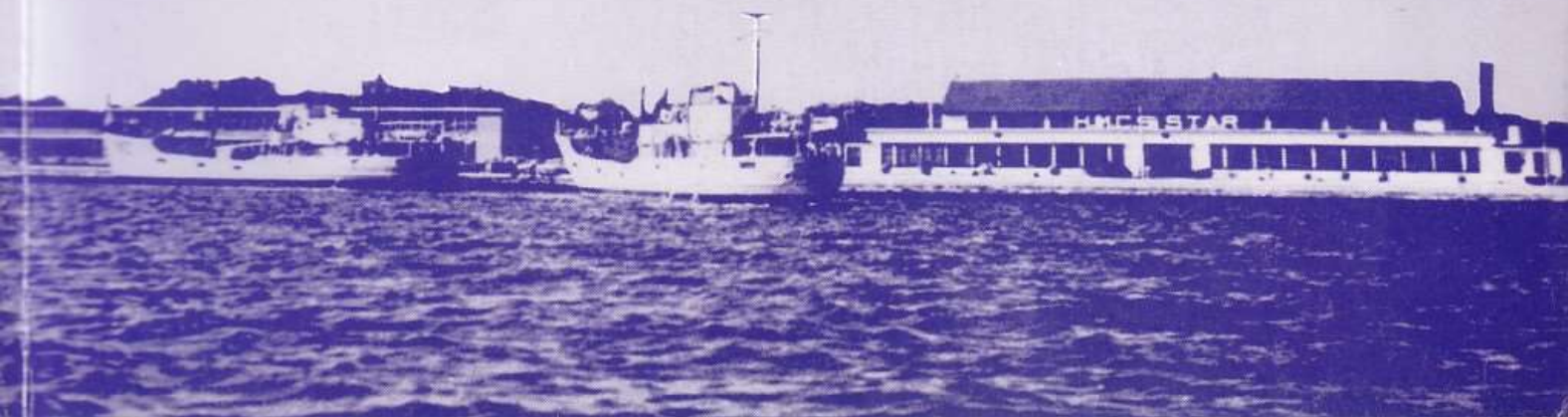


HMCS STAR A NAVAL RESERVE HISTORY



Commander Robert J. Williamson



HMCS STAR

A NAVAL RESERVE HISTORY

50th Anniversary Edition

Commander Robert J. Williamson, CD

Printed by

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Harry Theoret

RCNVR

Hamilton Division

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AS REPRESENTATIVE OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO, I AM DELIGHTED TO EXTEND GREETINGS FOR INCLUSION IN THIS BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF HMCS STAR.

OFFICERS AND ALL RANKS OF HMCS STAR CAN REFLECT WITH GREAT PRIDE ON THEIR UNIT'S REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE DEFENCE OF CANADA DURING WORLD WAR II. AS WELL, THE EXCEPTIONAL NAVAL TRAINING GIVEN BY HMCS STAR TO CANADIAN PERSONNEL TODAY IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO OUR GROWTH AS A NATION.

MAY I EXTEND WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE FOR A JOB WELL DONE AND MY SINCERE BEST WISHES FOR THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF HMCS STAR IN THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE TO CANADA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lincoln M. Alexander".

LINCOLN M. ALEXANDER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

FALL 1991

PATRONS

The printing of the 50th Anniversary Edition of A History of HMCS Star was made possible by the generous donations of these individuals and organizations who have subscribed to this project.

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MS M. & LS N. Gould
SLt & Mrs. Brian Lee

FOREWORD

Woven into the social, economic and industrial fabric of this Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth are threads of scarlet, navy blue and gold representing an esoteric military and naval presence within the community. The threads are illustrious, long, and unbroken, but are so fine that they are almost invisible to the mildly curious eye. To those of us who have served in the Armed Forces of Canada, either Regular or Reserve, these threads are obvious, and we are proud that they form a part of this city and the surrounding area.

In this year, 1991, the fiftieth anniversary of the commissioning of Hamilton's Naval Reserve Unit, HMCS *Star*, it is very appropriate to publish a history of the significance of the Navy on Lake Ontario, and particularly at the "Head of the Lake". The naval spirit within the Hamilton area has been represented by a relatively small group of volunteers who have bound themselves together within the customs and traditions of the sea, and who have accepted the heritage upon which the Royal Canadian Navy has been built, during both wartime and in times of peace. This group extends beyond *Star* to include veterans' groups, in particular the Hamilton, Brantford and Burlington Naval Veterans' Associations, the Navy League of Canada, area Sea Cadet and Navy League Cadet Corps, the Naval Officers' Association of Canada, and the Maritime Defence Association. While these each represent the naval spirit, it is to *Star* that we all look for naval authority and direction. *Star* flies not only the national colours, and the Naval Jack, but as well, she flies the guide pennant to provide direction to the scattered naval community.

This book written by Cdr R. J. (Bob) Williamson, a former Commanding Officer of *Star*, describes the origins of naval service in this area, well before the commissioning of Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Star* on November 1, 1941, through to the present time, and goes further to include some thoughts for the future. To all who have worked, or served in *Star*, to all who have served in the Canadian Navy - or in any other Navy, and to all who are interested in local history, either as serious students or as casual observers, I commend this welcome addition to Canadian naval literature and local history. I hope that you will enjoy this publication and after reading it, will join with me in extending both thanks and congratulations to its author.

Commodore R. T. Bennett
CMM, CD, RCN(R) Ret'd

Hamilton, Ontario
November, 1991



FOREWORD

by

**Captain (N) P. J. Yans, CD, A de C
COMMANDER NAVAL RESERVE DIVISIONS**

I can think of no better way to mark with distinction the fiftieth anniversary of the commissioning of HMCS *Star* than to publish a comprehensive history of this renowned Naval Reserve Division. Those who had the original idea for this project and those who made it happen must be commended for their excellent initiative.

This book celebrates fifty years of tradition and service of the highest order. It recognizes the dedication and devotion to duty of the thousands of men and women from the Hamilton area who have served in HMCS *Star* during these fifty years.

Born in wartime, HMCS *Star* fulfilled immediately its mission of delivering to the Navy, courageous volunteers willing to serve their country in the dangerous and stormy waters of the North Atlantic. HMCS *Star*, since then and to this day, has continued this mission and the present members of the Ship's Company are no less dedicated and willing to serve than their forefathers.

May the celebrations of this important fiftieth birthday emphasize the glorious exploits of our wartime veterans and may this book inspire all reservists, not only those serving in HMCS *Star* but also those serving in other Naval Reserve Divisions to give the best of themselves to the Navy and to their country.

Pierre Yans



PREFACE

The writing of this book has been planned to meet a deadline date of November 1, 1991. This date marks the 50th Anniversary of the commissioning of the Hamilton Division RCNVR as HMCS Star.

It has been a fascinating experience to research our generally neglected naval reserve history, delving into an incredible wealth of personal records maintained by individuals who have taken great pride in their accomplishments.

This work comes none too soon. There is a steadily decreasing number of veterans who can remember the events of those years since the formation of the Naval Reserve in 1923. If by chance the shoe boxes of photographs and scrap books they spent a lifetime collecting, have not already been discarded, all too frequently names, places and dates are unidentified. Nevertheless these are precious documents and should be treated with great care. There is a home for them in library special collections, historical societies and museums.

The recording of the history of Star began with Cdr S. Ross and later, Cdr J. Curtis who requested background information about their ship from Naval Headquarters. Each commanding officer since then, depending on his inclination, has added bits to the record so that several pages of information were eventually accumulated. This is what has been used to create a short historical synopsis for annual inspection programs.

This book had its beginnings in 1985 during the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Navy. PO2 Nadine Burke did such a fine job of preparing a history display for the Annual Inspection that year that it seemed reprehensible not to continue her research. Through collaboration with her close friend, former Wren Barbara McInnis, they put together the basis of a history resource file.

When I turned command over to Cdr D. Mark in September 1988, I left with him an invitation to continue the project. The stumbling block was finance. It would take anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to publish a history of Star. Grants and donations could be solicited. What was needed was a volunteer with the time and courage to tackle the job of writing. The initiative had to come from the commanding officer, Doug Mark. The incentive was provided by the pending date for the 50th Anniversary. The driving force was furnished by the Chief Clerk, MWO A. Vezina who took charge of fund raising. I accepted the challenge to be the principal author and editor of the 50th Anniversary book in December 1990 with the proviso that a support team of typists, proof readers, researchers and a printing expert be made available. I also needed the assistance of Cdr F. Lee to write the chapter on Integration and Unification. It was a period of our history during which he served as commanding officer. I did not feel comfortable with my bias, which I believed would seriously interfere with my ability

to make a reasonable presentation of that period involving green uniforms.

This historical interpretation of Star's story has been drawn from many sources. Principal of these are: Starshells, Hamilton Spectator, Commanding Officers' Historical Reports, Hamilton Scourge Foundation, correspondence files, and personal interviews. My thirty four years of association with the Naval Reserve both on the active and primary reserve list has helped me to weave the fabric of these resources in a nautical and hopefully an interesting way.

The story has been told by developing different themes rather than being weighted down by chronological details. Where possible the flavour of the times and events are illustrated by personal stories and anecdotes. It has been our intention to mention as many people as possible because the story of a ship is really the story of her crew. There will of course be many personalities who for lack of space or continuity could not be mentioned. There may also be omissions because of lack of time. Six months, restricted to evenings and weekends, does not provide sufficient opportunity to investigate all potential resources. There will, I am sure, be hundreds of people who will come forward after the publishing of the book to provide information that could have been used earlier.

Photographs have been selected not only to illustrate events, but to fill in details that for lack of space or flow of text had to be omitted. They are a very important part of the historical record and where possible, captions have been included. Many photographs from personal collections are old and of such poor quality that tragically they had to be discarded. Regretfully many of the original negatives from the Hamilton Spectator files have been lost and the expected quality of pictures from this source was limited. One of the best sources of pictures was the CON'D file in the photo section of C.F.B. Ottawa.

The writing of HMCS Star's history has been a major undertaking. Few other Naval Reserve Divisions have attempted such an exercise. In retrospect, it appears that a special combination of time, place and personalities were required to complete this undertaking. Much of my training and experience has been a preparation for this commitment. Even so, at times there was a sense that unexplained forces were guiding my hand. My wife needed a great deal of patience to understand the power of this obsession and to put up with the conversion of the dining room into a permanent library resource centre.

I trust that it has all been worthwhile and that for those who share an interest in our naval history, some insight and a few memories will be stirred.

*Cdr R. Williamson
Hamilton, Ontario
May 20, 1991*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has presented a comprehensive story of the role played by the naval community of Hamilton and the name *Star* in our history. The process of writing it could not have been possible without the support and contributions of many people.

