence of getting that bloody engine to go. First, eject whoever is sitting on the hatch over the engine compartment. Pry open the hatch, balance one end on your head, and jam as many wooden splinters as possible into your frontal lobe. Next, move the compression lever to the "up" position. Then lean down and open the fuel valve on the lower right side of the engine, taking care not to impale oneself on the upright compression lever. Next, do the secret dance of fiddling with the little doofus thingy on the lower left side of the engine. Then, ease the throttle a quarter of the way down, insert the crank, and begin to heave away, always cranking clockwise (counter clockwise cranking being regarded as maritime heresy and was in any event not mechanically feasible unless you were taking steroids). When sufficient momentum was gained and you began to see stars, or a dull but intense radial pain had started in your chest, and the duty watch of Angels began singing "Eternal Father, Strong to Save", you immediately flip the compression lever to the down position and adopt a worried professional look. If all goes well there will be a series of loud explosions and the engine will start.

Sometime after he got the new engine, the Admiral invested in a hydraulic winch so that he could weigh the massive anchors he used without herniating his crew. Most yachtsmen tend to use a lightweight Danforth-style anchor to moor their yacht. Things that can be handled easily by one person. Not us. For standard-general-convenience-normal-everyday use, we carried a regulation Admiralty pattern anchor that weighed a

good 30 pounds and was shackled to a hefty chain cable. Getting this thing rigged and ready for letting go required Herculean feats of strength. There was a smaller Danforth used as back-up.

For more formal events like Hurricanes, Northeasters, and the kind of weather you experience in January off Greenland, we had a huge Admiralty pattern bower anchor stowed on top of the cabin that clocked in at well over 60 pounds. This was only used in extremes and I know that, on the few occasions when it was used, especially when paired with the standard anchor, apple orchards, pine forests and complete religious sects could be blown away before *Venture* would drag her anchor.

Buying the winch was another exasperating family exercise in adapting British technology to North American climes. From these lessons, I came to believe there was a mystical relationship between geography and technology: the farther away something is from its place of design or manufacture, the higher the probability that it will fail and require regular and expensive repair.

I am not sure how they dealt with this during the space program but we could have given them some tips. The winch arrived from England by air freight at astronomical cost and immediately leaked pink hydraulic oil. It continued to do so for the next twenty years. The oil had nuclear qualities and was impervious to any known method of removal, except possibly for exorcism (although the amount of blood spilt on it would suggest that even that would be futile.)

The winch deposited a treacherous slick over the port side of *Venture's* tiny foredeck, positioned so that anyone attempting an important or urgent manoeuvre like picking up the mooring could easily end up doing a grande jété off the foc's'le into the water. I know, because it happened to me and once I had the priceless satisfaction of watching a pompous, irascible, and very senior member of the Canadian Diplomatic Corps carom off the foredeck doing the herky-jerky.

The winch was installed and immediately refused to work despite many "adjustments" with a large hammer. The maintenance cost was considerable and the Admiral created a lasting bond with the Repair Division of the Lunenburg Foundry. He thought nothing of picking up the phone and announcing that this was the Admiral speaking, the winch required repair again, and would they please immediately send someone the 40-odd miles to fix it? When? Next week? No... this afternoon, and be sharp about it. True to their calling they always came and patiently poured in more pink oil or replaced another seal.

Two other pieces of gear should be noted. One was a huge ship to shore radio presented to the Admiral on his retirement. This was not your standard piddling little yachting walky-talky, suitable for Chris-Crafts and other maritime arrivistes. No sir, this was your state of the art heavy-duty North Atlantic commercial marine radio, just one step up from Samuel Morse and his code, with a huge transmitter, a whip antenna, and a telephone handset into which the Admiral would intone the call sign of *Venture* as if practicing the Order of Service for a Burial at Sea. I can still hear him chanting... "VCS Halifax, VCS Halifax, VCS Halifax ... this is the yacht *Venture* ... Victor Charlie 354, on 2182 Kilohertz ... How Do You Read?" Over and over he would repeat it in a slowly

rising monotone, convinced that by dint of sheer repetition and loudness he could force the message through the ether. Of course, they only rarely received him, because the wretched antenna was about four feet off the water and the range not more than 10 miles. Still, he got quite a bang out of it and if the *QE2* came within range he would certainly be able to call them up and tell them to haul taut their dammed signal halyards, and be sharp about it.

In a fruitless attempt to blackmail the rest of the family into thinking that sailing could be more tolerable, the Admiral caused a flush toilet to be installed. Now, I use the word flush advisedly because operating this little monster when *Venture* was heeled over on the port tack and leaping about like a mad thing was not something that you'd normally recommend to anyone but the totally incontinent.

Flushing the toilet was of an order of complexity similar to operating the diving manifold in a submarine. Valves had to be opened in a certain sequence, a pump pumped to fill the bowl with seawater, your business done, and then other valves opened and the flush handle operated vigorously until the bowl was clear, whereupon other valves had to be shut. The whole procedure was incredibly complicated and we were terrified of getting it backwards, and pumping when we should have been peeing, that we gave up and resigned ourselves to maritime constipation.

Our sailing season was mid-May, shortly after the ice broke up, to late October. Most of our sailing took place in the afternoon, after the Admiral completed his mandatory "stretch off the land," otherwise known as a nap. Often it would be blowing hard and an afternoon sail meant several hours of clinging to the windward rail, getting soaked through and gazing with dread fascination as the lee rail buried itself once again and the dog began to slide down to leeward with a look of detached resignation.

Sails usually lasted most of the afternoon and if it was chilly, as it often is in the autumn, the afternoon was warmed by an issue of Kai, a unique navy concoction that sustained many during long night watches. We prepared this on our little wood-burning stove on the starboard side of *Venture's* little cabin. Kai was made of dark chocolate shaved from a large slab, crumbled and placed in a pot and boiling water added to make a thick- paste. To this was added one or more cans of Armoured Cow (sweetened condensed milk) and the mixture thinned until the right thickness was reached. Usually, this was judged to be when a spoon placed in the mixture would slowly fall over. It was then ladled out in indestructible Admiralty pattern mugs and passed to the crew up on deck. Consumed while steaming hot, it spread warmth everywhere. I have no idea what the calorie count was but I'm certain you won't find the recipe in "Light-Hearted Cooking."

Sailing ended in time for late tea in front of the fire place at home. This was always the best part of the day, running before the wind and basking in sunshine, headed for the mooring and home. At least until we came within sight of the mooring.

Picking up the mooring was stressful, because the Admiral's deep sense of professionalism forbade casual use of the engine to assist in what was a pretty complex manoeuvre, especially if there was any wind. The mooring was usually picked up under sail. We would approach the mooring on a broad reach, and Murphy's law

would come into effect - at precisely the wrong moment a gust of wind would accelerate *Venture* on the final approach so that we bore down on the mooring like a runaway juggernaut.

The task of picking up the mooring was normally assigned to trusted veterans. It was a tricky job because it involved standing right up in the bows, sliding on the pink oil leaking from the winch, in a blizzard of flailing ropes, blocks, and lines, fending off flapping sails, and thrusting with a long and heavy wooden boat hook to pick up one of two mooring bridles that floated just aft of the mooring.

This was a recipe for disaster for the novice and over the years I witnessed many an overconfident Sunday sailor attempt it with predictable results: either the boathook and moorerpicker-upper became inextricably entwined in rigging or the individual managed to hook on to a bridle as the vessel swept past at a fair clip but was then faced with a tricky choice of whether to follow the boat hook into the water or remain with the vessel.

On one occasion, a visiting Admiral assumed the picking up position like an overconfident Greek javelin hurler and began to jab and thrust at the bridles only to lose contact with the boat hook, which floated past in the upright position, bobbing and saluting in a mocking fashion at those in the stern before vanishing forever beneath the waves. The air was pregnant with unspoken thoughts as *Venture* circled for another run at the mooring, this time with the visiting Admiral now in the figure head position, attempting to trap one of the bridles with his bare hands as we approached. I am not sure he sailed with us again.

