Chapter 9

IN THE NAVY

PART I:
UNIVERSITY NAVAL TRAINING DIVISIONS

I still remember *Swallows and Amazons*, the Spenceley's gift to me in 1939. It was a book by Arthur Ransome which I mentioned in Chapter 6. Eventually at birthday and Christmas, I was given all the books in the set, and dinghy sailing was so well described that I knew how to sail a dinghy the first time I stepped into one. Even from the age of eight, my dad might be partial to the army but I was determined that it was the navy for me.

I had looked into the navy in our first month at university and had persuaded my friend Burf Kay that we should both join the University Naval Training Division. So on a Tuesday evening in September we ventured down to H.M.C.S. York, the naval establishment for Toronto located on the Lakeshore near the foot of Bathurst Street. The old Toronto Maple Leafs baseball stadium was on the corner and there was a large Tip Top Tailors factory next to the naval base. A couple of years ago I was back to HMCS York for a mess dinner. The baseball stadium was gone and the Tip Top Tailors factory was called something else, but the HMCS York drill hall looked just as I remembered it more than fifty years before.

We were enrolled as Ordinary Seamen and they started to issue us with square rig uniforms*, but soon it was decided that we would be promoted to the rank of Cadet, so all the square rig kit was retrieved and, bit by bit, we were issued 5Bs otherwise known as 'battle dress'. In the air force they called them 'bomber jackets' and that's the way most people know them today. My kit was not complete until I arrived in H.M.C.S. Stadacona in May of 1950 to start my first summer's training.

Burf was assigned to the Supply Branch so he went to H.M.C.S. Naden in Victoria and had his training at Royal Roads. My eyesight was borderline short-sighted so at first they were going to assign me to the Supply Branch as well, but at my father's instigation, I requested a retest and passed—barely. I was then assigned to the Executive Branch so I went to the east coast. Previously, UNTD cadets had gone to H.M.C.S. Cornwallis with all other new entries, but ours was the first year to go to HMCS Stadacona for training.

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* Battle dress (5B) was a working uniform for officers and the rank was shown on shoulder boards (epaulettes). Cadets were assigned 5B as their full dress uniforms but had a white twist on the lapel and no epaulettes.

Our uniforms were the same as the Royal Navy uniforms with "Canada" shoulder flashes added. Officers dress uniforms had eight buttons on the jacket and gold rings on the lower sleeve to designate rank. Petty officers had six buttons with badges to show the rank. Ratings below the rank of Petty Officer wore bell bottoms and pullover tops with the square back flap on the collar—hence the name square rig.

First Summer, 1950. Stadacona

I had never been to the east coast before. We all assembled in Union Station in Toronto, took the train to Montreal, and then got the 'Ocean Limited' to Halifax. Officers could get lower berths and a seat in the parlour car, but not us. As officer cadets, we were entitled to an upper berth and an ordinary seat in the Pullman. The Ocean Limited left Montreal at supper time and I remember seeing Quebec City from the Levis shore, before it got too dark and the porter came through to convert the Pullman seats into berths so we could turn in. When we woke up and looked out in the morning, we were in New Brunswick, and eventually in the early afternoon we arrived in Halifax. After relative luxury on the train it was a comedown to be herded into open trucks at the railway station for our ride to Stadacona.

H.M.C.S. Stadacona was in a large block of land between Barrington and Gottingen Streets in Halifax. The main entrance to the base was off Gottingen, but there were two gates off Barrington St. as well. Our barracks was F Block and our mess was the Gunroom in another building about 50 yards away. There were large dormitory-style rooms with four double bunks in each. Altogether there would be about 250 cadets from all across Canada in the barracks. We were up each day at 0630 hours* and had callisthenics outside before breakfast. Morning Divisions was at 0800 h. on the main parade square near the main gate. After that we had instruction in Navigation, Seamanship, Gunnery and several other things. We were expected to keep a log of what we had done and I soon learned that this was not a personal diary but an account of our instruction and progress.

The military is different from any other kind of job. In most jobs you work for a designated period such as 40 hours a week. In the military, you are on duty 24 hours a day and are granted leave from 1700h to 0730h the next morning, unless of course you are on duty watch. It was all a bit like summer camp but on a bigger and more serious scale. We were involved in many things both on the base and in the city. I remember a Halifax Natal Day parade down to the Citadel on a very hot July day. In our blue serge uniforms we were suffering from heat prostration and several cadets fainted. But there were fun times too.

We were always in uniform on duty, but could wear civilian clothes while off the base. Officers were saluted by everyone below them in rank and must return the salute even if they were in civvies. You could only salute while wearing a cap so headgear must be worn outside at all times. We were told that we were officers, albeit not yet commissioned, but if we went ashore (off the base) in civvies, we must wear a hat. We all went uptown to buy the most garish hats we could find. I got an electric blue fedora style hat which lasted me throughout my navy career. After that it disappeared. I never had the nerve to wear it anywhere else.

There were endless rules and regulations which we were always forgetting. One of the cadets offered a simplified guide to help us stay out of trouble:

If it moves, salute it. If it doesn't move, pick it up. If you can't pick it up, paint it.

There were detentions for a whole variety of crimes and misdemeanours. It took very little to get on the slackers' list and then to appear before the commanding officer of the UNTDs to be allotted a punishment. Usually it involved no shore leave for a few days or a week but running around the parade square was also popular, or getting up at 0600h for extra callisthenics. This took me back to my days at Trinity College School.

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* We learned the 24 hour clock early on.

Alcohol played a large part in military life ashore or afloat. Looking for women seemed to be most of the rest. I was only 19 that summer and the drinking age in both Ontario and Nova Scotia was 21 in those days. But nobody questioned my age and I learned how to drink beer. In the Gunroom, beer was available every day after classes ended at 1600h and we all partook. We also visited the local establishments in Halifax. On one such jaunt, we went to a tavern which had entertainment. A guy who looked no older than me was playing the guitar and singing country music in a classic 'down east' style. His name was Hank Snow and I had never heard of him. He went on to become famous in country music both in Canada and the US. I was able to say I knew him when he was just starting out.

We had a good time too. Some of the cadets from Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia invited us to go over there for a weekend. We were treated royally. We stayed at the Paramount Hotel, a grand old house on the main street, and were well treated by the owner who also was the concierge, the porter and just about everything else. When my parents visited me later in the summer, they were touring the Annapolis Valley and I went with them as far a Kentville and we were treated to a free dinner at the Paramount. I then took the bus back to Halifax.

The First Cruise, H.M.C.S. La Hulloise

There were several training cruises over the summer and I was on the second one. Two World War II frigates were used, H.M.C.S. La Hulloise and H.M.C.S. Swansea. There was extensive preparation before we boarded the ships. We assembled our own hammocks (micks) from assorted bits of rope and canvas. More experienced seamen pointed out that we should also make 'mick sticks' to spread the ends. Otherwise, when we climbed into our micks, they would close over us, encasing us like a sausage. A mick has to be stretched out almost flat to be comfortable for sleeping and our weight in the mick would create tension that would make it too difficult to get out of.