Time constraints were a major factor working against this production. Cdr Lee eased that problem considerably by contributing one chapter. The contribution of Commodore Bennett in writing the foreword and proof reading the preliminary text to which he provided many references and photographs was both encouraging and helpful. Cdr Mark, the commanding officer, provided his insight in the **Epilogue**.

Researching for a book is most demanding in terms of time. Credit for some of this must go to PO2 (ret'd) Nadine Burke and LW (ret'd) Barbara McInnis who between them did considerable library research and meticulously recorded events and collected scrap books full of information. Barbara, with the help of her husband Doug, also recorded several interviews as well. A great deal of research was also done by Colwyn G. Beynon, Chief Curator of the RHLI Heritage Museum. He is credited for much of the information on the Hamilton Naval Brigade and Naval Company. George Hedden of the naval veterans also helped round up information from his contemporaries. SLt Roy Morley and Cdr R. Bowman dug up some useful documents in Ottawa and Lee Walsh provided some interesting information on Seafires, a pet project of his. MS Paul Williamson, band librarian made available information on the Band of HMCS *Star*. Lorne Harbottle has done considerable research into his family tree and was able to provide much background detail about Captain Harbottle. Ivan Brookes dug out some old correspondence with the Naval Historian about the World War II Naval Reserve vessel, *Pathfinder*. His research answered some important questions about the vessel.

In addition to Colwyn G. Beynon, there are many other historians who have lent their support to this project. Chief amongst these is Emily Cain, Research and Co-ordinating Officer of the Hamilton Scourge Project. Her computerized research records substantiated some of what was known about the part played by *Star* in the War of 1812 and provided a great deal of new information. Janet Dimock of the Research Indexing Department, Central Negative Library, Canadian Forces Photographic Unit, CFB Ottawa was of immeasurable help, providing open access to many photo files and where they existed, duplicate prints of many photographs. The overnight accommodation provided by CFB Ottawa was also greatly appreciated. Acknowledgement should also be given to the National Archives of Canada, in particular, Diane Martineau, Senior Reference and Research Officer of the Photographic Division, her supervisor Peter Robertson, and archivist Glen Wright. Brian Henley of the Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library provided what he could as did Brenda Brownley of the Hamilton Military Museum. David Christie and Andrew Byrne of the Directorate of History for the Canadian Armed Forces were most interested in our project but were unable to provide much information for lack of research funds. It was at this time that it became fully understood how much new ground was being prepared by the History of HMCS *Star*.

The Hamilton Spectator proved to be one of the best sources of information for this book, especially during those periods when the editors took an interest in military affairs in Hamilton.

Although much of the photographic work and art work were done by the author, CFB Toronto did some film processing and Kon Roth of MacNab Secondary School did photo enhancement, and assisted the author in photograph processing for picture layouts. PO1 Cindy Rottenbucher formatted the picture pages on a Macintosh computer graphics program with the kind permission of her employer, Trevor Garwood-Jones Architect Inc. Gord Cobham and Jeff Korz volunteered their art work.

Many details and photographs were provided from the albums and living memory of: Cdr R. G. Wilson, Cdr D. Bethune, Jim Fraser, Ivy and Herb Seager, Wally Mellor, Ed Rattray, Irene Seager, Marg and Dave McAlpine, Bill Lawrence, Cyé Mitchell, Norm Webb, Vern Smart, Doug Harrison, Russ Norman and countless members of the naval community. Gordon McNulty of the editorial staff of the Spectator provided pictures of naval aircraft from his father's album.

All of the hard work in research and writing would be marred without the keen critical eye of the proof readers. The time and effort of Commodore Bennett, MWO Vezina, Cdr Woodrow, Cdr Mark, Cdr Ostofi, Cdr Bowman and Mrs. Patricia Dececchi in this regard was extremely helpful and greatly appreciated.

The Theoret family of Superior Printery, representing a family business that encompasses four generations, provided a very generous discount for the printing of this naval history in memory of Harry Theoret, recently deceased, who joined the RCNVR through the Hamilton Division and was drafted to Halifax in June, 1940.

Three of the key factors that made this book possible were the fund raising campaign by MWO A. Vezina, the printing resource knowledge of Lt G. Warrell and the typing of SLt Rita Lee-Irvine. Although a member of unit strength at *Star*, she like so many others, has contributed countless hours of her own time to this project. She was responsible for typing and formatting this considerable historical document on her word-processor while maintaining a full time job with the police department, raising a family and completing her other obligations as a naval reservist.

What better place to complete this acknowledgement than on that note of dedication and exceptional contribution of time and effort? After all, it is just those qualities of human endeavour that have made this project come to pass.

As a special acknowledgement, this book has been written in recognition of those members of our naval community, past and present, who have left the safety and comfort of their homes to venture down to the sea in ships, as well as those who have served in support thereof and their families who abide their absence.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY HISTORY OF STAR

What is in a Name?

The navy has always been steeped in rich tradition, curried by the events of history. A chronicle of H.M.C.S. *Star* must examine the heritage of the name *Star* which originated in the Royal Navy. There the Admiralty maintained traditions and battle honours by retaining the proud names of ships from one generation to another in the commissioning process for naval vessels.

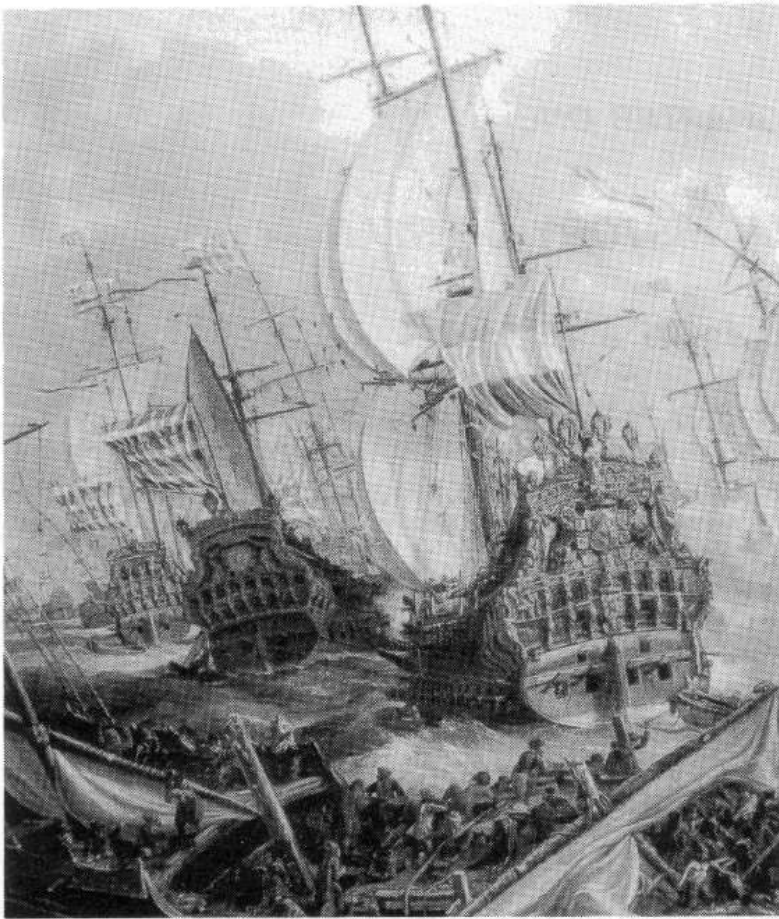
It was likely with the intention of preserving naval traditions that in September 1954, the Commanding Officer of Naval Divisions, Commodore Kenneth Adams, CD, requested that all Naval Divisions supply him with a history of their ships. In compliance, Commander J. H. Curtis, Commanding Officer of H.M.C.S. *Star* delegated the task to his T.A.S. (Torpedo Anti-Submarine) Officer, Lieutenant J. D. Jones. He, in turn, compiled the first brief but reasonably comprehensive, three-page history of *Star* with the assistance of former Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Lloyd Westland and former Engineering officer, Lieutenant George William Reese. Using that information as a basis, this chapter on *Star's* history has been expanded to its fullest, based on present day information and research. Special emphasis has been placed on Canadian events pertinent to our ship's heritage.

The name *Star* first appeared as a British ship belonging to the East India Company. Little is known about this vessel except that as part of a combined Anglo-Dutch fleet, she participated in a series of encounters with their commercial rivals, the Portuguese, in the Arabian Sea off the coast of India on February 1 to 14, 1625. The skirmishes ended upon the depletion of ammunition and the advent of the monsoon season. Of the twenty-nine casualties, four of them were in *Star*.

The second vessel to bear the name *Star* was a twelve-gun ship bought in 1650 as part of the rebuilding of the English fleet under the Commonwealth regime of Oliver Cromwell between 1649 - 1660. Like most dictators, Cromwell diverted popular dislike for his puritanical laws and military rule by vilifying the Dutch who once were a Protestant ally but had become an ambitious and dangerous commercial rival.

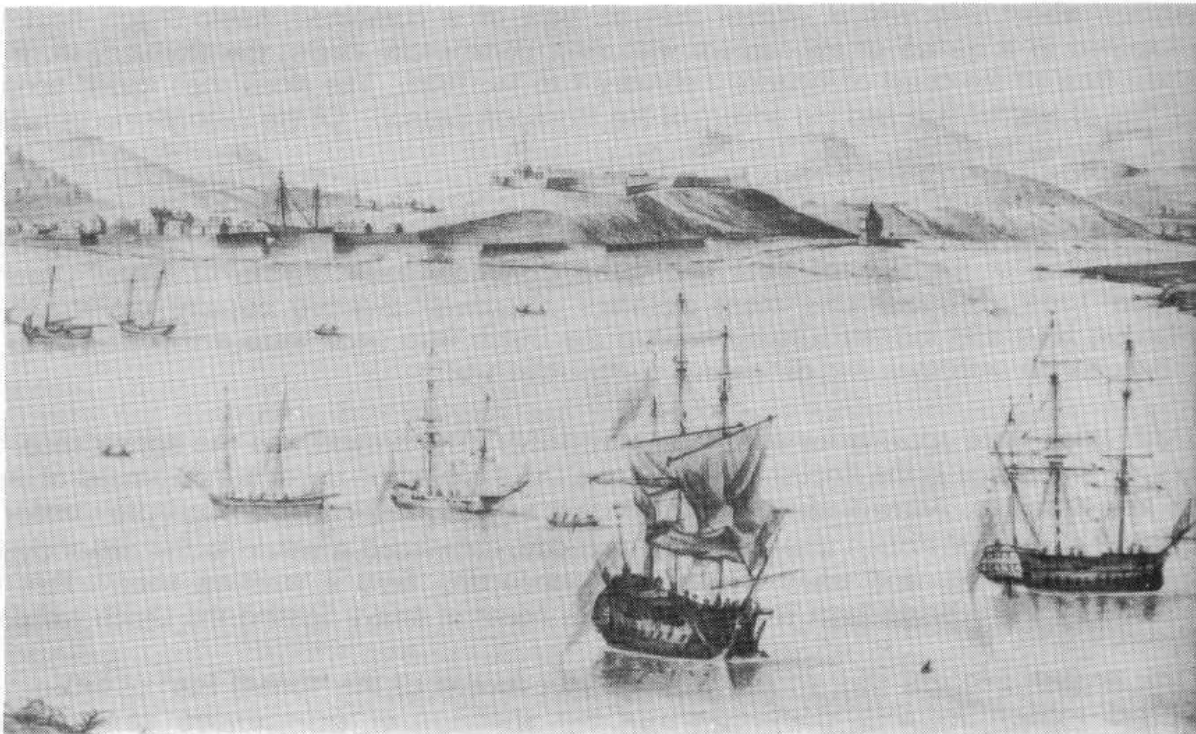
Both sides were spoiling for a fight by May 1652. The pretext was the appearance, in a sheltered anchorage in the English Channel, of a Dutch squadron under the command of one of their ablest sailors, Admiral Marten Tromp. *Star* as part of the English squadron under the command of Admiral Robert Blake, arrived next day, demanded a salute to the newly devised Commonwealth flag, and when it was not forthcoming fired a warning shot. This was answered by a broadside from Tromp. After five hours of heavy fighting the Dutch withdrew.