Our sailing picnics were marathon expeditions, usually mounted on certain feast days like the Anniversary of the Glorious First of June. They were planned with all the care of a major naval campaign. *Venture* would be loaded down with enough provisions for a small army, a large pot to boil corn in, the dog, reading material and utensils, quantities of Gold Medal Lime Juice and Oland's Schooner Beer (the only beer regarded as fit for consumption). We towed a dinghy astern to get everything ashore.

We normally picnicked on Rafuse Island at the entrance to Mahone Bay. Some 15 miles distant from our place, it made for an all-day outing and sometimes if the wind was light and the visibility good we would find ourselves sailing home through the dusk and on into the night, ghosting down the moon's path toward home, with the family softly singing "Shenandoah."

We would arrive off the anchorage at Rafuse Island and go through the manoeuvre of performing a running moor under plain sail. I performed this hellishly complicated manoeuvre in person well before I read about it in one of the Hornblower books, and confirmed its existence in the Technical Annex to Vol.3 of the Admiralty Manual of Seamanship, and realized just what it was that we regarded as normal.

Not for us your standard take-the-sails-down, start-the-engine, and drop-the-hook approach to anchoring. No, Sir. Under a full press of canvas, and with both anchors ready for letting go, the Admiral would approach the anchorage on a broad reach and order "Let go the Starboard Anchor!" as we approached the anchoring spot he had

selected. With that anchor descending toward the bottom he would bear off and press on, allowing the cable to run free, aiming to overshoot the anchorage position by a hundred or so feet, then bring the vessel into the wind again and order "Let Go the Port Anchor!". Backing the jibs, he would manoeuvre *Venture* under sail until she was "middled" between the anchors and riding comfortably. A complicated affair but one accomplished with a minimum of fuss and bother.

Securely moored, we would load the dinghy and row ashore. Firewood was gathered, a huge fire lit, corn boiled in salt water, food eaten and beer consumed while sitting on driftwood logs. The dog would spend time blissfully snouting in the sand and we would walk the sandy beach and contemplate the blessings of life. The Admiral would sometimes produce his ancient squeeze-box and we would all roar out long forgotten songs at the top of our lungs, always finishing with "Green Grow the Rushes-Oh!"

On one occasion our singing attracted the attention of some cattle, left on the island to graze, and so ensued what came to be known as the Battle of Rafuse Island, or the Admiral's Retreat.

We were sitting around the fire when a battalion of bovines appeared over the sand dunes overlooking the beach. It became obvious they regarded us as objects of some social interest, and that a closer inspection was in order. Sizing up the situation, the family began a rapid assembly of goods and chattels in a strong point around the fire.

As the cattle approached and began to moo menacingly, the order was given to retreat to the water and the Admiral's wife herded us into the rowboat, leaving the Admiral to guard our belongings and preserve the family's honour. There followed a wonderful sight of the Admiral, sporting an enormous tattered straw sun hat, with white zinc sun screen on his nose and lips, brandishing a rake and chasing huge moo-moos away from the remains of the picnic. They eventually outnumbered him and over-ran the campsite. The episode was captured on film and never failed to entertain as we watched the Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, normally accustomed to "putting down" Soviet submarines, forced into a Dunkirk-style evacuation by a band of overfriendly Guernsey cows.

The Loss of HMCS *Fraser*, 25 June 1940

by Michael Whitby¹

On 25 June 1940, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) was confronted with “the price of Admiralty” when the destroyer HMCS *Fraser* was sunk in a collision with the cruiser HMS *Calcutta* in the Bay of Biscay off the southeast coast of France.² She was the first major warship lost in the relatively brief history of the 30 year old navy. Although a British Board of Inquiry that met in the days following the incident produced a straight forward explanation of the circumstances causing the collision, opinion within the RCN came around to a different conclusion. Given the confused circumstances of that summer night, and the general chaos that existed in the British home naval commands at that dire point of the war, it is probably impossible to come to any definite conclusion as to responsibility for the collision. That said, the evidence and circumstances seem clouded enough to allow at least a sympathetic view to the explanation adopted by Canadian officers.

Fraser was in the Caribbean on 24 May 1940 when the Canadian government famously despatched four River-class destroyers to bolster the Royal Navy. As a result she did not join *Restigouche*, *St Laurent* and *Skeena* at Plymouth, England until 3 June, four days after her three sister ships. Rather than folding them into an existing RN flotilla, the Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches Command, Admiral Sir Martin Dunbar-Nasmith, designated them the Western Approaches, Devonport Sub Command, and named *Fraser*'s captain, Commander Wallace Creery, senior officer. But this was only for administrative purposes, and like their British counterparts, the four destroyers were sent hither and yon, often individually, and were only together once more.³ For her part, after a few days in dock to improve her anti-aircraft armament *Fraser* was kept busy screening fleet units and troop convoys in the Western Approaches. A highlight came when Creery was senior officer of a screen of eight destroyers—four RN, four RCN—during the final stage of the ANZAC troop convoy's long transit to the UK.⁴ Overall, tension was high and activity constant; and with German U-Boats and the Luftwaffe taking a heavy toll of shipping, demands on commanding officers were particularly gruelling.

In the third week of June, *Fraser* and *Restigouche* were sent into the Bay of Biscay where the situation was as chaotic as had existed off Dunkirk or other evacuation ports on the Channel coast. Thousands of civilians and soldiers—mostly Polish—were fleeing southwestward through Brittany to avoid being snared by the German armies storming across France. Initial evacuation had started at Brest, moved to St Nazaire, shifted to the Gironde ports around Bordeaux, and finally south again to St Jean-de-Luz on the Spanish border. All the while they were harassed by the Germans. U-boats were positioned off the Biscay ports they would soon call home, and the Luftwaffe operated seemingly at will, sewing mines in harbour approaches and attacking shipping. On 16 June, in one of history's great maritime tragedies, the Cunard liner *Lancastria* was sunk by the Luftwaffe off St Nazaire with the loss of an estimated 3,500 soldiers and civilians. Adding to the turmoil, the French government surrendered on 22 June with the general cease fire scheduled to come into effect three days later, muddling the political situation and leaving civilians and soldiers affiliated with the Allies scrambling to avoid internment.

The tumult within Western Approaches command, responsible for directing evacuation operations from the French Atlantic ports, is evident from the command war diary, which at its calmest moments reflects confusion and uncertainty as Admiral Dunbar-Nasmith's beleaguered staff attempted to shuttle warships and transports into the area to evacuate as many as possible. *Restigouche* went south from Plymouth early on 22 June to escort the liner *Arandora Star* to the Gironde, and *Fraser* soon followed, transporting a naval communications team dubbed 'Party Z' to St Jean de Luz. After leaving *Arandora Star* to her business, *Restigouche* picked up 59 evacuees including two Polish generals—her commanding officer Lieutenant-Commander Nelson Lay recalled "the Generals were so glad to get onboard an RCN ship that they kissed me on both cheeks."⁵

Meanwhile, *Fraser* was flagged down by an innocuous sardine smack off Arcachon whose passengers turned out to be the British and Canadian ambassadors and other diplomatic officials fleeing France—the Canadian ambassador Georges Vanier had no idea he had been rescued by one of his own until he encountered *Fraser's* commanding officer whom he knew previously from Ottawa: "Hello Creery, what are you doing here!"⁶ Transferring their distinguished refugees to a ship bound for Britain, *Fraser* joined *Restigouche* at St Jean de Luz and spent a hectic day shuffling positions in the crowded harbour—Commander Creery later recalled they had to shift berths four or five times. Finally, when field artillery appeared on the bluffs overlooking the harbour—they were uncertain if it was French or German - *Fraser* quickly re-embarked Party Z and a few other stragglers, and scurried out to sea with *Restigouche*. It marked the close of the last significant evacuation from French soil.