I was on La Hulloise which was tied up in HMCS Dockyards just across Barrington Street from Stad. We went down on a blue bus and boarded the ship with our kitbags. Saluting the quarterdeck from the top of the brow while struggling to keep your kitbag from falling into the drink was a new learning experience for most of us. Our messdeck was about 30 feet square and there were 48 of us to eat, sleep and live for about four weeks. We each got a footlocker in the bank of seats along each bulkhead. They were about 2 feet deep, 2 feet long and 18 inches wide. Try finding your underwear at the bottom of that mess when you are almost late for morning divisions.

This was a training cruise and we all learned the meaning of on-the-job training. With a scrubber and a bucket of soapy water we learned how to scrub a deck without much instruction. It was the same for painting ship's side. I was lowered over the side in a boson's chair with a large brush and a can of heavy grey paint. I don't remember any instructions. The only instructions I heard were from the Petty Officer to tell the other cadets how to lower me down without dumping me in the drink and how to make the line fast. I bumped against the side of the ship all the way down and somehow I managed to upset the can of paint into my lap. I could feel the heavy gooey liquid soaking into my dungarees and dripping into the already polluted harbour. By the time I was hauled up again and dressed down by the disgusted PO, the paint had begun to set and I literally had to peel my pants off. Washing would not remove the paint. Those dungarees were never the same although I continued to wear them the rest of the summer.

In our messdeck was a small piano. Another cadet, John Mogen was an excellent pianist but when he tried to play it he found that many of the keys were broken. We decided we would fix it. I went ashore and bought some cord and glue and stole some wooden tongue depressors from sick bay. I pulled the keyboard out and found that about ten hammers were broken and the whole thing was out of adjustment. I glued and reinforced the hammers and tried to tune it with moderate success. After the glue was dry, John tried it and declared that it was very good. After a bit, the communications people from the Atlantic command came to see us and take pictures. They sent out a press release which was printed in the Hamilton Spectator, much to the surprise of my parents and friends back home.

The cruise was planned to take us to Saint John and then Grand Manan Island where we planned to spend several days in a secluded cove for a regatta. Then we were to go down the coast to Rockland Maine for a Lobster Festival and then back to Halifax. It didn't work out that way. The first part was according to plan and I found it exciting. As we cleared Sambro Head, we began to feel the big swells rolling in off the North Atlantic. The ship went up and down and so did the pit of my stomach. I was surprised that I felt queasy but managed to avoid being seasick. I went below but discovered that I felt better on deck where I could see the horizon.

By the next day I had recovered, but when we got to the Bay of Fundy, fog rolled in and we could see nothing. We proceeded to Saint John. I had a duty station on the bridge so I was able to learn the commands and watch how the captain (the old man), the first-lieutenant ('No. 1') and the officer-of-the-watch (OOW) handled the ship during docking manoeuvres. A friend of mine who had a duty position on the quarterdeck handed me his camera and asked me to take some pictures of the ship and the harbour as we came alongside. I was able to do this surreptitiously and regretted that I did not have a camera of my own.

The Bay of Fundy has some of the biggest tides in the world. There are tidal bores on the Petacodiac River where the tide comes in and goes out like a wave. Spring tides as high as 60 feet have been recorded in the upper reaches of the bay. Even at Saint John they can be 20 to 25 feet. The huge tides cause the famous Reversing Falls at Saint John where the tide flows rapidly through a narrow defile into a larger body of water, and then when the tide goes out, it flows through the other way. It is more a rapids than a true falls, but it is pretty impressive nonetheless.

In the harbour, the piers and jetties have to be 40 feet high to give enough water under large ships at low tide. I had a day on watch while we were there, and we were constantly adjusting the lines to the jetty either in or out. At high tide, the brow would slope down from the quarterdeck to the jetty which was only about 3 feet above the water. As the tide dropped, we moved it to the main deck and then two decks up and it still sloped down from the jetty to the ship.

It was quite a business moving it. Four of us would haul the brow onto the jetty, swing it around so it would reach the main deck, and then push it back onto the main deck. As the water dropped even lower, we would repeat the process to put the brow onto the oerlicon gun platform. Then the whole process would be repeated six hours later as the tide came in.

We walked up to the Admiral Beattie Hotel and the big park out in front. We visited a farmers market and bought some fruit. We then decided to phone home. This was in the days before direct long-distance dialling. When it was my turn, I put my nickel in and dialled "0". The operator came on the line and I asked to place a collect call to Burlington Ontario. The

Saint John operator called an operator in Montreal, then Toronto, and as each came on the line they announced their place. Finally I heard a voice in a nasal twang that could have been straight out of Brooklyn: "Hemilton, Ontairryo." Soon I was talking to my parents.

While we were in harbour, a submarine, presumably Russian, was sighted in the Cabot Strait, and a subsequent sighting suggested that it was entering the Bay of Fundy. These were the early days of the Cold War so we were ordered to go and look for it. We left harbour in a hurry and sailed further into the bay. It was hazy and damp and we were all on watch all around the ship. At one point the ASDIC* operator reported a contact dead ahead. The pings of the ASDIC signal were put through a loudspeaker on the bridge so we could all hear them. We steamed over the spot dropping a hand grenade as a signal to the submarine commander to surface. Nothing happened and the echo of the contact had shifted off to port in a strange fashion because even though it seemed much further away, there was no drop in tone of the ping. Finally the echo depth sounder gave us the clue. There was a sudden rise in the sea bottom and the ASDIC signal must be echoing off that.

I overheard the captain and the OOW discussing this. The captain said "I should have known that no submarine commander in his right mind would come into this bay. When the tide goes out he would not have enough water to stay submerged." The OOW commented that the sightings of submarines were pretty suspect. He had heard a story of a woman in the USA who reported a submarine over her house. It was an army dirigible. The sighting off Newfoundland seemed genuine enough, but the one in the Bay of Fundy could have been a whale or nothing at all. We spent two more days sweeping the upper reaches of the bay but found nothing. By this time we had missed the Lobster Festival at Rockland Maine so we stopped briefly at Grand Manan Island and then returned to 'Slackers', as Halifax was affectionately known by the crew, after gunnery and depth charge trials near Sable Island.

Back to Stadacona

The rest of the summer was fairly routine back at Stadacona. I visited the Hobsons again. Mr. Hobson had been the bank manager at the Bank of Montreal where my father had his accounts but was transferred to Halifax a few years before. My father had kept in touch with him and they were very good to me both summers I was in Halifax. There were parties in the Gunroom and sometimes we were invited to other parties elsewhere in town. I also explored the sights around Halifax. Just north of Stadacona on the shore of Bedford Basin was a strange settlement known locally as Africville.

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* ASDIC is an acronym which stands for *Admiralty Submarine Detection Investigation Committee*. It was set up by the Royal Navy after the First World War because German submarines had wrecked havoc on allied shipping and could not be easily detected if submerged. Radio waves do not easily penetrate water but the committee scientists came up with a system which used high frequency sound waves. The waves could be focussed under water for direction and the time it took for the echo to come back gave an accurate measure of the range (distance) of the contact.

The operator wore headphones to hear the ping of the returning echo and the tone (frequency) rising or lowering, gave a good idea whether the target was moving towards or away from the ship. It was very important in the North Atlantic convoys in 1940 and 1941. The devices were Top Secret and in scarce supply so that in the early years of the war, only one or two escort ships might have one. The technology was shared with the Americans who had been working on a similar device. When the USA entered the war in January 1942, they called it SONAR and began producing the sets in large numbers.