The English success was attributed to the introduction of the "formal line" of battle. The apparent reason for this innovation was the shortage of experienced sea-officers in Cromwell's navy. Generals at Sea, such as Blake, deplored the melee which was the accepted form of battle. He utilized a more disciplined parade ground formation in order to make better use of his fire power to offset the superior Dutch ship-handling skills.



In 1652, *Star* was part of the English Squadron that defeated a superior Dutch fleet at Dover with the introduction of the formal line of battle.

**National Maritime Museum,
Greenwich U.K.**



Watercolour by J. J. Bastioles, Public Archives of Canada

In 1711, HMS *Star* was part of the British fleet that captured Port Royal to mark the beginning of the end of French colonial power in Nova Scotia.

The victory was a splendid achievement and a balm to English naval aspirations. *Star* along with the other English ships present at the battle, received the battle honour "Dover 1652", to commemorate their splendid success.

At the end of the First Dutch war, *Star* along with other naval vessels, was put up for disposal in 1654. However, a principle of naval strategy had been established that was to last for more than a century until challenged by Admiral Nelson. Maintaining the "formal line" of battle became the sole aim of a naval action, and it called for an exceptionally daring captain to break out of his admiral's formed line. The result was a century of indecisive actions in which opportunities to achieve a tactical surprise were deliberately thrown away to avoid breaking the line.

Some of the reforms of Cromwell's Commonwealth were swept aside in 1660 with the return of Charles II to the throne. This event marked a significant milestone for the navy. It, at last, became "Royal" in name. Therefore the next ship named *Star* in 1710 was commissioned as HMS *Star*. Of even greater significance to our heritage was the fact that she was the first *Star* to play a part in Canadian history.

HMS *Star*, along with *Dragon* and *Falmouth*, was fitted out in Plymouth for an assault against the French at Port Royal on the Bay of Fundy. The ships sailed for Boston where they met with other British ships and five provincial regiments. On September 24, 1710, the squadron of ships anchored off Port Royal near the present day training centre of C. F. B. (formerly HMCS) *Cornwallis*.

After a five month siege, the French capitulated in 1711. The English Commander took possession of the fort and changed its name to Annapolis Royal. This event marked the beginning of the end of French influence in what is now Nova Scotia. There is no explanation as to why Annapolis Royal is not a part of *Star's* battle honours. HMS *Star* was again engaged against French colonial interests, this time in the West Indies, when she was shipwrecked on May 29, 1712.

The ship's other battle honours are related to the consequences of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 and the Napoleonic Wars after the Battle of Trafalgar. By the Treaty of Paris, France was forced to yield all claims to Canada, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, but in return was allowed to keep Guadaloupe and Martinique in the West Indies and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Canada. After the French and Spanish defeat in 1805 at Trafalgar, there was still an element of the French fleet at large in the West Indies.

An 18-gunned HMS *Star* was commissioned at the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars. She was sent as part of a fleet of 45 ships, carrying 10,000 troops to strike at the garrison of Martinique manned by 5,000 troops and various batteries of 290 guns. The island capitulated on February 24, 1809. In 1810, a similar expedition was mounted against Guadaloupe, a neighbouring island. Why it was not attacked immediately after Martinique is not clear. On February 6, Guadaloupe surrendered. The troops received a medal for their victories and the ships including *Star* received the battle honour "Martinique 1809 and Guadaloupe 1810".

In 1812, hostilities broke out between the United States and Great Britain. Since the Americans did not possess a navy capable of challenging the Royal Navy's control of the Atlantic, they attacked Canada along the borders of Ontario and Quebec, a British territory which was easily accessible to them and beyond the protection of the formidable British fleet. For the defence of Canada, it was necessary that military reinforcements and supplies from Britain reach as far west as Detroit. In those days when roads were few and in poor repair,

the only practical supply route was up the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. For this reason, the successful defence of Canada depended on the naval control of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

When the War of 1812 broke out, the naval force on the Great Lakes, known as the Provincial Marine was seriously under strength. Nevertheless, it was upon this little freshwater navy that the burden of defending the lakes fell, since no warships could negotiate the rapids on the St. Lawrence.

To command the naval forces on Lake Ontario, the Admiralty chose a distinguished young officer, Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo, one of Admiral Nelson's younger confederates. He arrived at Kingston, the principal British naval base and shipyard, in May of 1813.

In order to understand the naval events of the War of 1812, it is essential to know the factors behind the strategy. The Deputy Surveyor-General in his report of 1788 wrote, "*Gales of wind or squalls rise suddenly upon the lakes, and from the confined state of the waters, or want of sea room, vessels may in some degree be considered as upon a lee shore, and this seems to point out the necessity for their being built on such a construction as will best enable them to work to windward. Schooners (with their fore-and-aft rig) should perhaps have the preference as being rather safer than sloops. They should be for eighty to one hundred tons burthen on Lake Ontario.*"¹ With the lack of sea room and the danger of a lee shore ever present, manoeuvring for a safe advantage became essential to any naval operation.

The Duke of Wellington, the foremost British military expert of the period said, "*Any offensive operation founded upon Canada must be preceded by the establishment of naval superiority on the lakes. The defence of Canada and the cooperation of the Indians depends on the navigation of the lakes.*"²

To gain superiority on Lake Ontario, both sides were engaged in a ruthless shipbuilding rivalry and a war of deception. To make his adversary, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, believe that his numerically smaller squadron was larger than it was, Sir James Yeo, changed the names and rigging of his ships to gain a psychological advantage. This masquerade confused not only Chauncey but generations of naval historians. It has now been clearly established that HMS *Star* was also known alternately as HMS *Lord Melville*.

Thanks to the publicity brought about by the discovery of the 1812 schooners, *Hamilton* and *Scourge* by Dundas resident LCdr A. Hodge, RCN, while in command of the Gate Vessel, *Porte Dauphine*, on loan to the Department of Transport as a Coast Guard environmental research ship and the consequent research by the Hamilton and Scourge Foundation, more is now known about the actions of HMS *Star (Melville)* during the War of 1812.

The first mention of *Melville (Star)* was in Yeo's report on July 16, 1813, after the American defeat at Stoney Creek in June. As he constantly harassed American supply lines and military depots on the south shore of Lake Ontario, Yeo wrote, "*I have used every device in my power to induce the enemy's squadron to come out before his new ship was ready, but to no effect.*" The new ship that Yeo refers to was the USS *Pike*, named after General Pike who was killed during the American assault on Fort York in April, 1813. Yeo continued in his

¹ Emily Cain, *Ghost Ships*, (Hamilton and Scourge Foundation, 1983), p.24

² Emily Cain, "The Burlington Races", *Hamilton Spectator*, October 25, 1984, Sec. B, p. B16

report, "Our new brig *Melville (Star)* will be launched this week, when the two squadrons will be in as great a force as they can be this year, and immediately we are both ready, a general action must take place, as every military operation or success depends entirely on whoever can maintain the naval superiority on this lake." ¹

The new brig was named in honour of Robert Saunders Dundas, Viscount Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty 1812 - 1827. Melville Sound was also named after him for his interest in arctic exploration. Our neighbouring town of Dundas was named in honour of his father Henry.

It was noted that on July 24, 1813, *Melville (Star)* was added to the British inventory at Kingston with a complement of 60 men. She was 186 tons and carried 14 guns, 2 long 18 pounders and 12 - 32 pounder carronades. As of that date the British squadron consisted of six ships; *Wolfe* 425 tons (flagship), *Royal George* 340 tons, *Lord Melville* (brig), *Earl of Moira* (brig), *Sir Sidney Smith* and *General Beresford* (schooners). A brig such as *Melville (Star)* was a two-masted, square-rigged vessel with additional lower fore-and-aft sail on a gaff and boom attached to the mainmast.

Melville (Star) was armed, like most of the British fleet, with carronades which were short range weapons but far more destructive than the long range American guns. To gain the advantage, Yeo needed rough weather or a night action to close quarters, while Chauncey's long guns made his squadron superior in calm weather at long range. Neither wished to engage without the upwind position and plenty of sea room. To be caught on a lee shore was to be avoided at all costs.

Such were the rules of engagement that both squadrons had to exploit when they met in the lake off the mouth of the Niagara River on August 7 and 10, 1813. *Melville (Star)* was the third largest ship in the British squadron.

The following extract is from the report that Yeo made of this action to Prevost:

"At sunset [on August 10] a breeze came off the land which gave us the wind of the enemy and I stood for them... He was in a long line...and two schooners to windward [were slow in tacking]. I therefore made sail between them and the two schooners to windward...while I captured the Julia and Growler, each mounting one long 32 and one long 12 with a complement of forty men." ²

Newspaper coverage of the action of August 10, 1813, reports that the *Julia* and *Growler* were captured after maintaining an unequal contest for 45 minutes with the *Wolfe* and *Melville (Star)* at pistol shot. ³

Yeo's report continues:

"I am also happy to acquaint you that two of his largest schooners, the Hamilton, of nine guns, and the Scourge, of ten guns, upset the night before last in carrying sail to keep from us, and all on board perished, in number about one hundred. This has reduced his squadron to ten and increased ours to eight, but they will take men from [our other] ships." ⁴

¹ Cain, p. 96

² Cain, p. 116

³ *Ships Data Base 1812 - 1815*, (Hamilton Scourge Project), p. A416

⁴ Cain, p. 116

This last statement is a clear indication of the shortage of experienced sailors on the lakes.