That evening the two Canadian destroyers joined the anti-aircraft cruiser HMS *Calcutta*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Alban Curteis, commander of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, who had been ordered to lead the three ships back to Plymouth. The force proceeded in Screening Diagram 2, a common formation with a destroyer positioned at one-and-a-mile distance on each bow of the cruiser - *Fraser* and *Restigouche* had used it often when escorting battleships in and out of Halifax earlier in the war. None of the three ships were yet fitted with radar, and visibility in the late evening twilight was about one-and-a-half miles by eye and three miles with binoculars. The wind was blowing out of the north northwest at about 20 knots (Force 5), and, according to Rear-Admiral Curteis, the sea was "lumpy" with a north-westerly swell.⁸ At 2212, while the ships were steaming on course 252° at 14 knots, Curteis ordered the destroyers into line astern behind *Calcutta* to ease station-keeping in the growing darkness. Upon receiving this signal on *Fraser's* bridge, Commander Creery told the officer of the watch (OOW), Lieutenant Harold Groos, "Right, round to port and put him about 20° on the bow."⁹ There has never been any explanation as to why Creery chose to bring *Fraser* around towards *Calcutta*, however, it was a routine choice - *Restigouche*, on the cruiser's port bow, carried out the manoeuvre by circling away from *Calcutta*. Commander Creery later recounted what followed:

2217 O.O.W. gave the order 'Port 10'.

2217½ Commanding Officer ordered Officer of the Watch to increase to 20 knots and get the manoeuvre over.

2218½ Commanding Officer realised that the Officer of the Watch had insufficient wheel on and took the ship over, at the same time ordering

'Port 20' and then 'Hard a-port'.

2219 Commanding Officer appreciated that the ship would not turn short of Calcutta and decided to try and cross the bow. He gave the orders "Hard a-starboard sound one short blast".

2219½ It was obvious that the swing could not be checked in time and the Commanding Officer in order to avoid a head-on collision, gave the orders "Hard a-port, Full speed, astern both".¹⁰

On *Calcutta's* bridge, the Officer of the Watch, Albert Lanaway—as a Commissioned Gunner his rank title was simply Mr.—saw *Fraser* turn to port "very quickly and after crossing our line of advance I observed she was coming towards us from fine on the Port Bow." The two warships were hurtling towards each other at about 30 knots. Lanaway,

reported to the captain that HMCS *Fraser* was coming towards us, the Captain ordered me 'To come over to Starboard'. I ordered Starboard 15°. I saw that HMCS *Fraser* had altered course to Port and immediately the Captain ordered 'Hard a-Starboard, Full Speed Astern, Sound one blast [to signal turn to starboard]'. These orders were passed immediately although there was a slight delay in sounding the siren. I heard *Fraser* sound one blast on her siren and almost immediately afterwards we struck her.

The two warships were closing at approximately 30 knots when they collided and *Calcutta* cut *Fraser* clean in half just forward of the bridge. As a horrified Lanaway watched from the cruiser's bridge, the bow "portion" of the destroyer "came down to Starboard and turned over, the after portion moved very quickly out to Port as if her engines were going astern."¹¹

Even though destroyers are relatively small ships, the recollections of one officer demonstrates how awareness of exactly what has transpired can be clouded during calamitous events. Lieutenant Patrick Whinney, RN had been on the staff at the British embassy in Paris, and after helping to direct the evacuation from St Jean de Luz, he jumped onboard *Fraser* when she escaped. Exhausted, he quickly fell asleep in an officer's cabin in the wardroom flat at the stern of the destroyer. "My next recollection", he recalled, "was more of a sensation than hearing anything except a dull 'Wumph!' The whole ship heaved and shook from stem to stern." Whinney rushed up to the quarterdeck and asked the sailors gathered there "if they knew what was happening or, indeed, what had already occurred":

Various opinions were offered but it was obvious that no-one knew anything for certain. While we were peering into the clouds of steam surrounding the bridge and the whole of the for'ard part of the ship, a searchlight suddenly picked up a large three-cornered shape sticking up out of the water about a hundred yards off the starboard bow. At that distance it was impossible to identify beyond the fact that it looked like the bow of a ship with the sharp end uppermost. A confident voice from the other side of the quarterdeck announced with some degree of satisfaction, 'Thought so, by God. A fucking U-boat!' In support of this agreeable idea we could now see some thirty or forty figures bobbing about in the water round the wreck—presumably the crew of the U-boat.

The victorious mood lasted scant seconds:

Then, as we watched, an extraordinary thing happened. Quite distinctly across the intervening water we heard the U-boat's crew singing 'Roll Out the Barrel'. Still the penny didn't drop. It was all too confusing until the Chief Bo'suns Mate appeared unexpectedly among us. He was bearing two or three lifejackets in one arm, offering them around to whoever was without. He knew what had happened having just come down from the Bridge. 'Ship's been cut in two, sir, by the cruiser, just for'ard of the bridge.' The 'U-boat' was the severed section of our own bows, and the men in the water were our own Canadian sailors.¹²

The chances of survival of anyone in the fore part of the destroyer were slim, and most of the 66 sailors who died were either in the forward mess decks or manning positions in that part of the ship.¹³ Those on the bridge had a remarkable escape. As Commander Creery described, when the cruiser's stem slammed into *Fraser's* wheelhouse, the force "lifted clear the monkey's island, which with its occupants remained perilously impinged upon *Calcutta's* nose." Creery and the others on the bridge were stunned by the collision, and when he gathered his senses he recognized "this precarious perch would not last long", and, after pulling a sailor from the crushed steel, ordered everybody on the bridge to jump onto *Calcutta's* fo'c'sle. Amazingly, when the cruiser entered Plymouth two days later, the tangled wreckage of *Fraser's* bridge remained affixed the cruiser's bow as a ghastly reminder of the calamity.¹⁴

Nelson Lay, who had brought *Restigouche* into position behind *Calcutta*, only learned of the collision when Rear-Admiral Curteis signalled him to pick-up *Fraser's* survivors. Lay saw some 60 sailors crowded on *Fraser's* quarterdeck, and fearing the hulk "might sink immediately and that her Depth Charges might explode", in a magnificent piece of seamanship in the swell then running, he twice nudged his stern alongside so that survivors could jump onboard. Meanwhile, *Fraser's* whaler turned up with other survivors; it was then manned by sailors from *Restigouche* who joined with their own boats and *Calcutta's* in rescuing those in the sea. When Lay had arrived on the scene, he initially thought *Fraser's* severed bow might be a wreck she had collided with, but he now realized its actual identity and saw fifteen to 30 sailors clinging to her guardrails. As *Restigouche* moved in as close as possible the bow finally capsized, throwing the sailors into the sea; Lay dropped his four Carley floats for the struggling survivors. The high swell made it difficult to bring the various returning boats alongside, and at one point *Restigouche's* stern slammed down onto the gunwale of *Fraser's* whaler, overturning the boat and throwing its occupants into the sea; all were rescued but one. After standing by for an hour Rear-Admiral Curteis decided the cruiser was too vulnerable with U-boats reported in the area and set out for Plymouth. Shortly afterwards he ordered Lay to sink *Fraser's* remains. Once this was done, *Restigouche*, too, headed for Plymouth. Lay was understandably proud of his sailors efforts, and reported "It is in my opinion, and with all due modesty, (as they belong to my ship), that the ship's company of HMCS *Restigouche* were magnificent on this occasion. Officers and men alike displayed wonderful coolness, initiative, skill and showed no regard for personal safety."¹⁵ All told, *Calcutta* returned with 33 members of *Fraser's* company, while *Restigouche* rescued a total of 117, including some from naval shore parties.¹⁶

The quest for accountability snaps closely at the heels of tragedies the scale of *Fraser's* loss. It would be fascinating to know what words were exchanged between Creery, Curteis and Captain Dennis Lees, *Calcutta's* commanding officer, after the Canadian officer climbed onto the cruiser's bridge following the collision, but no accounts of this undoubtedly awkward conversation exist. We are thus left with the reports each officer submitted to the C-in-C Western Approaches. Captain Lees made no judgement on blame but in simple stark terms outlined his perceptions and responses from *Calcutta's* bridge. He noted "as soon as the executive signal was made, *Fraser* was observed to alter course to Port and appeared to be shaping course to cross *Calcutta's* bows and come down her Port side." As the two warships approached each other Lees "considered that if I held my course *Fraser* would pass dangerously close down my Port side and I ordered the Officer of the Watch to put on Starboard wheel and sound one blast on the siren."¹⁷ When the collision occurred Lees estimated *Calcutta's* course to be about 265° and *Fraser's* inclination "about 140° to the right." The key discrepancy is that *Fraser* actually intended to pass down *Calcutta's* starboard side, but Lees was unaware of that fact.