During the period before the American Civil War, Halifax was a major destination of the 'Underground Railway' which helped runaway black slaves from the Deep South to escape to Canada. Even though Canada provided a refuge for these people, it did not mean that there was no discrimination or prejudice. They often found it difficult to be accepted in the city and many moved to this plot of rough land and built shelters out of any materials that were at hand or could be scrounged from the city around them. It was not an official community of Halifax and was not provided with municipal water or electricity. It was an area where white people were not always welcomed so we were told not to go there. But we could see it from the north gate of the base, and I was fascinated to take a look. It reminded me of the Indian shacks on the farms around us where many of my friends lived during public school.

Second Summer, 1951. Stadacona and H.M.C.S. Swansea

Things were a bit better organized in my next summer at Stad'. The pay had been increased to $175 per month and all found, expenses were small and we could bring home most of the money if we didn't go out drinking beer too often. The Korean War had been going for a year and six tribal class destroyers, including three who had been at Stad' last summer, were patrolling the Korean coast. There were rumours circulating that we might be conscripted into the Korean War but there was never any official reference to it. Canada's solitary fleet-class aircraft carrier, H.M.C.S. Magnificent was secured alongside in the dockyards most of the summer and we got a chance to go on board and also to tour the Fleet Air-Arm base across the harbour at Shearwater.

We were also given much more drill on the parade square. I can remember ceremonial divisions in which I was a member of a special honour guard for a visiting admiral from the US Navy. It was all white gaiters and polished buttons—very pusser—and Lee Enfields with white straps which we had to whiten and polish ourselves. We were drilled and inspected by a commissioned officer, gunnery who was tougher than any chief "guns" we had ever encountered. We felt that we had received the highest compliment when he said that we weren't half bad—for cadets![*]

Morning divisions were held on the main parade square every morning at 0800h. We were all turned out in our divisional groups and inspected by our officers. A Chief Petty Officer, 'Guns' served very much the same role as a regimental Sergeant Major in the army. They

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[*] A few definitions:

"Pusser" – Strict government issue. All very correct and proper. To be contrasted with:
"Tiddley" denoting something fancy and ornamental which met regulations but was not government issue. For example, our cap badges had originally been woven prior to the war but government issue in 1950 was a gold coloured badge stamped out of metal in one piece. This was "pusser." I bought a woven cap badge which cost extra and was a regulation badge but because it was not standard issue, would be considered "tiddley."

Lea Enfield – the Short Magazine Lea Enfield (SMLE) was the standard issue rifle for the British and Commonwealth forces from the late 19th century and throughout most of the 20th century—at least up to the mid 1960s. It served in the Boer War as well as two World Wars.

Commissioned Officer – Ratings who had risen through the ranks to Chief Petty Officer 1st class could apply for an officer's commission without going through the officers training courses like cadets and midshipmen. They received a rank like Lieutenant with two rings, but they were called commissioned officers and addressed as 'Mister.' The US Navy had a similar system. Hence the play "Mister Roberts".

Guns – The gunnery branch in the Canadian Navy was responsible for discipline and drill training much as the Royal Marines were in the Royal Navy.

inspected very carefully and they didn't miss much. In those days, Palmolive Soap came in a green wrapper with a black band with the word "Palmolive" in gold letters on it. The letters and the appearance closely matched the 'Canada' shoulder flashes we all wore. Over a few beers in the Gunroom, some cadets dared Bob Dougan to wear a Palmolive label over his Canada flashes and go through a divisional inspection. Bob actually wore the fake Canada flashes for almost a week and was never caught, even by old 'Hawkeye', the chief who regularly inspected us. Bob became known as the Palmolive cadet.

Cruise to the British Isles

The cruises had been improved this year. Our cruise was to the British Isles and lasted a month. I was on H.M.C.S. Swansea this year. There were three ships in the flotilla, the two frigates from last year and H.M.C.S. Crescent, a British destroyer from World War II, now recycled as a training ship for the Canadian Navy. This summer I bought a small folding camera so that I could record the trip.

We passed Sambro Light on July 3 on our way across the pond. I was an experienced "salty" by this time but it still took an overnight for me to get my sea legs. The frigates roll and pitch a lot in the ever present Atlantic swells and I really began to appreciate my mick which swung with the ship's roll and neutralized some of the motion. Unfortunately, things were so crowded below that you could not always sling your mick so that it could swing. Sometimes coming off watch in the middle of the night you couldn't find a place to sling it and would up dog tired sleeping on the lockers or the deck. That was one feature of shipboard life—you were always tired. Grabbing some sleep or shut-eye became a dominant concern at sea. Sailors had all kinds of terms for sleeping, 'shut-eye', 'crashed', 'bombed', and for the places to sleep, 'cart', 'bag', 'sack'. This was the first time in my life that I could sleep standing up—and sometimes did.

The routine was different at sea. In addition to the regular work during the day we stood watch. I was on the Second of Port watch. The ship's company including the cadets was divided into 4 watch groups, two each of Port and of Starboard. While at sea, we all stood watch on rotation. The watch periods were the Middle Watch (0000 – 0400h), Morning watch (0400 – 0800), Forenoon watch (0800 – 1200h), Afternoon watch (1200 – 1600h) First and Second Dog watches (1600 – 1800h and 1800 – 2000h), Evening watch (2000 – 2400h), a total of 7 watch periods each day. The odd number meant that the pattern of watches changed each day for everyone.

Life settled into a routine. Wakey-wakey at 0630h, divisions on the quarterdeck at 0800h, work till 1600h with half an hour for lunch, supper in the messdeck and cleanup and personal things until cart-time. The watches were on top of this and each night you would be on evening, middle or morning watch which meant that every night you were lucky to get six hours sleep. After a week, the bread was mouldy, the milk was a bit 'off', and we were so tired of the country and western records they played repeatedly over the PA system that I was standing on the quarterdeck one day when a whole bunch of records came sailing out of a nearby doorway into the sea. Somebody had taken their revenge.

We had a few rough days. I remember one day when the seas were so high that the bow plunged into the next great swell sending waves of water over the bow and down the upper deck. The quarterdeck would go down as the bow rose up and often water would sweep across. The crew was cautioned about going on the upper deck. Lines were strung from the bridge to the after conning position and we would hang on to this line as we made our way

from one to the other. On calmer days we learned how to rig a jackstay which would allow us to transfer things and people from one ship to the other on the high seas. A cadet was sent across but because we didn't keep the line tight enough he got rather wet.

We sighted land in the early morning of July 10th and anchored in Gerrard Bay, near Falmouth that afternoon. We spent the evening cleaning ship then sailed for Portsmouth at 0100h the next morning. This was a nostalgia trip for me even though I had never been there before. I recalled in *Peter Duck* that the 'Wildcat'* had coasted these waters on her way to the open Atlantic. We made Portsmouth by 1100h and secured alongside right beside Nelson's flagship, H.M.S. Victory. We walked past it every time we went ashore. Because this famous ship is on permanent display there, the whole dockyard is called H.M.S. Victory.