Chauncey's corresponding report stated that,

*"The loss of the Growler and Julia is mortifying in the extreme...[but] I have been able to discover [that] the enemy has no intention of engaging except he can get decidedly the advantage of wind and weather, and as his vessels in squadron sail better than our squadron he can always avoid an action unless I can gain the wind and have sufficient daylight to bring him to action before dark."*¹

The next naval action on Lake Ontario brought *Melville (Star)* literally right onto our doorstep in Burlington Bay. Although it was not a glorious battle, it was a brilliant defensive achievement that preserved the British squadron and prevented the Americans from gaining complete control of the Great Lakes. Such an occurrence would likely have resulted in the Americans winning the War of 1812. The exploit referred to here happened on September 28, 1813 and has gone down in Canadian annals of that period as the Burlington Races.

The story can best be told by Emily Cain. Her article, "Heroic lakes pilot turned tide in the War of 1812" is liberally quoted here from the Hamilton Spectator, October 25, 1984.

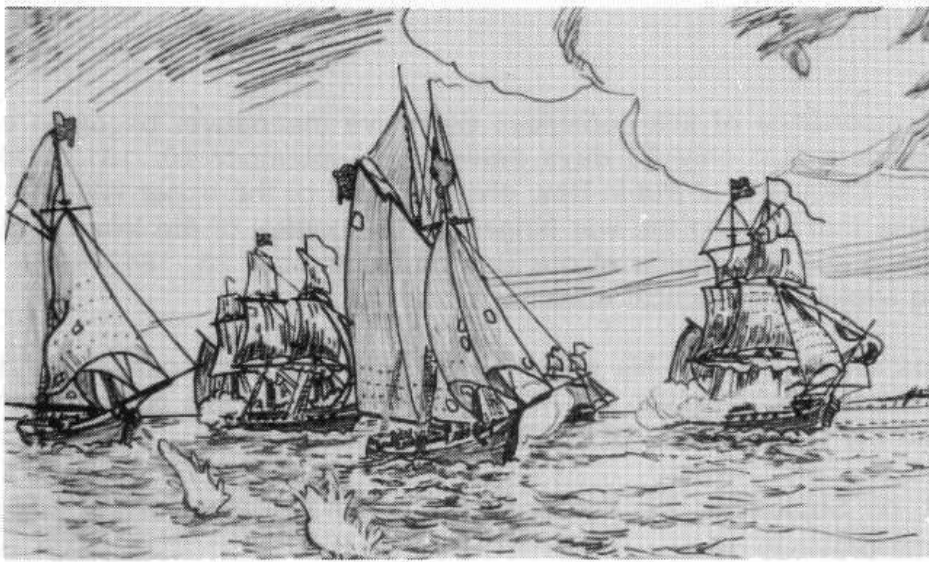
"The capsizing of Hamilton and Scourge on August 8, 1813, and the capture two days later of two additional American schooners, Growler and Julia, gave the British a short-lived superiority. However, the Americans launched the huge schooner Sylph shortly afterwards, and she went far to redress the loss of the four smaller schooners.

On September 28, Sir James Yeo was anchored in the Bay at York (Toronto) [with his squadron of six ships], having just returned from delivering supplies to the army stationed at the Head-of-the-Lake. About midday, the American squadron bore down from the east [in a very extended line and Yeo attacked the centre of the line at close range for about an hour.] [Yeo's ship suffered damage to her masts and] as the laggardly portion of the American line caught up [and began to overwhelm him], Yeo decided to retire. The wind had come up from the east [placing him in the very unfavourable position of being down wind under reduced sail on a lee shore. He withdrew downwind in the direction of the Head-of-the-Lake.] Yeo's flight and Chauncey's pursuit is popularly known as the 'Burlington Races'."

Chauncey chased Yeo. Then, according to the log of HMS Wolfe, "at 4:30 the (British) squadron came to an anchor off Burlington Bay (in the vicinity of Bronte), close in shore with springs on the cables." In other words the British squadron maintained a strong defensive position close in shore so that the enemy could not envelop them. With a following wind, the ships anchored by the stern, hauling their anchors to the rear using rope spring hawsers. By releasing these ropes during battle, the ships could swing in the wind on their anchor cables and present a fresh bank of guns to the enemy.

Commodore Yeo, a superb seaman, had maintained the fighting integrity of his squadron and compensated for his flagship's lack of maneuverability under sail. As a result, the Americans declined battle and took refuge in the mouth of the Niagara River to repair their damaged ships, leaving the British squadron "unmolested" and in control of Lake Ontario. It is a myth that the British squadron ran away and hid in Burlington Bay. That story was so well told that fancy became fact, but in reality, fact was even fancier than fiction.

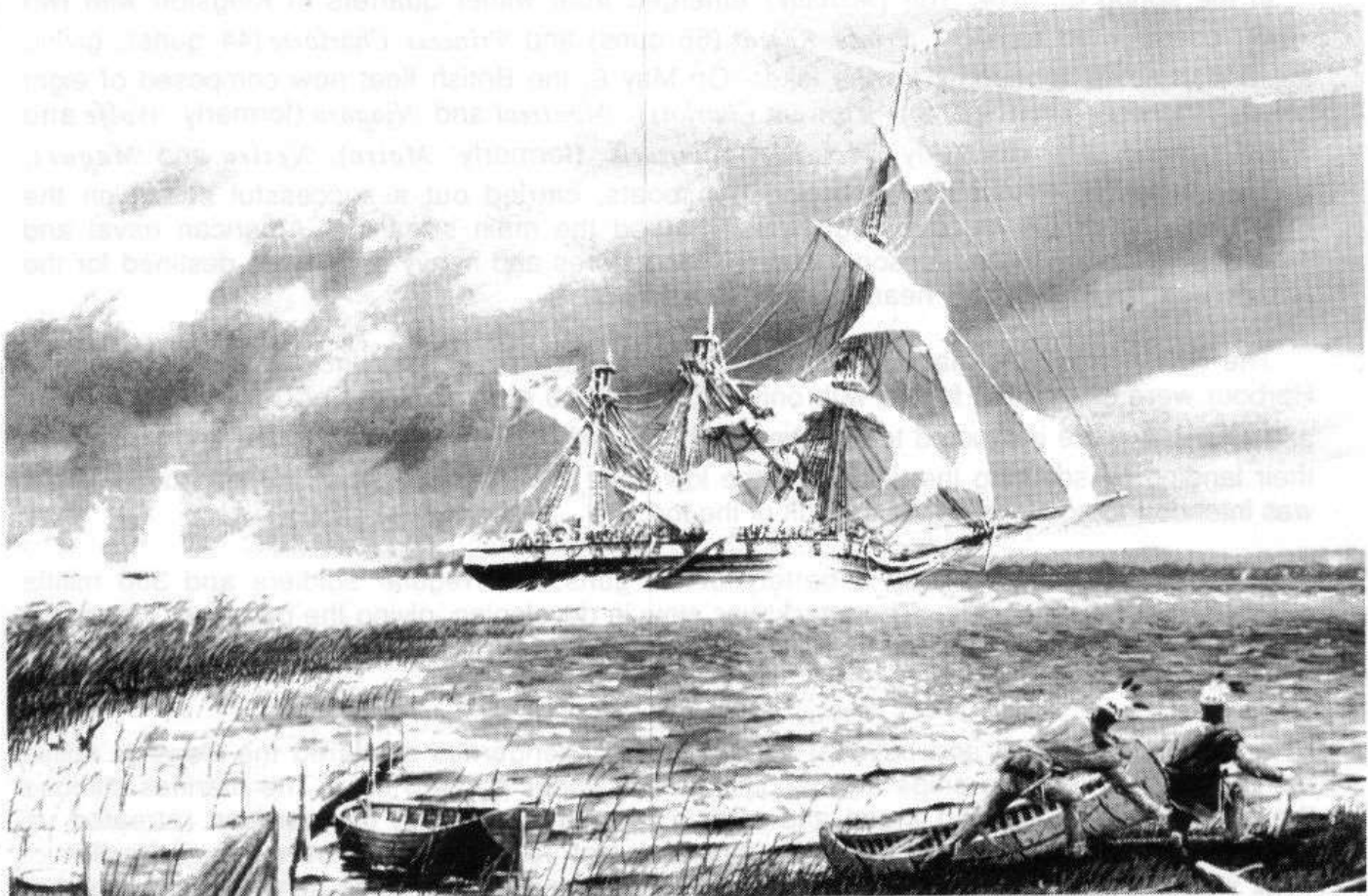
¹ Cain, p. 117



Naval uniforms of 1812.
(Ralph.Clark.Stone Ltd.)

HMS Star (right) IN ACTION, AUG. 10, 1813 Adapted from a sketch
by C. W. Jefferys

The balance of naval power in Lake Ontario was temporarily swung in favour of the British on Aug. 10, 1813 when Commodore Chauncey lost four ships in two days; the schooners USS *Scourge* and USS *Hamilton* in a squawl and USS *Growler* and USS *Julia* in action against HMS *Wolfe* and HMS *Star*.



Burlington Races September 28, 1813

Painting by Peter Rindlisbacher 1989, Permission Hamilton Scourge Foundation

HMS *Wolfe*, Royal George and Melville are shown approaching the Head of the Lake at Burlington in line ahead formation with a strong easterly wind setting them on a lee shore. They are about to anchor with hawsers hauling their anchors to the stern, allowing them to rotate around their anchors to present a formidable field of fire. Such superior British seamanship prevented the Americans from winning the War of 1812.

The magnitude of the importance of this audacious defensive manoeuvre becomes very significant when one considers that only 18 days earlier on September 10, 1813, Oliver Perry had won the battle of Lake Erie at Put-in-Bay, giving control of the upper lakes to the Americans. On the premise that winning the war hinged on the control of the lakes, victory was snatched from the enemy at the head of the lake on September 28, 1813 when the Americans were unable to exploit their tactical advantage.

After the engagement, on September 29, Yeo praised Captain Mulcaster in HMS Royal George and Captain Spilsbury in HMS Melville (STAR) for their actions on the previous day. It would seem fitting, given the military significance of this battle, that the British ships involved be awarded Battle Honours for "Burlington 1813". No such acknowledgement was considered by the British Admiralty or the future government of Canada.

On November 2, 1813, before wintering in Kingston, *Melville (Star)* in company with *Moir*, *Sir Sidney Smith* and *Beresford*, attacked the enemy at French Creek. They entered the harbour under heavy fire and anchored in order of battle. They bombarded the enemy positions, retired at nightfall and repeated the attack the next day.