In his report, which like Lees', was written during the passage to Plymouth, Creery admitted an error in judgement on his part to be the cause of the accident. "In the first instance", he explained, "the Officer of the Watch put on insufficient wheel. Owing to darkness I was slow to observe this and when I did I made an error in judgement in thinking that it would be possible to turn *Fraser* short of *Calcutta*." Rather than assigning any blame to Lieutenant Groos, Creery took full responsibility:

It is my custom to allow junior officers to carry out manoeuvres under my supervision and I interfere with them as little as possible. On this occasion although I allowed the Officer of the Watch to start the manoeuvre, I took over the ship myself before it was completed. In view of this I do not consider any blame whatsoever is attributable to the Officer of the Watch.

Creery emphasised "that the manoeuvre was a simple one and should have been easily carried out." His only explanation as to why this did not occur was that "my judgement was affected by lack of sleep. Since leaving the West Indies in May I have had but one complete night's rest and the ship had only been in harbour for one night since the 10th of June."¹⁸ After digesting Lees and Creery's reports, Rear-Admiral Curteis left no room for doubt as to what he thought was the cause of the incident, concluding "I consider the collision to be due entirely to an error in judgement on the part of Commander W.B. Creery." *Fraser's* captain initially erred in allowing Lieutenant Groos to turn towards using only 10° of helm: "had full manoeuvring wheel been used at once he would have turned short of *Calcutta*." He then increased his speed to 20 knots, "thereby magnifying the error in judgement."¹⁹ Curteis acknowledged no extenuating circumstances.

Admiral Dunbar-Nasmith convened a Board of Inquiry in Plymouth on 28 June to investigate the causes of the collision. Given the dire war situation - the Luftwaffe had begun scattered raids across Britain and the *Wehrmacht* sat menacingly at the French Channel coast - minds were elsewhere, and although an inquiry was something all involved would have liked to avoid regulations decreed it take place. Accordingly, when reviewing the minutes of the inquiry one gets the impression it was a somewhat hurried

affair with only cursory probing by the board; of course, Commander Creery's written *mea culpe*, which the board had for consideration along with the other reports, influenced the tone.²⁰ In effect, they had their explanation. Certainly, Rear-Admiral Curteis was perfunctory responding to three short questions that he had nothing to add to his written report. Likewise, Captain Lees was not asked to provide much in the way of additional information, beyond to acknowledge that *Fraser* was clearly visible during the entire process. He also reconfirmed his impression the destroyer was going to pass down *Calcutta's* port side. Not surprisingly, Creery was subjected to the most questions, and his demeanor impressed the Board, who complimented him on his "frank and open manner." Creery said he had nothing to add to his report beyond that he had omitted to mention that he had heard *Calcutta's* last minute blast on the siren signalling a turn to starboard. When asked if he thought *Fraser* "actually reached the point clear but fine on the Port bow of *Calcutta*", Creery emphasised, "No Sir, His stem and foremast came in line but I didn't cross." About half the board's questions addressed Creery's state of fatigue and he described in detail *Fraser's* numerous movements over the previous days and the fact that he was seldom able to leave the bridge. He also added that he had been ill the day previous to the incident and had sought medical attention. Following up, the board queried the doctor temporarily assigned to *Fraser*, Surgeon Lieutenant Timothy McLean RAN, if Creery's illness - an inflamed sore throat - in combination with his general fatigue, could have affected his vision and "quick brain reactions." McLean responded that "reaction time is slow with increasing fatigue, I think that can be definitely proved."²¹ Strangely, the Board did not pursue this line of inquiry with Captain Lees. Anti-aircraft cruisers like *Calcutta* were a precious commodity, and *Calcutta* had been subjected to heavier operational demands than *Fraser*, being entangled in combat situations through the long Norwegian campaign and then off Dunkirk.²² The pressures had not alleviated in the Biscay operations that followed thus there is every reason to believe Lees and his watch-keepers were as tired as Creery, with equal impact upon their decision-making.

Not surprising given the tenor of the inquiry, the board's findings echoed Rear-Admiral Curteis's original report. The cause of the collision was "an error in judgement" on the part of Creery in that "he allowed his ship to be turned towards the *Calcutta* using too little wheel." Lees was not considered "in any way to blame", and "the steps he took were proper in the uncertain circumstances." However, the board recognized the strain Creery had been under, suggesting his error in judgement "was caused by his state of fatigue which was the unavoidable consequence of the service on which he had recently been employed."²³ When forwarding the results to the Admiralty, Admiral Dunbar-Nasmith tempered the judgement by praising the Canadian: "Since joining my Command, Commander Creery had carried out his duties in a most able manner, and I have been impressed by the evident keenness of the RCN Division under his enthusiastic leadership. It is most unfortunate that devotion to duty should have resulted in an error in judgement with such serious results." When it came to recommending disciplinary measures, the Admiralty was also exhibited an element of sympathy confirming "that further action, if any, will be taken by the Canadian authorities."²⁴

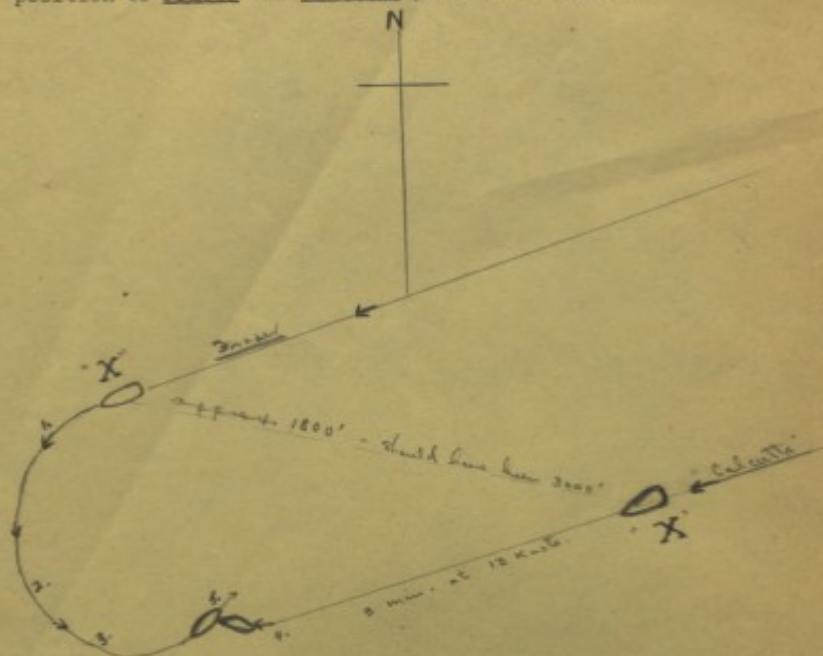
In the days after the inquiry, Commander Creery either became aware of additional information about the events on 25 June, or events clarified in his mind. In a memorandum written later in the war—most likely in early 1942—Creery conceded he

had admitted to an error in judgement in his initial report on the accident. However, he explained “my report was written in about the worst set of circumstances imaginable on the day after the accident, in a strange ship, still terribly shocked by what had happened”. His memory apparently cleared as he recovered. Creery recalled “it was not until two weeks later I remembered the all-important point that *Calcutta* was altering course to starboard when I first reversed the wheel [just before the collision].” Expanding on this, and taking into account Captain Lees’ explanation of events, he posited “if *Fraser* proceeding at 20 Kts. crossed *Calcutta*’s line of advance 2½ cables [500 yards] ahead of *Calcutta*, who was steaming at 14 Kts. and *Fraser*’s inclination was 160° to the left it would have been quite impossible for *Calcutta* to have hit *Fraser* on the starboard bow.” “In fact”, he submitted, “*Fraser* never did cross *Calcutta*’s bow, and it is my opinion never would have come into collision with her if *Calcutta* had not altered to starboard.” His last second reversal to port “had no effect.” Concluding, Creery emphasised, “My great error was in allowing myself to be persuaded by C-in-C Plymouth not to ask for a Court Martial, but in this decision I was influenced by the fact that we were expecting the invasion of England to take place at any moment and everyone was wrought up and working overtime anyway.”²⁵