Duty lists had been posted and shore leave granted. We were in Portsmouth for a week and each watch would get a 48 hour pass to go to London. I remember venturing out rather timidly on that first afternoon past the Victory, through the main gate and walking down to the waterfront. It was an exciting and new experience for me. We explored the town and were taken on tours of the harbour, the Fleet Air Arm station at Lee-on-Solent and the H.M.S. Duke of York which was moored in the basin. I remember that there were two heavy cruisers moored beside her.† In my scrap-book I commented: "– *from our mooring she looked like a destroyer with two corvettes alongside."*

48 Hours in London

Our '48' was eagerly anticipated. I was invited to go with three other guys on my watch, Irving Strong, Dick Outram and Dave Code. I also had been in touch with the Spencelys who were looking forward to a visit. Also in 1951, the Festival of Britain was on. This was intended to show Britain's recovery from the devastation of the Second World War. I quote from my scrap-book diary:

> Sunday, July 15
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> We had considerable difficulty in convincing the officer of the day that we had to have liberty at 1200 (Second of Port was duty watch until 1200) to catch the only reasonable train for London at 1225 (They really leave on time.) We found out about First and Third class coaches but it was rather a rush to make it at all. The trains really travel but the roadbed is poor. We arrived at Waterloo station at 1440 and had our dinner – better than I feared but not as good as I had hoped. We phoned the hotel recommended to us (Franklin Court – 11 Craven St.) and made the necessary reservations.
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> After confirming our reservations and moving in we set out to explore. Mme Toussaud's Wax Works came first. Taxi to Westminster. We looked around – but of course on Sunday there were no guided tours of the Abby or anything. Went across the Westminster bridge and took pictures of it and of the South Bank (Festival.) We recrossed the bridge to try to find a restaurant. We then attended

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* This was Arthur Ransome's third book about the Swallows and Amazons' voyage to the Caribbean in quest of buried treasure. Uncle Jim's schooner was called the *Wildcat*.

† The Canadian Navy cruisers were light cruisers and hence smaller than these.

the evening service in the Abbey (an American from Cincinnati gave the sermon) and then set out again to see the world. Dick Outram and I wanted to get to a concert but few were at hand. We found that the Festival Hall had been sold out for weeks (Sir Malcolm Sargeant and the London Philharmonic – Wonderful Program) so we went to the exhibition itself. Stayed for about 4 hours then crossed the Thames by a footbridge from the grounds. We then decided we were hungry but do you think we could find a single place open? (time 2245) I thought of my father's complaints about Toronto one Sunday evening when he could not find anything open. "Not a very metropolitan city" he said. Returned to the hotel and went to bed.

Monday, July 16

Wakened fairly early by the maid who brought up breakfast. She was from Germany and couldn't understand the Englishman's method of hotel keeping. The place was cheap enough ($1.40 per night* – Bed and breakfast) but as far as we could discover there was only one bathroom for three floors and when it went on the blink Monday night we found ourselves shaving in a basin the size of a big cereal bowl with cold water and doing you-know-what in the "Men's" of the local Tube station. Anyhow – the accommodation was worth $1.40 so who cares?

Dave, Irv. and Dick wanted to go shopping and I decided to go exploring. I phoned Mrs. Spencely first and she insisted I visit her that afternoon. I went to Trafalgar Square and up by St. Martins-in-the-Fields to Piccadilly Circus where I had my picture taken under protest. Back to Trafalgar and under Admiralty arch onto the Mall. I noticed a crowd moving down it towards the Palace and discovered there would be a changing of the guard that morning. I, of course, raced down to catch all the details. A roving guide helped to get me in position for good shots. Followed the horse guards through the park to Whitehall. Met the other guys there. We all set out to explore some more – along the Mall. I continued on down to Victoria station where I was to catch a commuter train to East Croydon.

I met Mrs. Spencely with no difficulty and went out to their Home. I was entertained by Janet and we went down to the "Public Bath". The changing booths were really quaint – a door which conceals only the vital portions – Men down one side, Women down the other – the "Bath" in the middle. Returned to the house after a time. Mrs. Spencely decided to take a drive out to "The Old Cottage" at Putings† in Kent. – Beautiful drive in the most beautiful green countryside. One narrow road which was barely wide enough for the car – we took at 35 m.p.h. had tea at "the Old Cottage" and explored the pasture – I nearly had my hand taken off by an over-affectionate horse.

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* That would be 9s 6d – nine shillings and sixpence.

† The home of Sir Philip Manson-Bahr.

We returned via Winston Churchill's country home to Haling Park Road. I was expected back at the Hippodrome to see "The Follies Bergère de Paris" so I took an early train back and arrived at the theatre about 8 pm. I took the Tube from Victoria station and learned what a subway can be. I arrived just as the first show was getting out and I saw more of my friends than I thought there were in London. Dick Outram arrived out of the blue at last, and without saying a word and with a dramatically mysterious air, led be off. It was anti-climactic however. – The other fellows were just getting supper in a near-by restaurant. Leo Charendoff linked up with us and we all went off to the show.

It was really very good and not all what you would expect. I won't show the program for it is somewhat misleading in this respect. Incidentally, Mrs. Spencely expected me to stay the night with her and I knew that last train left Victoria station at 11:35 – sharp! The show was out at five to eleven – so I raced out, with some difficulty caught a taxi – and got my bag from the hotel. I made it too — although I had a slight argument with the guard at the gate as to whether I should board it or not. I phoned the Spencely home from East Croydon Station and Mrs. Spencely came and picked me up. After a light snack I went to bed in spite of Sally's questions and conversation from the next room.

Tuesday, July 17

The day dawned bright and clear I guess – though I wasn't up to see it. I did get up somewhat later and had a wonderful breakfast. I caught an early train since we had to be back to the ship by noon. At Victoria I go a commuter to London Bridge and from there another to Waterloo. I had to run across the street to get into the proper part of the station for the Portsmouth train and there linked up with all the other boys for the horrible trip back. We were back on board at 11:55.

We went to "Brigadoon" at the old Kings Theatre in Portsmouth that night as a special sailing treat.

As I read this after more than half a century, I am reminded of an age of discovery when everything was new and exciting. You had to make your own way in the world without planned tours and travel consultants. This was England just 6 years after the war and it was still recovering from the blitz. Yet the spirit was high and we all felt that we were part of an important enterprise. These spirits might be dashed by later experience, but you have to have this feeling in the first place to appreciate what comes after it and set it in perspective.

Lamlash, Belfast and back to Slackers

We sailed on Wednesday for Lamlash. We contemplated a stop in Swansea Wales but CANFLAGLANT* had not made the necessary diplomatic arrangements so we saluted as we sailed by. Lamlash is about the only town on the Isle of Arran in the Firth of Clyde and it was the site for our flotilla regatta. I have pictures of the ships, and the various sports such as boat pulling with whalers and jousting with mops. We were there a week and never got

* Canadian Flag Officer, Atlantic Command

ashore. The captain said *"Three ships' companies and 150 cadets? We'd overrun the town."* That was the end of the discussion.