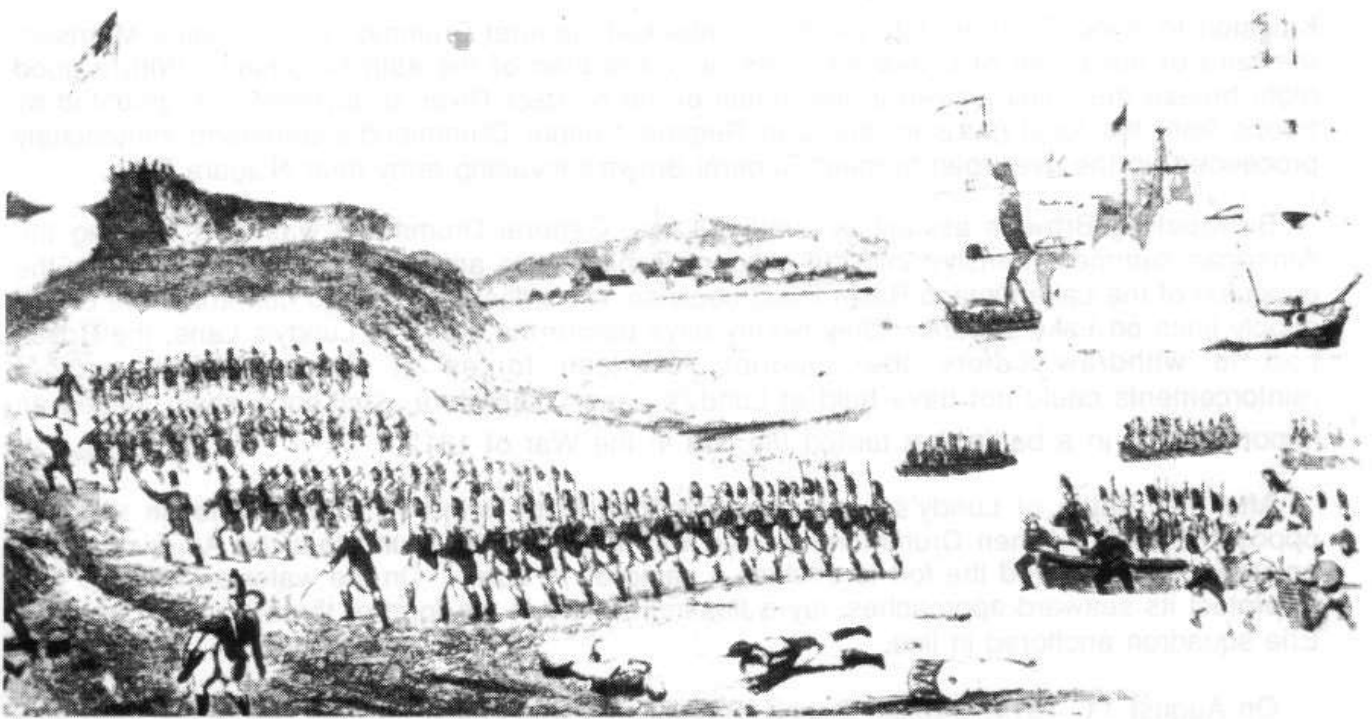
In the spring of 1814, *Star (Melville)* emerged from winter quarters in Kingston with two newly constructed frigates, *Prince Regent* (66 guns) and *Princess Charlotte* (44 guns), giving the British naval superiority on the lake. On May 6, the British fleet now composed of eight ships, *Prince Regent* (flagship), *Princess Charlotte*, *Montreal* and *Niagara* (formerly *Wolfe* and *Royal George*), *Star* (formerly *Melville*), *Charwell* (formerly *Moir*), *Netley* and *Magnet*, accompanied by eleven troop-carrying gun boats, carried out a successful attack on the American port of Oswego, through which poured the main stream of American naval and military supplies from the Hudson Valley. These stores and heavy guns were destined for the American ships building at nearby Sacketts Harbour.

The Americans who had been expecting an attack on their principal port at Sacketts Harbour were caught flat footed with only a force of 300 men stationed at Oswego. HMS *Star* and *Charwell* were instructed to tow the gun boats with the troops into position and then cover their landing by scouring the woods on the low point towards the foot of the hill from which it was intended to advance on the assault of the fort.

The port was defended by a battery of six guns, 300 regular soldiers and 300 militia drawn from the countryside. The attack was slow in developing, giving the people of Oswego a chance to remove some of the vital war supplies from the port to a cache eighteen miles up the Oswego River.

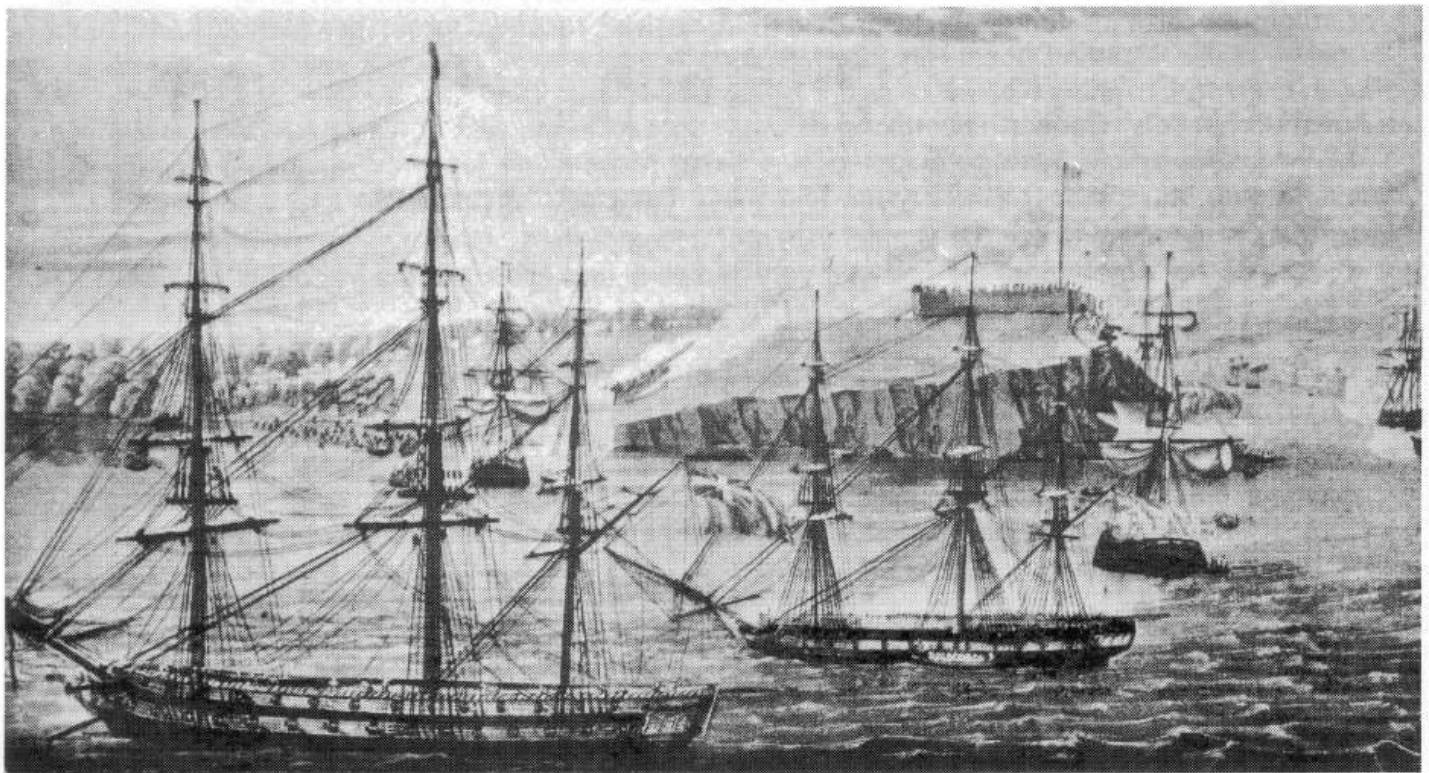
A wild Highland yell and bayonet charge by the Glengarries scattered the Oswego militia but the battery kept the ships and landing parties under a sharp fire. The marines climbed the bluff on which the fort stood and after a ten minute scuffle, the garrison retreated up river. The Americans lost 69 men, the attackers lost 95. The spoils were only a fraction of what was expected, 2,400 barrels of provisions, ammunition and some heavy naval guns, but it did delay the re-equipping of the American fleet at Sacketts Harbour and raised the morale of the British and Canadians, keeping the Americans on the defensive. During the attack on Oswego, Yeo reported that Captain Anthony of *Star* behaved very much to his satisfaction.

A critical analysis of historical records shows that *Star* played a significant role in the famous Battle of Lundy's Lane at Niagara Falls on July 25, 1814. With the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo on June 18, Britain could turn her full military attention to the conflict in Canada. From the middle of July, *Star* and *Charwell* were busy transporting supplies from



The Assault On Fort Oswego, May 6, 1814
John Ross Robertson Collection

HMS *Star* and HMS *Charwell* towed the boats with troops into position and provided covering fire from inshore for the assault on the fort.



The Storming of Fort Oswego, May 6, 1814

The frigates, HMS *Prince Regent* and HMS *Princess Charlotte* are in the foreground while the brigs, HMS *Charwell* left and HMS *Star* right, cover the landing of troops inshore. The British attack captured stores and delayed the equipping of the American fleet at Sacketts Harbour. (Cain, p. 118)

Kingston to York. Then on July 24, they embarked General Drummond, Lt. Colonel Morrison, the hero of the Battle of Chrysler's Farm, and 400 men of the 89th Regiment. With a good night breeze the ships arrived in the mouth of the Niagara River at daybreak. Augmented by troops from the local garrison, the 89th Regiment under Drummond's command immediately proceeded up the river road to meet General Brown's invading army near Niagara Falls.

By repelling Brown's assault at Lundy's Lane, General Drummond was able to bring the American summer offensive into the Niagara Peninsula to an end. The master plan for the conquest of the Lake Ontario Basin failed because Yeo's fleet was able to guarantee the British supply lines on Lake Ontario. Only twenty days before the Battle of Lundy's Lane, the British had to withdraw before the superior American forces at Chippewa and without reinforcements could not have held at Lundy's Lane. Therefore, *Star* once again played an important role in a battle that turned the tide in the War of 1812.

After the Battle of Lundy's Lane, the American Army withdrew to Fort Erie on the lake opposite Buffalo. When Drummond arrived with his army, he found that the Americans had enlarged and improved the fort to enclose a camp of 15 acres. On the water beyond the fort, to protect its seaward approaches, lay a floating battery in the form of three ships of the Lake Erie squadron anchored in line.