We can never ascertain precisely what occurred on the bridges of the two warships that gloomy night. Certainly, every witness on *Fraser*’s bridge insisted she never crossed *Calcutta*’s bow, thus the cruiser’s alteration to starboard was critical. Yet, most, but not all, bridge personnel in the cruiser indicate the destroyer did cross; some were uncertain. As it was, the RCN accepted Creery’s version of events. Commander Harry DeWolf, CO of HMCS *St Laurent* - *Fraser*’s Chummy ship - who spent weeks with Creery as they made their way home to Canada after the incident, remembered him being unhappy with the version of events presented by the inquiry.²⁶ At naval headquarters in Ottawa, Captain Leonard Murray, perhaps the most respected navigator in the RCN, produced a sketch chart depicting how *Fraser* did not cross *Calcutta*’s bow, and the cruiser’s alteration to starboard caused the collision.²⁷ [See Below] That became the RCN’s authorized version of events. For example, in a June 1963 article in the Victoria Times Colonist, Captain Harry Kingsley (RCN ret’d) described how the collision occurred due to *Calcutta*’s miscalculation of *Fraser*’s intentions and the cruiser’s last second manoeuvre.²⁸ Finally, when the author met Creery’s son Raymond, himself a naval veteran, he took pains to explain how his father had been victimized by the inquiry.²⁹ As it was, the Admiralty left the consequences of the verdict to the RCN’s leadership who applied no discipline; nor is there any evidence they ever asked their British colleagues to reopen the inquiry. They were content to leave things as they were and Creery’s career progressed on its normal path: in 1955 he retired as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff in the rank of Rear-Admiral.³⁰ In the end, all one can conclude with any certainty is that *Fraser* was a victim of the fog of war, and the fatigue that is so often in its company.

HMCS Fraser I

Copy of sketch by Capt. L.W. Murray showing relative position of Fraser and Calcutta prior to collision:-



"X".... position of Fraser and Calcutta when manoeuvre commenced.

1. Fraser's Officer of the Watch turned under small helm and increased to 20 knots.
2. Fraser's O.O.W. steadied on a course with Calcutta off his port bow. Speed of 20 knots brought him too far ahead.
3. C.O. Fraser took over control and put on full helm.
4. Calcutta realized Fraser was ahead of him and tried to avoid him by altering course to starboard.
5. Fraser, tried to swing to starboard, went full astern, couldn't get port helm off..... collision.

Source: File 9870-35/6

Chart produced by Captain Leonard Murray, RCN, undated, but likely in the summer of 1940
Credit: DHH, 81/520/HMCS Fraser 8000, Vol. 1, Box 36, File 6

Endnotes

1. Michael Whitby is Senior Naval Historian at the Directorate of History and Heritage. This article incorporates additional material to the account in W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty and Michael Whitby et al, *No Higher Purpose: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, Part I* (St Catharines: Vanwell Press, 2003). The author wishes to thank Captain Kevin Greenwood RCN for sharing valuable research material. The conclusions and any errors lay firmly at the feet of the author.
2. From Rudyard Kipling's line in "Song of the English": "If blood be the Price of Admiralty good God we ha' paid in full." See <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk> accessed 1 June, 2016.
3. "Ships Movements, Actions, Losses, September 1939-March 1942" at Navy History.net <http://www.naval-history.net/xDKWW2-3900Intro.htm> accessed 31 May 2016. This remarkable site is an essential, reliable source for anyone researching the Royal Navy during the Second World War.
4. Western Approaches Command War Diary, 13-15 June 1940, the United Kingdom National Archives (TNA), ADM 199/371.
5. Horatio Nelson Lay, *Memoirs of a Mariner* (Stittsville: Canada's Wings, 1982) 109; and Western Approaches Command War Diary, 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 199/371.
6. Rear-Admiral W.B. Creery, "HMCS *Fraser*, June 20 to June 25, 1940", 5 May 1968, Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), 81/586.
7. For the Bay of Biscay evacuation operations see, Western Approaches Command War Diary, 21-25 June 1940, TNA, 199/371; and Stephen W. Roskill, *The War at Sea*, Volume I (London: HMSO, 1954), 232-238.
8. CO HMCS *Restigouche*, Report of Proceedings, 27 June 1940, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 24, Volume 6889, File NSS8970-353/6; and Rear-Admiral Curteis, "Report of Collision Between HMS *Calcutta* and HMCS *Fraser*", 28 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
9. Lieutenant H.V.W. Groos, "Statement on Collision", 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
10. CO HMCS *Fraser*, "Report on Collision", 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
11. Mr. Albert F.H. Lanaway, "Statement of Collision", 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
12. Commander Patrick F. Whinney, RN, "The Fall of France 1940: A Shrimp's Eye View", Imperial War Museum, IWM 78/50.
13. The total included nineteen RN ratings who had been part of the evacuation party at St Jean de Luz.
14. Commander Wallace Creery, commentary on narrative into sinking of *Fraser*, DHH, 81/520 HMCS *Fraser* 8000 Vol 1, Box 36, File 6. See also CO *Fraser*, Report on Collision, 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504; and Western Approaches Command War Diary, 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 199/371.
15. CO HMCS *Restigouche*, "Report of Proceedings – HMCS *Restigouche* from 2130/25 to 1800/26", 27 June 1940, LAC, RG 24, Volume 6889, File NSS8870-353/6; Rear-Admiral Curteis, "Report of Collision Between HMS *Calcutta* and HMCS *Fraser*", 28 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504; and Ship's Log, HMS *Calcutta*, 25-27 June 1940, TNA, ADM 53/111636.
16. Western Approaches Command War Diary, 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 199/371. *Restigouche* also picked up *Calcutta's* whaler and six of her crew.

17. CO HMS *Calcutta*, "Report on Collision", 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504. Lees' report also includes his "Report on Collision and Grounding".
18. CO HMCS *Fraser*, "Report on Collision", 26 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
19. Rear-Admiral Curteis, "Report of Collision Between HMS *Calcutta* and HMCS *Fraser*", 28 June 1940, TNA, ADM 1/10504.
20. The Board was comprised of Rear-Admiral F.B. Watson, Commander of the base at Devonport; Captain A.H. Maxwell-Hyslop, the Captain (Destroyers) Plymouth; Surgeon Commander J. Hayes; and Lieutenant-Commander J. Mornemont, the navigating officer of HMS *Revenge*. All were RN officers.
21. "Minutes of Board of Inquiry into the loss of HMCS *Fraser*", TNA, ADM 1/10504.
22. *Calcutta's* movements are detailed in Home Fleet War Diary, April-June 1940, TNA, ADM 199/361; Western Approaches Command War Diary, June 1940, TNA, ADM 199/371; and at naval-history.net at http://naval-history.net/xGM-Chrono-06CL-HMS_Calcutta.htm, accessed 8 August 2016.
23. "Report of Inquiry into the loss of HMCS *Fraser*", 29 June 1940, UKNA, ADM 1/10504.
24. Admiral Dunbar-Nasmith, "Report of Board of Inquiry into the Loss of HMCS *Fraser* – 25th June 1940", 6 July 1940; and Admiralty minute, 15 July 2016, both TNA, ADM 1/10504.
25. RCN Historical Office, "Criticism of a Narrative by Cdr. Creery", nd, DHH, 81/520 HMCS *Fraser* 8000 vol 1, Box 36, File 6. Although undated, this document was written before Creery was promoted Captain on 1 July 1942.
26. Vice-Admiral H.G. DeWolf, RCN (Ret'd) to author, 13 December 1999. DeWolf was not just displaying blind loyalty to a colleague. He held a poor opinion of Rear-Admiral Curteis's judgement and navigational skills due to an unspecified incident that took place in Halifax during the interwar period; likely when the British officer was Captain of the cruiser HMS *Despatch*.
27. "Copy of sketch by Captain. L.W. Murray showing relative position of *Fraser* and *Calcutta* prior to collision", nd, DHH, 81/520/HMCS *Fraser* 8000, Vol. 1, Box 36, File 6. The chart was probably made in the summer of 1940 when Murray was Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff at Naval Service Headquarters, after Creery returned to Canada and before Murray took over HMCS *Assiniboine* in October 1940.
28. Captain Harry Kingsley, RCN (ret'd), "The First *Fraser* and Her Grim Fate", *Victoria Times Colonist*, 30 June 1963.
29. Captain R.A. Creery, RCN (ret'd) to author, 25 September 2002.
30. N. Jolin and J. MacFarlane, *Canada's Admirals and Commodores* (Vancouver: Maritime Museum of British Columbia, 2016), 37-38.