We did have a party on Holy Island the last night we were there. Holy Island is a small uninhabited island in the bay and they brought large kegs of beer and sides of beef from Lamlash for the biggest bun and beer bash I had ever seen. We scooped the beer out of the open kegs – hops and all, and ate buns with slabs of Scottish beef roasted over an open fire. Barbequed hamburgers and Labatts would never taste the same again.

Then we were off to Belfast for a couple of days. In 1951 the 'Troubles' had not yet begun. Shankhill Road was just another street. Problems between Protestants and Catholics were very much present though and we were aware of this even walking the streets. We visited Queens University and the Festival of Britain site which mainly featured Irish agriculture. Second of Port was on duty one day and we watched some of the men straggle back a little the worse for wear at various hours of the evening and night.

The next evening was our last in the British Isles. One of the guys wondered if we could go to a dance in the local hall. Another thought we could get some dates from the nurse's residence of the local hospital. We finally found a number and called. A woman's voice answered but when she heard a man's voice was all set to hang up. She was prevailed upon to listen when we stated we were Canadian officer cadets on a cruise and sailing tomorrow. She found some blind dates for us and later, when we went around to the hospital to pick them up, that it was lucky that one of the nurses had been walking down the hall and picked up the phone. The regular secretary on the desk would not have given us the time of day. It was a great last night for the cruise.

The next day, we sailed for Londonderry where we refuelled for the cruise back across the pond. Then it was clearing the headlands of Lough Foyle and onto the broad Atlantic. I had lost my sea-legs by then and the first night I was on the middle watch. We sat leaning against the funnel drinking kye* and reminiscing about the trip. After a while the kye and the steady roll of the ship got to several of us. As we rushed to the nearest rail a petty officer yelled at us "Fer Gawd's sake. If you want to puke go to the leeward side. We turned around to see that we had decorated the side of the funnel.

The third day out we hit the tail of an Atlantic hurricane. I don't know how big the swells were but when we were in the trough, some of them were higher than the bridge. We were in 'pipe-down' for 24 hours. No-one on the upper deck without rappelling gear. I have some pictures of La Hulloise cresting a swell in which you can see the ASDIC dome on her keel. After we passed through the storm, we did depth charge trials and the cooks were at the ship's side picking up all the fish we had killed. We had them for supper that night. And before we knew it, we were going by Sambro light and into the same berth we had been in a month before.

Stadacona and Home

The rest of the summer was the usual classes, drills and exercises. Because some cadets did not pass their signalling test, we were all out at 0600 for half an hour reading Morse code. An RN cruiser was in port and the Royal Marines put on a drill on the parade square called

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* Kye is cocoa made with lots of sugar but no milk. After boiling on the back of the stove in the galley for a day or so, it develops a definite kick and an aroma that you will never forget.

"Beat the Retreat". It was excellent. I did celestial navigation using the Mark, St. Hillaire method; before the days of calculators and computers, we worked it out with logarithms to the 6th decimal place. Other than once placing my 'ship' in the middle of the Sahara Desert, I did pretty well on that. Some American midshipmen on a tall sailing ship came into port. We entertained them in the Gunroom and showed them the town. They told us in a broad New England accent that they were from New London, Connecticut on the "Thaymes" River.

Finally in early September it was time to go back to school and our 'normal' lives. It was back on the train but we all knew each other better then so the trip was one big party. There were open bottles of beer in every car but the trainmen and conductors made a mild protest then looked the other way. The train stopped in some small New Brunswick town and a couple of the guys spied a beer store near the station. I will never forget the two of them running with a 'two-four' between them as the train slowly began to pull out of the station. We assumed that they had missed the train but later, as the train was clipping along, I spied the two of them huddled on the steps under the platform at the end of a car about three up from where I was. I wouldn't have seen them if we hadn't been going around a curve. I ran through the car, calling for buddies to help as I went and lifted the platform to let them climb into the car. They almost dropped the case of beer but one guy said afterwards, "After all that, if I dropped it, I'd 'a gone after it."

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PART II:
GREAT LAKES TRAINING COMMAND

When I completed my B.A., I was commissioned with the rank of Acting Sub-Lieutenant. This was the lowest commissioned rank but when I obtained my M.D. I would be automatically promoted to Lieutenant in the Medical Branch. (Surgeon Lieutenant). While in my first year of Medicine, I heard about a new venture based at H.M.C.S. Star in Hamilton. The navy was bringing some minesweepers up from the coast to provide new-entry training on the Great Lakes. Reserve Officers were invited to apply for summer employment. As a commissioned officer my salary would jump to $225 a month—again with room and board and all found.

Even though we complained about the cramped living conditions on board ship, and the perennial chicken-shit (the pettifogging regulations and overbearing CPOs didn't even warrant the respectable name of horse-shit) it was a good life in many ways. I decided that this would be a great way to spend a summer and earn some hours towards my Watchkeeping Certificate. I transferred from York to HMCS Star, partly because that is where the GLTC was based and partly because my parents were still living in Aldershot and I was using that as my permanent address.

Summer on the Great Lakes, 1954

In Medicine, the exams are later than they are in most other courses so I was not available for duty until the beginning of June. I arrived early on a Monday morning (0730h is the usual starting time, Divisions are sharp at 0800) and was told that I was posted to HMCS Kentville, a Bangor minesweeper tied up at the jetty near the base. My thoughts ran back to that first summer in Halifax when I had gone to Wolfville and the town of Kentville is just a few miles down the road. I also looked it up and discovered that HMCS Burlington, that ship I had seen commissioned in Grade 6, was also a Bangor. Sadly for the town of Burlington, it did not survive the war.

Shortly after we had settled in, we were all ordered over to the base to meet the newly appointed Flag Officer GLTC, a certain Commodore Budge. Everyone had heard of Captain Budge who had taken over H.M.C.S Ontario shortly after the mutiny and had refused to be piped on board, the traditional greeting of a new CO. Instead, he had stood on the jetty and dressed down the crew roundly, using gestures and much profanity, before he would even step on board and accept the command. We were on our guard.

Budge was true to form. He began quizzing us immediately on our knowledge of the navy and the job we were to perform. If we didn't give satisfactory answers, he would have a little tantrum, then settling down abruptly would move down the line and say "next?" During one tantrum he hit the wall so hard that his fist went right through the plasterboard into the next room. He looked a bit cowed, but only for a moment. He turned abruptly and said to the chief by the door in a quiet voice: *"See that that is fixed. They don't make bulkheads like they used to."*

Our commanding officer was a senior lieutenant who was due for promotion to lieutenant-commander. He was very much a *salty* and not used to the narrow confines of some shipping channels on the Great Lakes. Also the system of buoys in marked channels was reversed from the system in salt water. He also liked to keep at least two miles separation from

commercial shipping and this was impossible on the Great Lakes. He appointed me Navigating Officer and I would also take my assigned turn as Watchkeeper.

I will never forget one time when I was in bad odour. I was on the bridge as we steamed up the long channel from Kingston towards the buoy which marked the commercial channel at the east end of Lake Ontario. Several lake freighters were approaching the buoy from the lake and it seemed we would arrive at the buoy at about the same time as they did. I was treating this the way I would drive a car towards a turn in the road. Finally the Bos'n on the bridge suggested politely that I should call the old man because we were within two miles of commercial shipping. I had overlooked this and our CO was none too pleased with me.