On August 11, 1814, Captain Dobbs, R.N. of *Star* was called up from below the Falls with seventy-five of his crew and marines to mount a night commando raid. They succeeded in capturing two of these floating batteries, USS *Somers* and *Ohio*. On August 13, Captain Dobbs wrote in his report to Sir James Yeo, "*I beg leave particularly to mention Mr. Grinded, mate of the Star and Mr. Hyde, mate of the Charwell, not only for their gallant conduct in the attack [on the American ships], but for their skill in bringing the vessels into the [Niagara] river through shoals and rapids and under a constant and heavy fire [from Fort Erie].*"¹ General Drummond also remarked in his report that he had received great assistance from Yeo's sailors under Captain Dobbs, R.N. of HMS *Star*.

Unfortunately, General Drummond did not succeed in the rest of his attack on Fort Erie. If he had, *Star* would have participated in a battle responsible for throwing the Americans out of Canada, thus adding to her battle honours, "Lake Erie 1814". Ironically, what Drummond and his army failed to do, the Canadian winter accomplished. On Guy Fawkes Day, November 5, 1814, the Americans set fire to every building and blew up the redoubts of Fort Erie before crossing the water to their winter quarters at Buffalo.

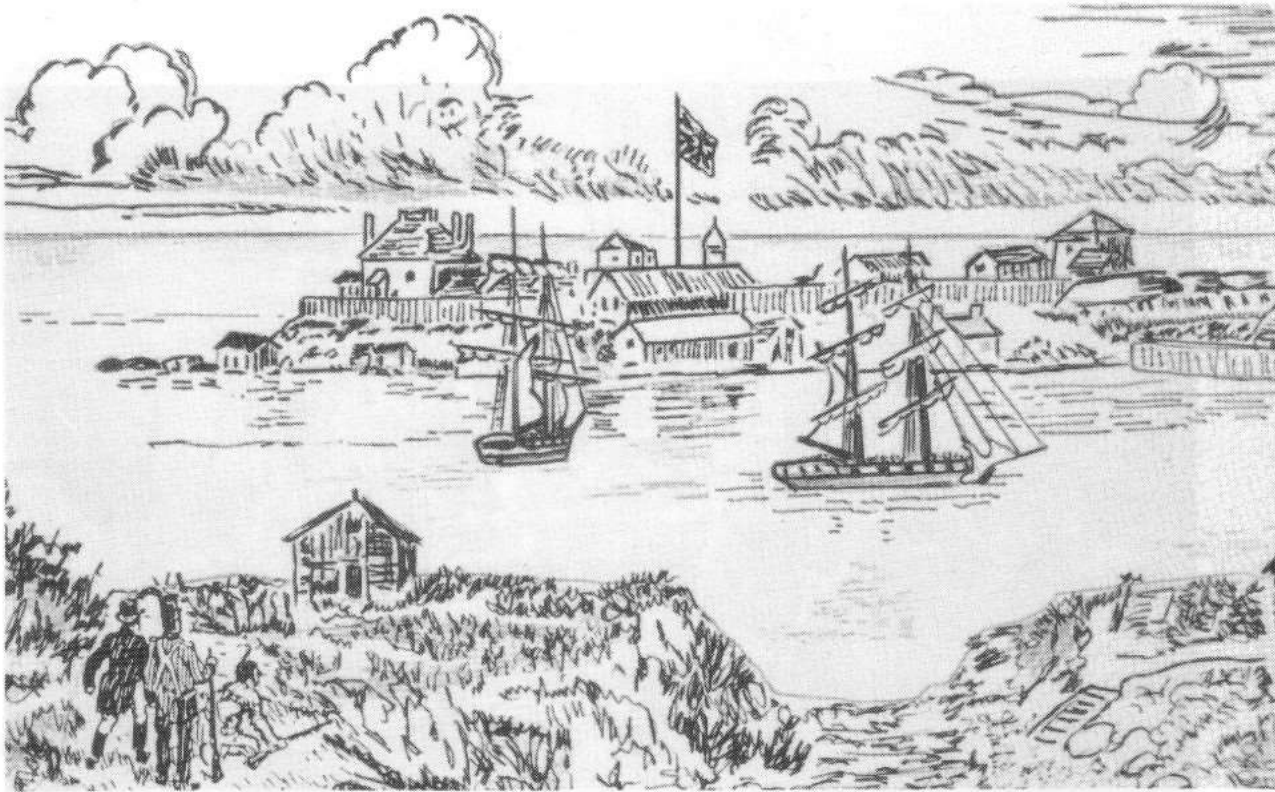
The last entry for HMS *Star* in the record of the War of 1812 occurred on November 24, 1814. General Drummond reported from Kingston that "*The Star unluckily sprung her masts in a winter gale and cannot venture upon the Lake again this season.*"² The structural damage must have been very extensive, for in 1815 she was declared unfit for anything but transport duties and in 1836 as part of the peace negotiations, decommissioned and sold.

A considerable amount of detail about the War of 1812 has been provided in this anniversary history because heretofore little has been recorded of the role that *Star* has played in the successful and vigorous defence of Canada. It is a role that deserves greater recognition.

The period of Pax Britannica following the fall of Napoleon in 1815, witnessed the ascendancy of British naval supremacy and her warships kept the freedom of the seas, "*for all who pass upon their lawful occasions*". The sixth ship to bear the name HMS *Star* was

¹ Ships Data Base 1812 - 1815, p. A617

² Ibid, p. A618



British Reinforcements arrive At Niagara Adapted from sketch by B. J. Lossing

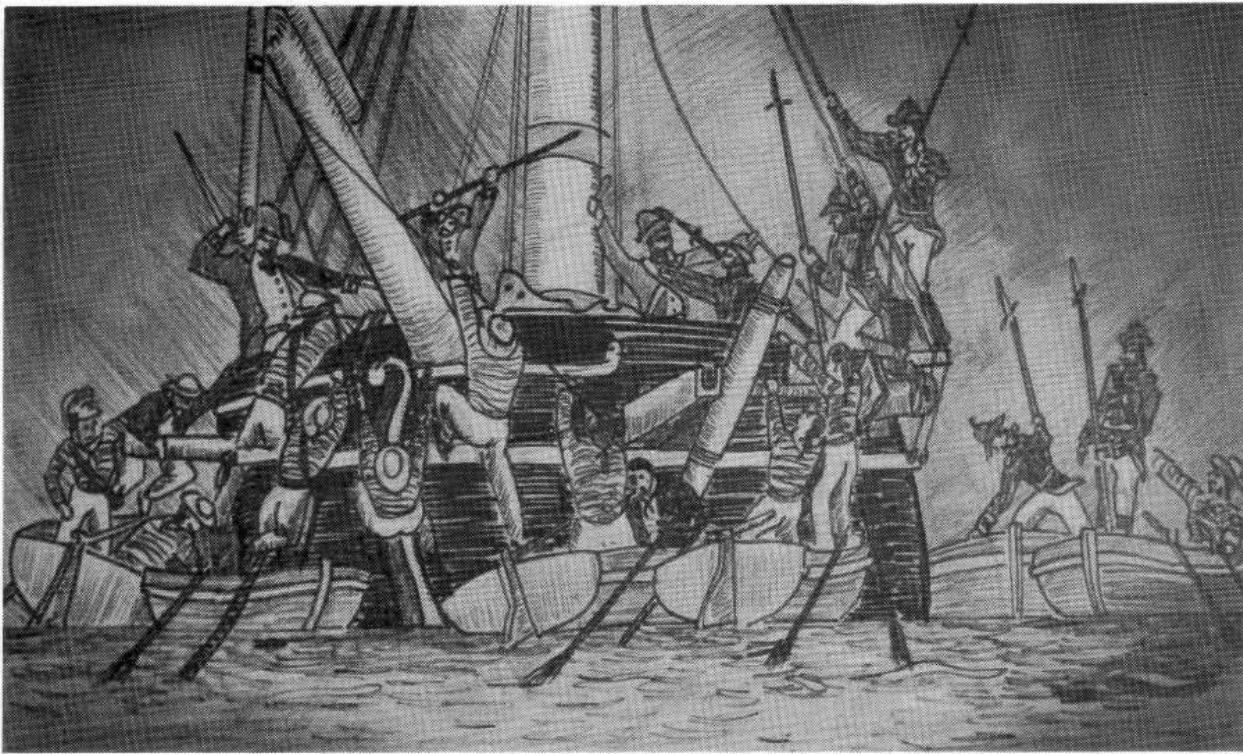
The brigs HMS *Star* and HMS *Charwell* arrive at Fort Niagara with essential reinforcements of 400 men from the 89th Regiment under the command of General Drummond on the eve of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, July 25, 1814.

Picture Gallery of Canadian History, C. W. Jefferys, Ryerson Press, Toronto



Battle of Lundy's Lane, July 25, 1814 From Harper's Weekly, June 16, 1866

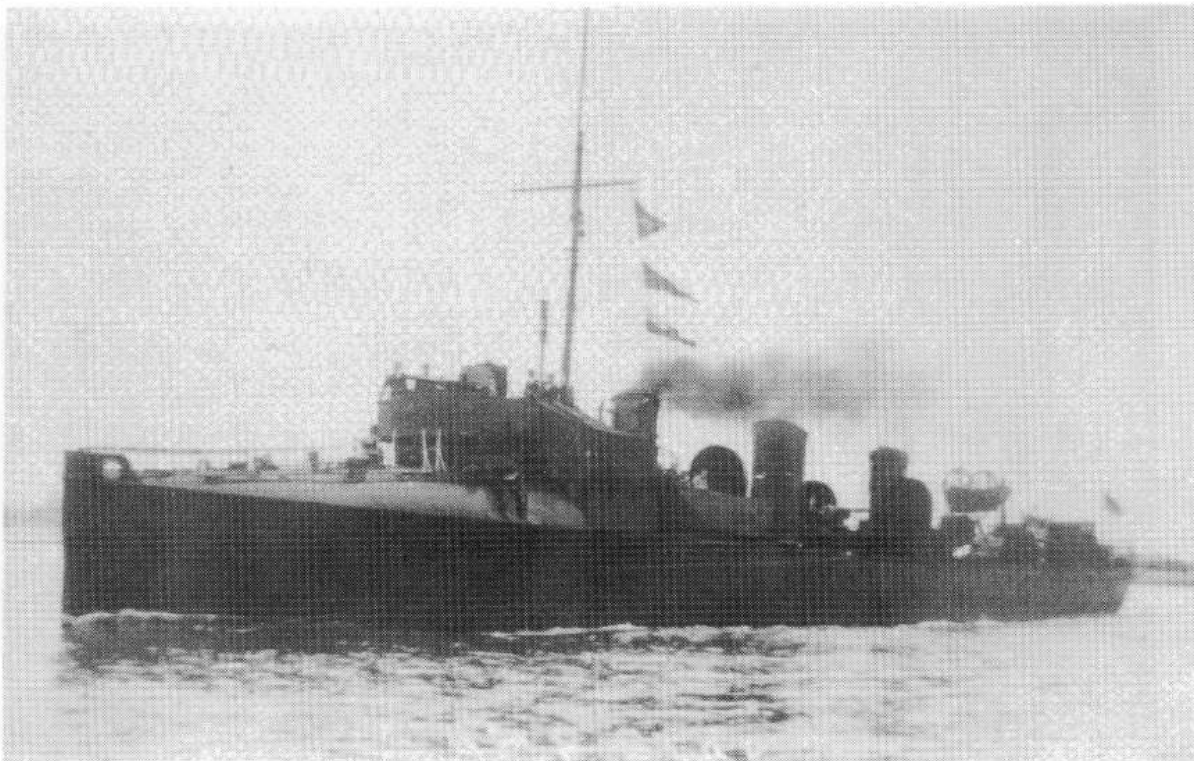
The British troops under General Drummond repulsed the American invasion at Niagara Falls.