Update: Conference & Annual General Meeting **Halifax, Nova Scotia – 10-12 August 2017** ***Canada and Canadians in the Great War at Sea, 1914-19***

The 2017 Conference and Annual General Meeting is being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, 10-12 August 2017, in affiliation with the Royal Canadian Navy. Set in historic Admiralty House, the home of the Naval Museum of Halifax, the timing and location are chosen with regard to 2017 being the centenary of the Halifax Explosion, a defining moment in that port's long history.

As always, subject matter is not restricted to military operations and related issues, but includes a wide range of maritime topics across history, to be presented according to the draft program below (revised as of 20 July 2017).

The conference registration allows for "full" and "daily" rates, and options for tours: of the Maritime Museum of Nova Scotia (including access to HMCS / CGS *Acadia*); and of sites relating to the Halifax Explosion (separate expense, and limited seating). Light refreshments are included, with lunch available for purchase in the nearby Navy Officers' Wardroom (Juno Tower) at a modest cost.

Membership in the Society is not a requirement for participation in the Conference, but we are confident you will see the benefits and looking forward to you joining us in Halifax.

Programme

Thursday 10 August

08:30-12:00 – The Great War at Sea

- Roger Sarty, *Halifax and Convoy, 1917-1918: The First Anglo-US-Canadian Naval Alliance*
- Michael Moir, *The Great War and the Re-emergence of Shipbuilding in Nova Scotia*
- Fraser McKee, *Kingsmill's Tiny Fleet – A Photo Inventory*
- Sean Campbell, *HMCS Grilse – A Maritime Muse*
- Jill Martin, *East Coast Marconi Wireless Operators in the Great War: The Experience of Petty Officer Jim Bouteillier RNR*
- Jeff Noakes, *'The Navy was his love': The Unusual Naval Career of Robert Benney Brett*

12:00-13:30 – Lunch (on your own / Juno Tower)

13:30-15:00 – Afternoon papers

- Salvatore Mercogliano, *The Transportation of the American Expeditionary Force, an Allied Effort*
- John Orr, *Yanks over Halifax: How indifference and indecision led to the deployment of US Naval Air Forces to Canada in 1918*

- Jan Drent, *A Pacific Bastion of Maritime Empire During the Great War*
- 15:00-17:00 – Maritime Museum of Nova Scotia (optional tour / own transport required, but cost included in registration)

17:00-19:00 – Dinner (on your own)

18:00-21:00 – CNRS Executive Council Meeting (Juno Tower TBP)

Friday 11 August

08:00-12:00 – The Halifax Explosion

- Michael Dupuis, *Journalists as First Responders in the Halifax Explosion*
- Janet Maybee, *Pilots and Politics*
- Alan Ruffman & Joel Zemel, *The 1917 Explosion Cloud as seen in Halifax Harbour: An Ephemeral Signal for Help*
- Dirk Werle, *Early Civilian Air Survey and Reconnaissance Activities in the Maritimes after the Great War*
- Tom Tulloch, *The Halifax Graving Dock – Before and After the 1917 Explosion*

12:00-13:30 – Lunch (on your own / Juno Tower)

13:30-16:30 – Halifax Explosion Sites Guided Tour (separate expense, departs from and returns to Naval Museum of Halifax)

16:30-18:00 – Reception and Exhibit Opening: "The RCN & the Halifax Explosion" (Naval Museum of Halifax)

- Includes CNRS Awards Presentations & Launch of Books by Conference Presenters

18:00 – Dinner (on your own)

Saturday 12 August

08:30-12:30 – Maritime Miscellanea

- Samuel McLean, *Performer & Audience: Defining the Royal Navy 1660-1749*
- David More, *Other (Canadian) Stuff we never learned about: French-Canadian Mariners in the early post-Conquest Era, 1775-1815*
- Myriam Alamkan, *Les approvisionnements morutiers de la Guadeloupe durant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*
- Marie de Lavigne-Aubery, *Halifax 1940: Transit for the European Gold*
- Charles ("Doug") Maginley, *Before the Maple Leaf: The Flags of Canada, 1868-1965*
- Chris Madsen, *Counting the Dead and Injured: Longshore Workers and Crown Liability after the 6 March 1945 Greenhill Park Explosion in Vancouver Harbour*

- John McCallum, *The 'Other' Halifax Explosion – the Bedford Ammunition Depot, August 1945*

12:30-13:35 – Lunch (on your own / Juno Tower)

13:35-16:00 – CNRS Annual General Meeting

CNRS 2017 Conference Coordinator

Dr Richard Gimblett

33 Greenaway Circle

Port Hope, ON, CANADA

L1A 0B9

Email: richard.gimblett@me.com

Tel: (905) 885-8804



CNRS-RCN HALIFAX 2017 REGISTRATION



Mail to: **Dr Richard Gimblett**
33 Greenaway Circle
Port Hope, ON, CANADA
L1A 0B9
richard.gimblett@me.com
(905) 885-8804

NAME: _____

E-Mail: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Note: All fees in Cdn \$s

Conference Fee – Check one (1):

- Full (includes breaks but no meals or excursion) \$40 _____
- Day only (includes coffee only / lunch at own expense). Check as applicable:
 - Thursday, 10 August \$15 _____
 - Friday, 11 August \$15 _____
 - Saturday, 12 August \$15 _____

Membership CNRS – New / Renew check one (1):

- Canadian: Individual \$70 / Student \$20 _____
- International: Individual \$80 / Student \$35 _____

Excursion extra (fee assessed per actual cost)

- Friday / Halifax Explosion Sites (Bus Tour) @ \$30 ea _____

TOTAL: _____

Payment – Check one (1):

- Cheque / Money Order enclosed / Payable to: Canadian Nautical Research Society
- Visa: _____ Exp: _____ Signature / Date: _____
- MasterCard: _____ Exp: _____ Signature / Date: _____

Response to The President's Corner

As the valedictory president's corner is rather critical both of the state of CNRS and of the journal, I appreciate the opportunity to respond. Of necessity I will review some practicalities of the way we do things. As I suspect most if not all of us join organizations because we support their objectives but have little if any concern for the day-to-day running of that organization, this may be of interest.

Madsen damns our society for being "remarkably parochial." With respect to the executive officers and councillors, he goes on, "Quebec is entirely absent and beyond the Ottawa-Toronto corridor, the talent pool is thin because not enough attention is given to overcoming the Central Canada slant." This is not a new challenge. I remember it being discussed in the 1990s. In finding a solution, two things must be addressed. The first is where do members live?