Living in Hamilton and Aldershot, I had often gone down to the canal to watch the big ships come in. I had also sailed on Lake Ontario and seen the lake freighters with their bluff bows pushing the water up in front of them and leaving a heavy wake behind. In a small sailboat, you gave them a wide berth because the bow wave could easily swamp a small boat. What our captain pointed out which I had not realized was that these large freighters only had a single screw. They were not very manoeuvrable, and at cruising speed could take a couple of miles to stop in an emergency. Also, a single screw ship with the screw just in front of the rudder tended to turn to starboard and this was counteracted by setting the rudder slightly to port while under way.

However when going astern, the screw pushed the water the other way so the rudder became almost useless. The natural reaction when you want to stop is to put the engine full astern. With a single screw, this would cause the ship to veer to port and with the rudder useless there would be almost nothing that could be done about it. Our CO pointed out that in close quarters, these behemoths could not manoeuvre the way our bangor could. Except for corvettes, which were single screw based on commercial whaling ships, all warships were twin screw and the larger ones would have four. A good ship handler, and our CO was an excellent ship handler, could place the ship alongside the jetty with very little manoeuvring just like parking a car.

Just a few years ago I saw the movie *Titanic*. I was fascinated during the scenes of the great ship taking its final plunge, to note that the ship had three screws, one in the centre immediately before the rudder. All of my former CO's description and advice came flooding back to me. I recall the commands given on the bridge of the Titanic when the iceberg was sighted. All engines were put full astern and the rudder was put hard aport. With all engines full astern, the rudder would be useless. If I understood the ship-handler CO's advice, the captain of the Titanic would have been better to stop the engines—at least the middle one—and to steer the ship around the iceberg. He might have still hit it but it probably would have been a glancing blow which may not have ripped the whole side out of the ship. I often wondered if they had a good ship handler consulting to the board of enquiry after the disaster.

The cruises were 10 or 11 days long and were started every two weeks. This was to match the schedules of the new entry seamen who were usually working with only two weeks vacation. The first cruise was to Prince Edward Bay near Picton. This seemed to be a popular spot for regattas and we were there on several cruises. We stopped at many ports on both sides of Lake Ontario over the summer. I remember Sodus Bay, Oswego, and Sachet's Harbour in New York State. It is noteworthy that this was the first visit of a Canadian warship to Sachet's Harbour since the War of 1812. In July we had a cruise through the Welland

Canal into the upper lakes. This took longer so our plan was changed to pick up another group of new entries in Port Arthur for the cruise back.

On Kentville, the original SU radar had been replaced with a commercial version made by Sperry. It had a great cumbersome antenna about 3 feet above the deckhead of the bridge (Bangours had a closed bridge) and you could feel the vibration when it was operating, which was all the time while we were at sea. It was always breaking down, usually at most inopportune moments such as when we were coming into port or were navigating a channel with other ships about. Our electrical bos'n got pretty good at fixing it on the fly. More than once, while underway, I was climbing over him crouched beside the radar cabinet as I tried to do the pilotage that the radar was not doing for me.

We were accompanied by another Bangor, HMCS Digby and a couple of fairmiles from HMCS Star and York. The fairmiles were manned by reserves who had little ship-handling experience. I remember one of them rammed the coal jetty in Sault Ste. Marie trying to pull up alongside. There was some rough weather on Lake Superior which is big enough that in the middle you could be in the ocean—there is no land to be seen in any direction. This knocked the fairmiles about but they are rugged and seaworthy so they came to no harm. In Port Arthur, we tied up for several days while we loaded the new group. I also visited Jim Neelin's parents who took me out to their camp north of the city. I remember I went out for a paddle in the canoe and I guess I took longer than I thought because they were upset with me when I got back as they were waiting to drive back into town.

On the way back we stopped in Buffalo. I was Officer-of-the-Deck that day and the fairmiles were leaving us early in the morning to go back through the Welland Canal. They planned to slip from the jetty at 0400h to beat the daily rush through the canal. The CO's had indicated that it was not necessary to wake me to pipe them off so I didn't request a wakeup call. There was a visiting officer from CANFLAGLANT with us and he had been visiting ashore, arriving back just in time to see the fairmiles pulling away with no OOD on the quarterdeck to pipe them off. I was in deep doo-doo.

I learned a valuable lesson from that. I should have insisted on following the proper protocol despite the assurances of the fairmiles captain that I didn't need to. At the very least, I needed something in writing to support my decision. But even more important, I did not defend myself very well before our CO. Officers are not put on report the same as enlisted men, but there is a process before the captain which allows me to defend my actions. I said nothing in my defence—thereby obliging the CO to assign me extra duties. I found the other officers willing to come to my defence but I didn't give them a chance.

I remember at Sachet's Harbour, we were invited to a reception at the local US Naval Reserve station. I was still using my cadet uniforms (no. 5Bs) with sub-lieutenant shoulder boards. Because this do required dress uniforms (no. 5s) I had to borrow a jacket from one of the other officers which didn't fit me too well but served the purpose. In the War of 1812, Sachet's Harbour had been the base for the US Navy on the Great Lakes. There were paintings and pictures of famous ships and famous battles. I was embarrassed to realize I knew almost nothing of those battles. The war on the lakes is hardly ever mentioned in Canadian history books. When I got back to Hamilton, I was off to the naval outfitters to get a tiddly dress uniform so I wouldn't get caught again.

My memories of the Kentville will always be connected to Rochester. In August there was a tattoo sponsored by the US Naval division in Rochester. My picture album diary records what happened:

> KENTVILLE was selected to take the Gun Running Team from HMCS York to a competition in Rochester with the US Naval Reserve Unit. It was a lovely day and on Saturday, the York Team beat the US Team in running, setting up and firing small cannon. We had lots of visitors on board who had not seen a Canadian warship before. We were scheduled to leave at 1200h on Sunday.
>
> Because we were pointed upriver, the CO tried to turn around in the harbour. He went 'slow ahead port' and used the after spring (line) to swing the stern out. Then it was 'slow astern starboard' and 'port 15'. The ship began to move out. By the time we were mid-harbour, the ship was across the harbour, moving towards the shelving shale bank on the opposite side. Then it was 'slow ahead port' and 'stop starboard'. Number One said "We are still moving astern sir." The CO barked out commands in short order……

(As navigating officer, it was my job to keep the log. I could barely keep up):

……"half ahead starboard, half ahead both,"…..

(After a pause during which we seemed to be moving even faster towards the bank)

……"full ahead both," (then) "stop everything, midships"……

There was a grinding shuddering crunch as the quarterdeck lifted up onto the bank. Dead silence on the bridge. There was also dead silence among the crowd of spectators on the bank to see us off. Digby towed us off the bank. We had faired both screws and bent the rudder so it was stuck at 10 degrees of port. The nearest dry-dock which could do the repairs was in Kingston – some 80 nautical miles away. We were towed by Digby but because the rudder was jammed and the port screw was so badly bent that it vibrated and could not be used, we went across the lake with the starboard engine going slow astern just so the ship would not veer off to port and break the tow line. The crossing took almost 24 hours.