Capture of USS Ohio and Somers, Fort Erie, August 11, 1814

Cdr. Williamson

In a dramatic night boarding action, Captain Dobbs, R.N. of HMS *Star*, with 75 of his crew and marines, captured USS *Ohio* and USS *Somers* in preparation for General Drummond's attack on Fort Erie, August 11, 1814.



Destroyer HMS Star 1918

commissioned into this period in 1845. Her duties were to suppress piracy and chase down slavers. She captured the slaver *Felicidade* on March 6, 1845.

In 1868, a four gunned HMS *Star* powered by both sail and screw, participated in the Abyssinian campaign. She was amongst the ships that received medals.

The last Royal Navy vessel to be called *Star* was a "C" class destroyer built under the expansion program of 1895 to 1901. She had a distinctive turtle-back bow and a maximum speed of 30 knots. Armed with one 12-pounder, five 6-pounders and two 18-inch tubes, she was 210 feet long. She saw service during the Great War 1914 - 1918 as part of the Shetland patrol, guarding these northern islands from attack by German submarines and minelayers.

When selecting a name for a new naval division on the Great Lakes in 1941, the prerequisites were that the ship have a tradition of battle honours to carry forward and be connected with Canadian and if possible with local heritage. It was also preferable to have a short name for ease of printing on cap tallies and ship's badges. Thus it was events in the War of 1812 on Lake Ontario that probably brought about the selection of the name HMCS *Star* for the Hamilton Naval Division.

HMCS *Star* is the ninth ship to bear that name with a significant heritage covering a period of 366 years. Her battle honours should be much more extensive and include many more dates, particularly those relevant to Canada. In summary, *Star's* record of action should read as follows:

1.	East Indian <i>Star</i>	Arabian Sea	1625
2.	Cromwell's <i>Star</i>	Dover	1652
3.	Colonial American HMS <i>Star</i>	Port Royal	1711
4.	West Indian HMS <i>Star</i>	Martinique	1809
		Guadaloupe	1810
5.	War of 1812 HMS <i>Star</i> (<i>Melville</i>)	Lake Ontario	1813
		Burlington	1813
		Oswego	1814
		Lundy's Lane	1814
		Fort Erie	1814
6.	Pax Britannica HMS <i>Star</i>	High Seas	1845
7.	Colonial Africa HMS <i>Star</i>	Abyssinia	1868
8.	World War I HMS <i>Star</i>	Shetland Islands	1914 - 1918

HMCS *Star* commissioned

Hamilton

1941



CHAPTER TWO

ORIGINS OF THE CANADIAN NAVAL RESERVE

Naval Brigade

After the War of 1812, the Provincial Marine was disbanded as part of the peace treaty. Citizens of Canada lived undisturbed until 1837 when the Third Gore Regiment under Lt. Col. Allan MacNab was mobilized to search out and destroy elements of a rebel force under the command of William Lyon MacKenzie. This outcast of the political system undertook to overthrow the Government of Canada and establish a reform party to displace the ruling Family Compact.

It was at this time that the first account of a volunteer naval force appeared in Hamilton. This force would be the forerunner of the present naval reserve at *Star*, and like so much of this city's legacy, traces its origins to the actions of one of our greatest historic figures.

While pursuing political activists in the Woodstock area, Lt. Col. Allan MacNab, commanding the Gore Regiment (now the R.H.L.I.), met Captain Andrew Drew, recently retired from the Royal Navy on half pay, who had purchased a farm in the area. MacNab was a good judge of character and was instantly impressed by this officer.

In the meantime William Lyon MacKenzie had escaped to the Niagara Frontier where he recruited supporters in the United States and seized Navy Island, a Canadian possession about three miles above Niagara Falls, next to Grand Island. He had set up a provisional government, complete with a tri-colour flag bearing stars to represent Upper and Lower Canada.

Realizing the need for a navy officer of Drew's ability to conduct seaborne sorties against rebel positions on the Niagara River, MacNab invited Drew to join with the Gore Regiment.

The loyalists relied entirely on volunteers for the entire campaign. When he arrived in Hamilton, Drew quickly enlisted a "Naval Brigade" comprised of former Royal Navy and Merchant Sailors who had settled around the Port of Hamilton, now known as the "north end", adjacent to the present naval base.

When Drew arrived at Chippewa with his volunteers, he set about finding boats for a crossing. On the afternoon of December 29, while standing in company with MacNab, they saw a small steamer cross from Fort Schlosser on the American side to Navy Island. The vessel was crowded with men and weapons. It was decided then and there that MacKenzie's forces had to be deprived of this vital supply link.

The steamer that they had seen was the *Caroline* of Buffalo, which had been chartered to carry troops and stores to Navy Island. MacNab called upon his naval advisor for a plan. Drew recommended a surprise seaborne night attack by his naval brigade and marines. MacNab wanted the *Caroline* brought back to Chippewa, but Drew argued that the Americans would demand her return. They decided that burning would be the best permanent solution.

Sixty volunteers with cutlasses were selected and about midnight they shoved off in seven boats. They crossed just above the rapids in bright moonlight. The powerful current

threatened to carry them irresistibly to the brink of the cataract, but they finally forced their way upstream to the shelter of the American shore and the *Caroline*, hidden by a low spit of land.

Captain Drew was the first to clamber up the side, startling three men lounging on deck. As they reached for their weapons, a sabre cut disposed of them. The main body of attackers routed the sleeping crew and booted them ashore. It was discovered that the *Caroline* was chained to the wharf. A crowd of men from a nearby tavern assembled on the wharf and Lt Elmsby with sixteen men armed with cutlasses, kept them at bay until the chain could be cut by Edward Zealand.

The paddle steamer was towed out into the current by the small boats of the naval brigade, set on fire and cast adrift. She passed through the rapids wrapped in flames and grounded on a small islet near the brink of the falls where she subsequently went to pieces.

Finding their supply route cut the rebels evacuated Navy Island on January 13, 1838 without a fight. Queen Victoria knighted Allan MacNab for his services during the rebellion. In recognition of their outstanding bravery in the sinking of the *Caroline*, both Captain Drew and Lt. Col. MacNab received commemorative swords from members of the Gore Regiment, Wentworth Cavalry and Loyal Indians. MacNab's sword is on display at Dundurn Castle while the whereabouts of Drew's is unknown.

Drew retired from active duty with the militia following the Tory uprising and returned to England where he lived out his life. The flag of the *Caroline* which was held as a trophy, went to England with Captain McCormick, where he vowed he would fly it on every anniversary of the sinking.

Captain Drew and his crew became the first Canadian Naval Volunteers under orders of a Canadian Government to sink an enemy ship. Since Drew's Naval Brigade was progenitor of the naval reserve in Hamilton, this military action of 1837 should become a part of *Star's* naval heritage.

THE HAMILTON NAVAL COMPANY

There being no hostilities after the short-lived rebellion in 1837, the remnants of Drew's volunteers melted away. Following the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 and the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British Regular garrison in Canada was stripped almost bare. The Canadian Militia Act of 1855 made the Dominion Government responsible for the defence of Canada through its volunteer companies.

With civil war raging to the south of Canada between the Union and Confederate States, anxiety mounted along the border. In the fall of 1861, the U.S. Coast Guard made a grave error in stopping the Royal Mail Steam packet *Trent*. This created severe tension between Great Britain and the Union and focused attention on the defence of the Great Lakes. The Militia Department raised Naval Companies to carry out this defence.

Eleven Naval Companies and one Naval Brigade were formed. These companies were uniformed as per the Royal Navy, trained in seamanship and naval gunnery. They also trained as infantry and were issued with Snider-Enfield rifles and cutlasses. A total of fifteen vessels were chartered and assigned to the Naval Companies to patrol the lakes, and transport men and supplies as required.

In Hamilton, a Volunteer Marine Company was raised in 1862 and redesignated as the Hamilton Naval Company in 1863. Like its contemporary, the Naval Company had a fine band. The duty of the Ship's Company was to guard Hamilton Harbour and protect the city. The Company trained in the Market Hall on James Street and the Rifle Ranges in Westdale beside Beasley's Hollow (Rifle Range Road). They were to man the first naval reserve gunboat, HMS *Magnet*, a former Royal Mail steamship, outfitted with an Armstrong Rifled Cannon. The *Magnet* was an iron side wheeler built on the Clyde in 1847 and shipped in sections to Niagara where she was assembled by the Niagara Dock Company. After a major rebuild in 1895 she was renamed *Hamilton* and operated on the Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal run until 1910.

The Commanding Officer of the Hamilton Naval Company was Captain Thomas Harbottle R.N. (Ret'd). In his civilian career, he was employed as Commodore of the Royal Mail Line operating between Montreal and Hamilton. He had settled in Hamilton in 1855 with his wife Euphenia and their sixteen children.

During the Fenian invasion in 1866, all the local militia went to meet the attack at Ridgway, leaving the Naval Company and the Field Battery as the garrison for the city. During this scare, a general alarm was sounded. It was reported that Hamilton was in imminent danger of a Fenian waterborne invasion. The Naval Company rushed to the waterfront at the foot of James Street and steam was raised on the *Magnet*. However, the invasion turned out to be nothing more than a steam tug assembling a lumber raft in the harbour entrance.

After the Fenian threat disappeared, the Hamilton Naval Company disbanded in 1868. Captain Harbottle and his loyal sailors were sent into retirement. For lack of a naval company to serve, Captain Harbottle joined the XIIIth Battalion, the forerunner of the R.H.L.I.

As Colwyn Beynon, Chief Curator of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Heritage Museum, points out, both HMCS *Star* and the R.H.L.I. can trace a history of partnership, standing side-by-side through the Rebellion of 1837 and the Fenian Raids of 1866.