I disagree with Madsen's comment that "A conference every few years on the "peripherals" is a poor substitute for a serious commitment to making the CNRS truly a national organization." It is, in fact, an important part of trying to ensure national membership. I believe, and the membership secretary can confirm this, that each conference attracts new members. It is therefore important to move the conference around the country, as we have been doing as long as I have been a CNRS member - from Galiano Island and Victoria to Corner Brook and St John's. Is that not a serious commitment?

The officers and councillors are nominated from the membership. If any given region is without members, it stands to reason it will not be represented on council. But membership in a particular region does not guarantee representation on the council. Everyone who is asked to serve must consider two questions - their ability and their willingness to serve. Their ability to serve may be limited by other demands on their time. Their willingness to serve may be a function of their ability to travel. Over the dozen or so years I was active with council, I can only think of one councillor outside central Canada who did not have institutional support to travel. That person only infrequently attended council meetings away from their region and ultimately stepped aside because they felt they were unable to contribute as they should. While teleconferencing is much easier than it was, scheduling a council meeting across four time zones is a new challenge.

At the end of the day, the candidates brought forward for office by the nominating committee reflect those who have indicated an ability and willingness to serve following the call for nominations. While it may not be a geographic balance, the slate of officers does reflect some geographic realities.

At the end of three years, every president has the opportunity to measure their effectiveness. Has membership grown? Are there new faces amongst those volunteering to do the work of the society? What is the state of the balance sheet? How well attended were the conferences? In most cases the answers are probably disappointing, but that too would be a reflection of geography and reality that the president failed to overcome.

One of the benefits of membership is receiving the journal, *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*. Madsen clearly thinks it is unsatisfactory. "Things have to change. Make your voice heard to council and Chair of the Editorial Board, if you have had a bad or good experience with the *TNM* trying to get published." He continues: "It is my conviction that *TNM* must serve members first, as a membership funded benefit. The journal consumes a disproportional share of CNRS revenue that is brought in every year and takes considerable volunteer labour. The question has to be asked. Is *TNM* providing good value in its present form?" His concept of the journal as a service to members, and presumably a forum where they can be published (a vanity press perhaps?) is surely unique that has never been shared in any statement accepted by the council or an AGM. (Certainly it is the exact opposite of the *International Journal of Maritime History*.) Our journal was always intended to be a scholarly journal that made a significant contribution to nautical research. Those in doubt should review Alec Douglas's "Of Ships and Sealing Wax" (July 2016). I would agree entirely that the journal "consumes a disproportional share of CNRS revenue." In response I would ask, "what else is expected?" The other two benefits the society provides are a conference that is intended to be self-funding, and *Argonauta*, now distributed electronically.

Are the journal costs out of line? For comparison we can look at *The Mariner's Mirror*, published by the Society of Nautical Research and the *International Journal of Maritime History*. Members of both CNRS and SNR will know that a comparison makes comparing apples and oranges look fair and reasonable. The SNR membership is considerably larger than ours, and they have financial investments. Even in the wake of the 2008 crash their "dividend and interest income needed for running costs had held up well and was, in fact, generating more income than cash holdings could currently provide." When I began the President's Appeal in 2001, it raised \$5,000 to add to our investment assets, then in the range of \$20,000. (We had an investment committee - president, treasurer and past president - to manage them.) Since then they have entirely evaporated. Indeed, our financial situation became so dire we were forced to cancel the cash prizes that accompanied awards. Hence our subscriptions must pay for the journal's printing and mailing, because unlike SNR, there are no other sources of income.

The *IJM* is entirely different. Once published by the International Maritime Economic History Association, it was taken over by the International Commission for Maritime History when the former folded. All the editors are on faculty at the University of Hull, and therefore enjoy institutional support, (information technology and computer support if nothing else) as our journal did when it was located at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Even so, a subscription to the *IJM* is in excess of \$600. (The website lists institutional subscriptions only.)

To answer the question, are members getting value for the money in the journal, I think the answer is "yes." If we as a society want to make a contribution to maritime history, as we are with our journal, it is obvious that we are doing it with significantly less support than the other quarterly English language journals. (*Great Circle* is published by the Australian Association for Maritime History twice a year.)

So what of the complaints and the publishing process? Madsen says, "I have heard complaints from some of you in regard responsiveness and editor guidance

during the submission and review process for articles. Having experienced these myself, I commiserate with any member or author trying to submit to our journal.” He also says that our journal “does not live up to most quality assurance standards for published academic journals.” As his comments were made in the context of his having recently published an article with the *IJM*, a direct comparison is appropriate. It is even more imbalanced than a CNRS/SNR comparison.

The *IJM* is a Sage Journals publication. Sage Publications Inc. is a multinational corporation specializing in academic publications with over 1,500 employees world wide. It has offices in Britain, India, and Singapore, as well as several in the United States. They have developed a tracking program for the publication process, (again, of which Madsen speaks highly) and are also associated with ScholarOne, (a division of Clarivate Analytics), which can handle the referee and peer review process. This is indeed a big business; Sage says it is the world’s fifth largest journal publisher! Not surprisingly, there is a cost associated with this. Hence a subscription to the *IJM* is roughly ten times to cost of being a CNRS member.

Madsen, while approving of the way the *IJM* is produced, failed to mention that early in his term as president, the CNRS council looked at being associated with Sage Publications, and decided against it, in part because of cost. My editorial colleagues and the members of the editorial board, are all volunteers. We do our work with the resources we provide ourselves, according to our personal time lines - travel, grandchildren, other work, or whatever it might be. The peer reviewers and book reviewers likewise as volunteers fit our requests into their own schedules.

Madsen’s criticisms were provoked by an error I made. I had finished the copy edit of his article about Vancouver waterfront unions, and had sent him the final version. He approved it. He asked for four minor corrections, that were made, and said, “the text is looking clean.” He gave his permission to publish. At that stage of every article, I send it on to Walter Lewis, the production editor. But in this instance, I had a problem. Because photographs were embedded in the article, the file, my computer advised me, was too big to send by email. Without any IT support to help me work through this, my solution was to break the article into sections that as separate files were small enough to go by email. Obviously I copied some parts twice.

I share Madsen’s confidence that Sage Publications Inc. would do better, but then he and council rejected it for our journal because of cost. I would like to thank all the volunteers, editors, board, authors, reviewers, mailing team and others, for helping with a publication that I think does represent value for money. The responsibility for errors remains mine.

Bill Glover

11th Maritime Heritage Conference & 45th Annual Conference on Sail Training and Tall Ships

New Orleans Marriott-French Quarter
555 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130 USA
February 14-17, 2018

The 11th Maritime Heritage Conference and the 45th Annual Conference on Sail Training and Tall Ships will come together for an information-packed joint conference encompassing a broad array of topics. The Maritime Heritage Conference was last held in 2014, and is unique in bringing together all elements of the maritime heritage community to discuss topics of common interest. Tall Ships America's Conference on Sail Training and Tall Ships is held annually and Known for its high "take away value", networking opportunities and camaraderie. You are invited to join with us and share an exploration of maritime heritage while charting the course for the future. The Conference Steering Committee invites you to become involved in the 2018 Conference as a presenter. This is an outstanding opportunity to come together with individuals from all segments of the maritime community to discuss topics of common interest, to learn from your peers, and to share your knowledge and experience with others.