We could not get into the dry-dock until the next morning so we moored in Kingston Roads just off the mouth of the Cataraqui River. Even that seemed somehow jinxed. I was on the bridge as usual and Number One was in charge of the fo'csle crew. Mooring involves putting down both anchors some distance apart and allowing the ship to ride half way in between. If the ship swings at anchor the cables will cross and could become quite twisted, requiring a swivel to be inserted where the cables cross. This is quite a complex procedure so the CO decided that since we were only there for about 12 hours, we would untangle the cables in the morning.

The next morning, the cables were twisted so they had to be taken apart and cleared. Then downwind anchor is raised as the cable for the other anchor is paid out. After that the windward cable is winched in, bringing the ship around. The wind was coming up so the CO was anxious to be under way as soon as the anchor was on board. He shouted down to the fo'csle: "Report clear anchor." The First Lieutenant shouted something back but it didn't sound like clear anchor. The CO shouted: "Say again!" Number One walked over and said quite distinctly "Foul Anchor, sir." A very rusty wire rope was wound all around it and

appeared to be attached somewhere under water. We were already beginning to drift toward the harbour, so the fo'csle crew was working frantically to clear the anchor. We decided that another ship had used wire rope on their anchor, and when they had a problem recovering it, just cut it free and left it there. I hated to think what the bottoms of busy harbours really looked like.

We were in dry-dock for over a week. Finally the screws were back and re-installed. The dock was flooded and we were afloat again. Of course there had to be a Board on Enquiry for a serious incident like this. It was especially embarrassing for our CO who was an excellent ship-handler and also who was about to be promoted to Lieutenant Commander. As part of the investigation, we took the ship out onto the lake to go through the commands which I had recorded in the log with times. It was fairly calm and we dropped a couple of buoys to mark where the jetty and the shelving bank would have been. Following the CO's orders, the ship behaved beautifully turning and stopping just where it should. We didn't even get to the 'full ahead' command. There was no explanation for what had gone wrong.

But we all knew. The WWII smaller ships were mostly fitted with reciprocating steam engines, a classic design from the First World War or before. Only the larger newer ships, such as the Tribal Class Destroyers had steam turbines. We affectionately referred to these relics of WWI as *knee-action turbines*. Many smaller ships were fitted with diesel engines later in the war—Digby was diesel but Kentville was steam.

Engines in a twin screw ship rotate in opposite directions so that the problems of single screw ships of thrusting of the stern to port or starboard is neutralized. An old reciprocating steam engine is open so you can see the crankshafts and connecting rods whirling around. The whole engine can be reversed by setting the steam intakes to a different position and you can see the crankshaft stopping and then beginning to rotate in the other direction. An experienced Engine Room Artificer can tell whether the ship is going ahead or astern by noting which way the engines are rotating. He doesn't have to check the settings on the gauges.

But we didn't have an experienced ERA. He was a very part-time reservist like many of the rest of us. We think that he got mixed up and didn't notice that the engines were turning the wrong way. Of course in the Board of Enquiry, he insisted that he had done everything right and his crew backed him up. So much for the findings of the Board of Enquiry.

In early September, the ships were due to return to Halifax. I remember planning to go to our cottage in Haliburton for the weekend and then come back to see the ship off the next week. As navigating officer I was responsible for seeing that the chart corrections were up to date. I didn't get finished until midnight and then picked up my gear and headed up to the cottage. It was about 175 miles and I didn't get there until about 4 in the morning. My mother was none too pleased that I made noise coming in and woke her up.

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The Next Summer on the Great Lakes, 1955

Things were better organized the second year. I was designated as a training officer and there were more regular force members of the crew. This year they had two Algerine

minesweepers which were bigger and had more room for our various activities.* Also, the training requirements were much stricter so that we had to provide reports on each recruit and the exact training he had received. Inspections were frequent.

As officers we had other duties on the ship. I was placed on HMCS Wallaceburg. Our CO was an Irishman Commander Jones, a very senior officer who was close to retirement. But he certainly knew the navy well and we learned a lot from him. Many things were similar to the first summer but we had more old salties in the crew and the officers. Cruises were similar to the previous summer, 10 to 11 days with a few days between to get ready for the next one. I created a chart of the Great Lakes area on which I marked the various cruises. I think that I still have it somewhere.

One day, the skipper said to me: "Deadman, you're from around here. Where the hell is Wallaceburg? We've been ordered by CANFLAG-GL to go there. The town fathers heard that their namesake is cruising the Great Lakes and they want to give a reception or something." I had a rough idea that it was somewhere near Windsor but when I looked it up on the charts, it was just up the Thames River from Lake St. Clair. The old man took one look at the narrow, shallow river on the chart with shoals, and many twists and turns and said: "What's he think I'm sailing? A canal barge? Tell him to go f… ah… scrub that. Tell them that if I go aground, they will have to take the responsibility." We never heard any more about that cruise.

I recall a better cabin which I shared with the other training officer. The wardroom was bigger and I brought my phonograph on board so we could play records. On one cruise we went to Chicago and during an open house on board, one of the visitors got talking to me and said he would take me out to see the Chicago Cubs play a team from Philadelphia. He brought his whole family along. Philadelphia won but what I mainly remember was that I was bored at the game.

There seemed to be long pauses during which the players paced around and stared at each other. Then the umpire would say “Play ball” and there would be a hit into left field followed by furious activity in which the player would be safe on first. Then the players would all stand around and look at each other for a while longer. I was reminded of the comments of some of my friends when I said that I played cricket at TCS. Major League baseball had to be more boring than cricket. However my host was very generous and I thanked all of them very sincerely for a lovely time.

Also in Chicago we went to see the latest Cinerama film. In Detroit we saw the Broadway road company of *The King and I,* and I then went out to buy the record. In Duluth, a bunch of us went to a party and the other officers all claimed that they got laid. My claim that I almost did was not seen as too impressive. One of the guys said that he had laid his date in the captain’s chair on the bridge. This was seen by most as an impossible feat but knowing this guy, I tended to believe him.

Alcohol also featured in every shore leave. One time in Sodus Bay about five of us at a table began buying rounds. I could not keep up. After about four, I was definitely under the weather. The other guys seemed completely unaffected. On another visit to Detroit, the

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* Bangors were 180 feet long and about 800 tons. Algerines were 230 feet long and 1100 tons. Frigates were 301 feet long and 1600 tons. Tribal Class Destroyers were 360 feet long and about 2500 tons.

officers were invited to the new US Naval Reserve establishment. It was quite a party. I remember an enormous bowl of shrimp and I had my fill. Drinks were flowing freely and I guess I had my share of that too. When the party showed signs of breaking up about midnight, one of the American officers invited us all over to his apartment to continue the party. We all piled into cars to go over there.

By this time I was not feeling too well. I tried to swallow some ginger ale but soon rushed to the bathroom and brought up everything—shrimp, crackers, hors d'ouvres, potato chips, peanuts—the lot. I probably brought up some of the drinks too because I immediately felt better. Soon we were moving on to another place but I stuck to ginger ale for the rest of the evening. After some of the guys were starting to go home, the driver of the car I was in said to me: "I think you are the most sober, you'd better drive."

There were six in the car, three of us from the ship. I heard people say to me, "turn right, turn left, stop here." Presently I looked around and the only others in the car were my two buddies from the ship, both sound asleep. I drove back to the naval establishment where Wallaceburg was tied up and persuaded the guys to get back on board. I then parked the car and took the keys over to the commissionaire at the gate telling him: "I don't know whose car this is but I'm sure he will be looking for it in the morning."

In 1954 we still had grog. Grog is pusser rum which was issued to every man on active duty every day. At noon, the designated officer and the Boatswain and another witness went down to the spirits locker to draw the amount of rum for the daily rum issue. The locker was small, the rum was cut from 160 proof and you could get drunk just breathing the fumes. Each man got a tot of 2 oz. which had to be diluted with water or pop before the issuing officer. Rum that has been diluted below about 40 proof will go sour and become undrinkable in a few days. The dilution was important so the seamen couldn't store it up and then go on a big toot later.

The whole rum issue was fraught with problems. We had a problem in the stokers' mess. The rumour mill had it that certain stokers had been saving their tot. One day the issuing officer became suspicious and when a stoker came for his tot, he poured something out of a coke bottle into it and turned to go. The officer asked to see the coke bottle. The contents were not coke but rum. So this man was diluting his tot with rum so it would not go sour and he could store it. A locker search of the stokers' mess turned up a lot more rum. They could all have had a good toot on their tots.

As a medical student, I assumed the role of medical officer on board. I felt very inadequate to the task. This was real medicine, not the theoretical stuff I was learning at school. I was called down to see a petty officer in the engine room who was vomiting blood. Even I, just going into third year could tell he had a bleeding ulcer and could exsanguinate if not treated. We called an ambulance but we still had to get him out of the engine room. There was a vertical ladder at one end which went up to a narrow hatch about 16 feet above. Finally we strapped him onto a stretcher and hoisted him vertically through the hatch. This was the kind of experience I would never get in school. It also emphasized the effects of alcohol in work situations.

I also learned the crazy things people do when they are drunk. On one of our cruises, we paid a visit to the US Naval Reserve Base in Oswego. That evening, the entire crew was invited to the seamen's mess at the base. The officers were accommodated in the wardroom and a great time was had by all. Later that night, we were informed that two of the seamen

were in the local jail and the Navy had notified Washington who had involved the Canadian Ambassador. The Canadian Consul from Albany came over. Apparently two of the seamen, quite drunk, had broken into a trophy case in the main lobby of the reserve base, stolen several trophies and broken a couple of others. Fortunately, they were not part of our trainee group; they were reserve force from Halifax.

This was an international incident. The men were released to naval custody the next day and were marched on board ship in irons and we immediately made sail for Star. This was too serious for Captain's Report so they appeared before the Flag Officer, Great Lakes. Fortunately for them, it was not Commodore Budge. Had he been the flag officer in 1955, they would probably still be in cells today. As it was, they were demoted, and sent back to Stadacona in custody. I never found out what happened from there.

In August, we had Hurricane Connie. Unlike Hurricane Hazel in 1954 which was entirely torrential rains by the time it reached Ontario, Connie had both wind and rain. As we left for Sodus Bay on a cruise, we were warned to expect heavy rain. But as we sailed down Lake Ontario towards Rochester, the storm hit with winds of Force 3-4 and driving rain enough to put dints in the steel plating. Wallaceburg still had a World War II vintage SU radar. It worked well enough for ordinary things but could not cut through the storm which blanked out three quarters of the screen. Visibility was down to 50 yards at times and the waves began to kick up.

Algerines were quite sea-worthy so we were not worried that we couldn't handle the storm. We were worried that we would not have enough sea-room to either run before the storm or head into it. Lake Ontario is the smallest of the Great Lakes, about 30 nautical miles across near Rochester and about 160 nautical miles from east to west but it gets a lot narrower at the eastern end. That may seem like a lot, but when you cannot see where you are going and the radar is largely blanked out, it is not all that much. We forgot about Sodus Bay. We sailed east with the mainly southerly winds and tried to get a fix by HFDF.* That didn't work very well either. Because we were in a cross-wind, the ship rolled alarmingly. On a steady course, the screaming winds caused us to list 20° to port. I have pictures in my album to prove this.

We were in a pipe-down for close to 24 hours. It was interesting to see how new-entries responded to this. Some seemed terrified and cowered in the mess-deck. Some were so violently ill that they had to be restrained from rushing to the rail, a rather dangerous thing to do in this weather. One trainee seemed to really enjoy this. At mess time, when few were interested in food, he was going around asking others if they didn't want their supper, could he have it? The navigating officer who was on the bridge most of this time was a salty permanent force lieutenant who was most embarrassed to find he was quite sea-sick. He claimed he was never like this on the ocean. They all had lost their sea-legs on the relatively calm Great Lakes. I never really developed them all summer.

As the winds gradually backed to the east and what we presumed to be the eye of the storm passed over, we were able to find our position north of Sodus Bay, and not too far from the gunnery range off the Prince Edward Peninsula, we decided to ride it out a bit longer and

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* High Frequency (radio) Direction Finder.

then as the winds had subsided somewhat, turn back to Hamilton. By the time we cleared the Burlington Canal pierheads by noon the next day, the sun was just peeking through.

Wallaceburg, Portage and Minas were returning to Slackers at the end of summer training. Most of the reserve officers and men left the ship at Star in early September but as we were down to a skeleton crew for the trip back, I decided to go with Wallaceburg as far as Montreal to help with the canalling. From there, they were in the broader St. Lawrence River and Estuary so the need of extra hands was not as great.

We sailed the second week of September. As we pulled away from the jetty in front of H.M.C.S. Star, I felt some nostalgia for the summer and could see that other crew members, many of whom I had got to know well, were feeling it too. The trip to Kingston was very familiar to me after two summers. Then we sailed past Wolfe Island in the international channel between many of the Thousand Islands. There was a lot of shipping and we appreciated the extra manoeuvrability of the twin screws. The heavy wake of the big lake freighters sometimes seemed almost as bad as the waves in Hurricane Connie but they were over quickly. There were also very strict speed limits in the narrow channels.

As we passed near one of the smaller islands, we saw a group of cottagers on the beach cooking supper on a large bonfire. They waved and we waved and it was great. Then No. 1 called out, "Look out for our wake!" we looked astern and saw that the ship's wake was mounting the beach and running along behind us until it dowsed their bonfire and forced them to all run up the beach. We never found out what they thought of the Canadian Navy after that.

Before the days of the St. Lawrence Seaway, there were a series of small canals to skirt rapids at several places along the river. We took on a pilot at Prescott because some of the parts of the river were very tricky if you were not used to them. We ran the rapids near Cardinal because the pilot figured that our ship could save time by not using the old canal. We went through the old Cornwall and Soulangues canals and then into the wider water of Lac St. Louis near Beauharnois. Then into the old Lachine Canal which ran right through Verdun and into Montreal harbour. Wallaceburg, Portage and Minas were all on the same jetty in the old harbour. That night, the officers took me to the famous strip club where Lily St. Cyr was holding forth. I had never seen anything like this in Toronto. Vive la Montréal. It was great. The next morning, I took a taxi to the Windsor Station and a train for my home. My friends on Wallaceburg sailed for Slackers and their homes.

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