The conference venue is the beautiful New Orleans Marriott. Rooms are available at the terrific rate of \$164+ per night! Details of the conference schedule are posted at: www.seahistory.org and www.sailtraining.org

Focus sessions include, but are not limited to:

Papers and sessions include, but are not limited to:

- Media and Publications
- Sail
- Not for Profit Administration
- Marketing and Social Media
- Fund Development
- Vessel Operations and Safety
- Tall Ships® Events and Host Port
- Tall Ships, Sail Training and Education Under Sail
- Maritime and naval history
- Inland Water Commerce and seaport operations
- Maritime Art, Literature and Music
- Lighthouses and Lifesaving Stations
- Underwater Archaeology
- Trade and Communications
- Shipbuilding
- Maritime Libraries, Archives, and Museums
- Marine Science and Ocean Conservation
- National Marine Sanctuaries
- Education and Preservation
- Vessel Restoration
- Maritime Heritage Grant Program
- Small Craft
- Marine Protected Areas
- Maritime Landscapes

Session Proposals are encouraged. Individual and Session Proposals should include a one-page abstract, and a one-page bio about each presenter. Please email proposals to Dr. David Winkler and Jonathan Kabak at: proposalsmhc@gmail.com For proposal guidelines: www.seahistory.org or www.sailtraining.org The deadline for papers and session proposals is November 1, 2017



**Exhibit Opening September 8, 2017
at the American Merchant Marine Museum,
Kings Point, NY**

In 1942, after the United States entered World War II, Herman Melton received an appointment as midshipman to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY. Though he had grown up in Texas, Herman became the Academy's first appointee from the state of Kansas. Upon his graduation in 1944, he was offered commissions in the U.S. Naval Reserve and the U.S. Maritime Service. More than 65 years later and in his 90's, Herman wrote his memoirs of World War II service aboard Liberty ships. The book is to be published by U.S. Naval Institute Press in September, to coincide with the museum exhibit highlighting Herman's experiences battling both the Germans and the Japanese.

During his time on convoy duty in three oceans. Herman entered combat at sea in some of the fiercest fighting from both the Germans and the Japanese. In the treacherous Murmansk run of 1942-43, Herman sailed as a cadet-midshipman as American and British merchant ships delivered urgently needed Lend-Lease supplies to the Soviet Union. The enemy U-boats and Luftwaffe torpedo bomber foes were at the peak of their fighting form. In a 1994 ceremony at the Russian Embassy Melton was awarded a medal from the Russian Government for his service on the Murmansk Run. During his January 1943 voyage across the Arctic Sea to north Russia, Herman's Liberty ship, SS *Cornelius Harnett*, was attacked by torpedo bombers of Germany's Coastal Air Group 406 based in Norway. Herman's battle station called for him to carry ammunition and reload shell magazines for the U.S. Navy Armed Guard gun crew aboard the *Harnett*. The gunners helped to shoot down two of the four attacking aircraft, and their commander received the Silver Star from the U.S. Navy for his performance in the action. On Herman's return voyage, a U-boat wolf pack set a trap for the convoy, broken only by a towering Arctic gale.

Eighteen months later in December 1944, Herman again entered a deadly combat zone during the Allies' invasion of the Philippines. Underway was a do-or-die battle waged by the airmen of the combined Japanese army and naval air forces that occupied the islands. Herman was third engineer aboard SS *Antoine Saugrain* in an allied convoy steaming from New Guinea carrying specially-trained troops and super-secret anti-aircraft equipment. Attacked by Japanese torpedo bombers, the *Saugrain* took two direct hits before her master gave the order to abandon ship off Leyte Island. Although the ship's rafts and lifeboats could carry only a fraction of the more than 200 crew and soldiers to be rescued, all hands survived thanks to two US Navy frigates dispatched to pick up men in the boats and those swimming in the water. After two more attacks by Japanese bombers, the *Saugrain* was sent to the sea bottom.

Marooned in Leyte, Herman served as a key engineer in salvaging two Liberty ships severely damaged in the new kamikaze war in the Philippines. After returning the SS *William Sharon* to service, he sailed the Liberty ship with her skeleton crew to San Francisco and he supervised the major dry dock repairs which restored her to duty. Herman was serving as an instructor of merchant marine recruits on Santa Catalina Island, California, when the Japanese surrendered.

The exhibit also tells a love story, Herman's wartime romance with Helen Dunn, his Kansas junior college sweetheart. Before departing for service in General MacArthur's war in the southwest Pacific, Herman married her in a saber ceremony in the Academy's chapel.

Liberty's War displays period uniforms, photographs, and souvenirs of Herman's wartime assignments, and documents his training as one of the first engineer cadet-midshipman of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Guidelines for Authors

Argonauta follows *The Chicago Manual of Style* available at this link: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

However, we utilize Canadian spelling rules, in lieu of American rules, unless referring to proper American names. Thus, the Canadian Department of Defence and the American Department of Defense are both correct.

For ship names, only the first letter of the names of Royal Canadian Navy ships and submarines is capitalized, and the name appears in italics. For example:

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Queenston*
Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Châteauguay*

Class of ship/submarine: *Victoria*-class submarines (not VICTORIA Class submarines)

Former HMCS *Fraser* rather than *Ex-Fraser*

Foreign ships and submarines:

USS *Enterprise*
HMS *Victory*
HMAS *Canberra* 3

Because *Argonauta* aims to publish articles that may be easily understood by senior high school students and other non-experts, we encourage authors to include general introductory context, suggestions for additional reading, and links to relevant websites. We publish memoirs, humour, reviews of exhibits, descriptions of new archival acquisitions, and outstanding student papers. We also publish debates and discussions about changes in maritime history and its future. We encourage submissions in French and assure our authors that all French submissions will be edited for style by a well-qualified Francophone.

Although *Argonauta* is not formally peer-reviewed, we have two editors who carefully review and edit each and every article. For those producing specialized, original academic work, we direct your attention to *The Northern Mariner* which is peer-reviewed and appropriate for longer, in-depth analytical works.

All submissions should be in Word format, utilizing Arial 12 pt. All endnotes should be numbered from 1 consecutively to the highest or last number, without any repeating of numbers, in the usual North American Academic manner described in the *Chicago Manual* which also provides guidance on using the Word insert function at this link: <https://www.ivcc.edu/stylebooks/stylebook5.aspx?id=14646>. For technical reasons, we prefer that authors use endnotes rather than footnotes. Typically an article in *Argonauta* will be 4 to 6 pages long, though we do accommodate longer, informal pieces. We strongly encourage the use of online links to relevant websites and the inclusion of bibliographies to assist the younger generation of emerging scholars. The *Chicago Manual* provides detailed instructions on the styles used.

All photos should be sent separately and accompanied by captions, describing the image, crediting the source, and letting us know where the original image is held. Authors are responsible to ensure that they have copyright permission for any images, art work, or other protected materials they utilize. We ask that every author submit a written statement to that effect. The images should be named to reflect the order in which they are to appear in the text (Authurnameimage1, Authurnameimage2, Authurnameimage3) and the text should be marked to show where the images are to be added (add Authurnameimage 1 here, add Authurnameimage2 here, etc.)

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<https://www.rmcc-cmrc.ca/en/registrars-office/academic-regulations#ai>

We encourage our authors to acknowledge all assistance provided to them, including thanking librarians, archivists, and colleagues if relevant sources, advice or help were provided. Editors are not responsible for monitoring these matters.

All authors are asked to supply a short biography unless the text already contains these biographical details or the author is already well known to our readers.



The Canadian Nautical Research Society

200 Fifth Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1S 2N2
<http://www.cnrs-scrn.org>

Membership/Renewal Form

CNRS membership supports the multi-disciplinary study of maritime, marine and naval subjects in and about Canada.

Members receive:

- **The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord**, a quarterly refereed journal dedicated to publishing research and writing about all aspects of maritime history of the North Atlantic, Arctic and North Pacific Oceans. It publishes book reviews, articles and research notes on merchant shipping, navies, maritime labour, nautical archaeology and maritime societies.
- **Argonauta**, a quarterly newsletter publishing articles, opinions, news and information about maritime history and fellow members.
- An Annual General Meeting and Conference located in maritime minded locations across Canada such as Halifax, Vancouver, Hamilton, Churchill and Quebec City.
- Affiliation with the International Commission of Maritime History (ICMH).

Membership is by calendar year and is an exceptional value at \$70 for individuals, \$25 for students, or \$95 for institutions. Please add \$10 for international postage and handling. Members of the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH) may join the CNRS for a reduced rate of \$35 per year. Individuals or groups interested in furthering the work of the CNRS may wish to subscribe to one of several other levels of membership, each of which includes all the benefits of belonging to the Society. CNRS is a registered charity and any donation above the cost of basic membership to the Society is automatically acknowledged with a tax-receipt.

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NASOH	\$35	\$35	

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