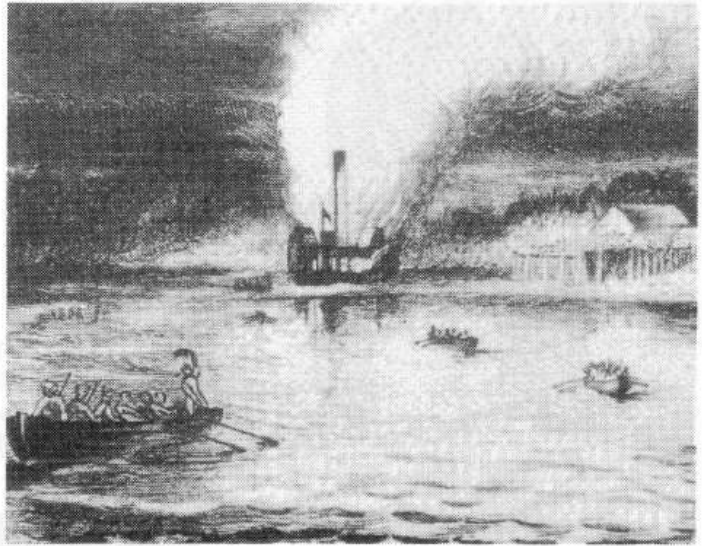
SHIP'S COMPANY
HMS GUNBOAT *MAGNET*
PORT OF HAMILTON
JUNE 2, 1866

Thomas Harbottle Captain R.N. (ret'd)	G. T. Malcolmson First Lieutenant
John G. Laven Second Lieutenant	G. H. Hills Midshipman
Thomas Blythe Spence Gunner	Robert E. Smith Able Seaman
William Griffith Able Seaman	Charles James Myles Able Seaman
James Hughes Able Seaman	Norman McLeod Black Able Seaman
John D. Mills Able Seaman	John Sutherland McLeod Able Seaman
John Knox Able Seaman	William Peace Able Seaman
Robert Barker Able Seaman	Daniel Barker Able Seaman
William Verrall Able Seaman	C. J. Miles Quartermaster
Edward Zealand Jr., Drummer	Edward Zealand, Sr. Captain (Ret'd) ¹

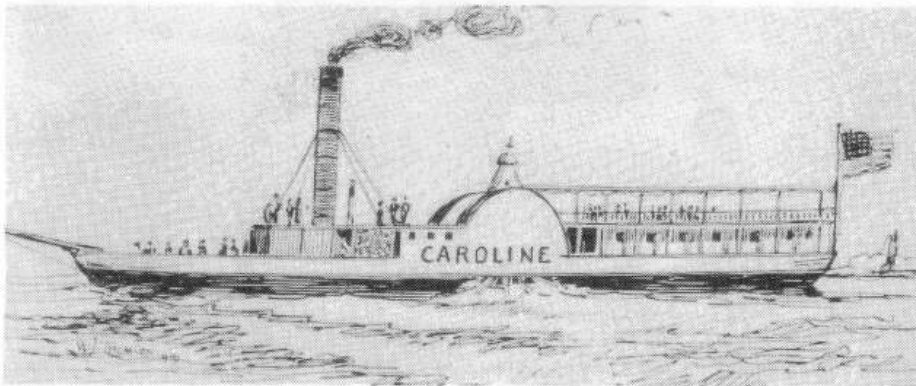
¹ Colwyn G. Beynon, Nominal Roll Hamilton Naval Company, RHLI Archive



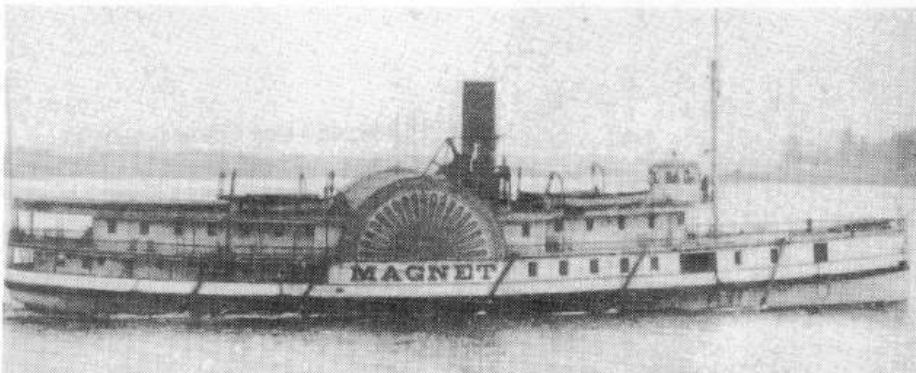
Captain Andrew Drew, hero of the Caroline sinking, recruited the Hamilton Naval Brigade in 1837.
(Public Archives of Canada)



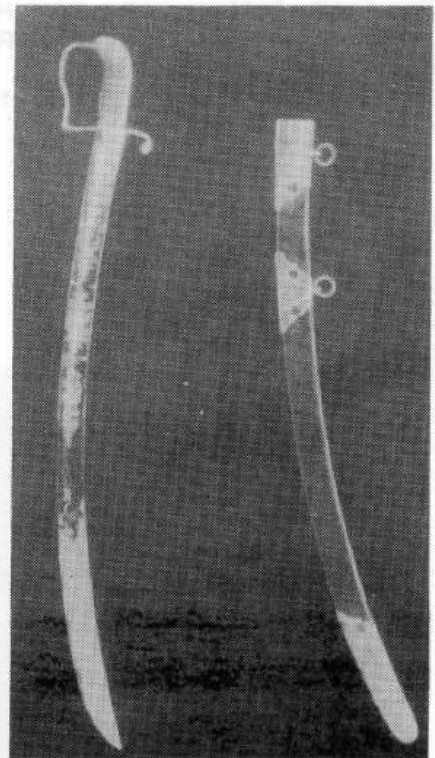
Cutting out and burning of the Caroline by the Hamilton Naval Brigade on the night of Dec. 29, 1837 near Schlosser, N.Y.
(Ontario Archives)



The Caroline of Buffalo, N.Y. sunk by the volunteers of the Hamilton Naval Brigade, 1837.
(Metropolitan Toronto Library)



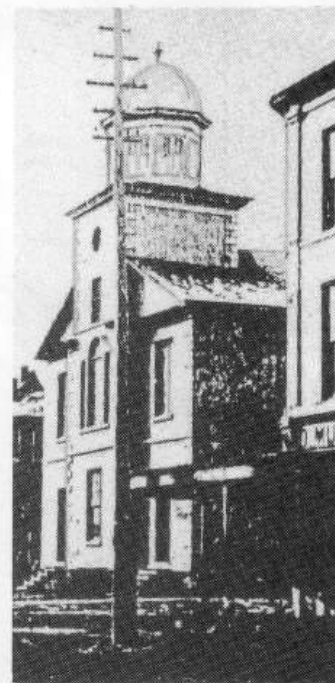
Magnet - The first Naval Reserve vessel manned by the Hamilton Naval Company, 1863.
(Great Lakes Ships We Remember)



Sword presented to Captain Drew in 1838.
(Canadian War Museum)



(Left)
Uniforms worn by members of
the Hamilton Naval Company
during the Fenian invasion of
1866.

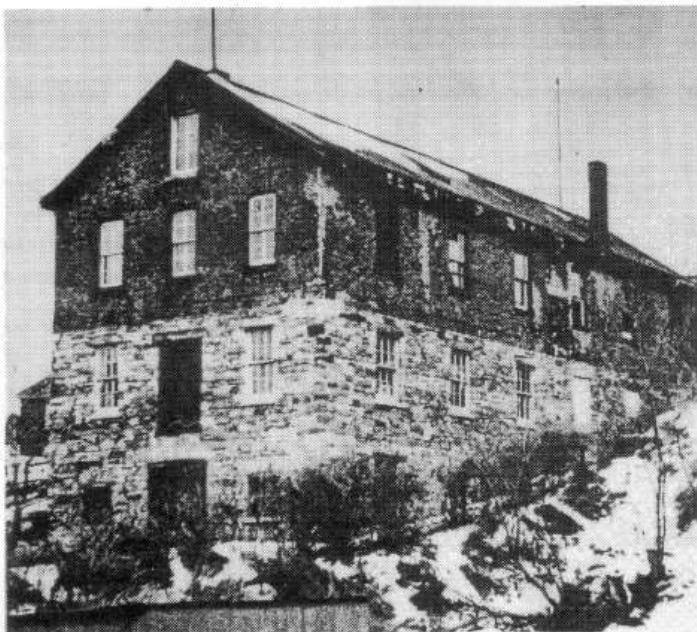


(Right)
The Naval Company trained in
the Market Hall on James
Street. (T.R. Woodhouse)

Lt Yeates chose a store house at 469 Bay Street as the first home of the RCNVR in 1923. It was the former site of the Reid Engine Works and Grant's Sail Loft.
(Hank Nyhof)



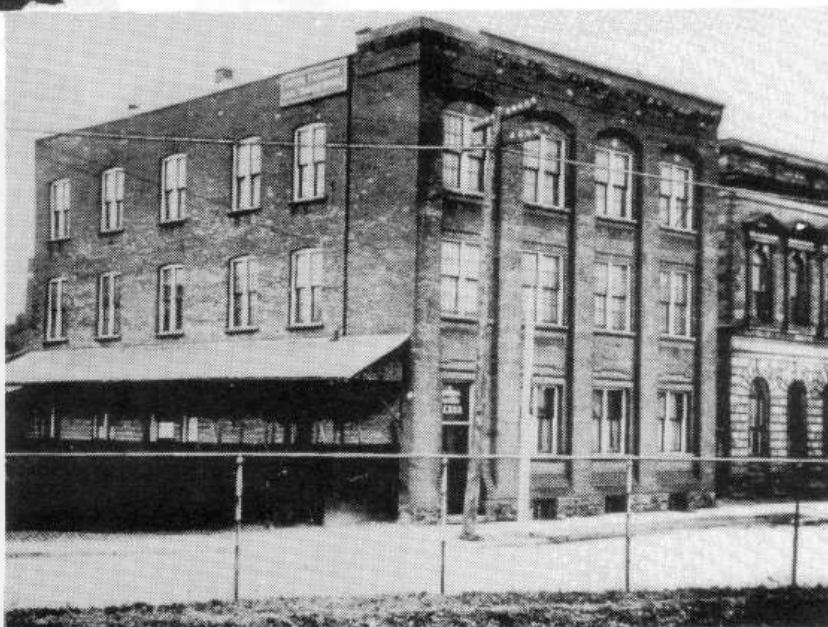
Built in 1869, 469 Bay Street has been
designated a historic property and
returned to its original use as a sail loft.
(R. Williamson)



The sail loft on Bay Street as seen from the water showing the four floors. (Spectator)



Ship's colours, donated by the Caxton Chapter of the I.O.D.E., were deposited in St. Peter's Church on Main Street East on March 24, 1936. (Rev. B. Burrows)



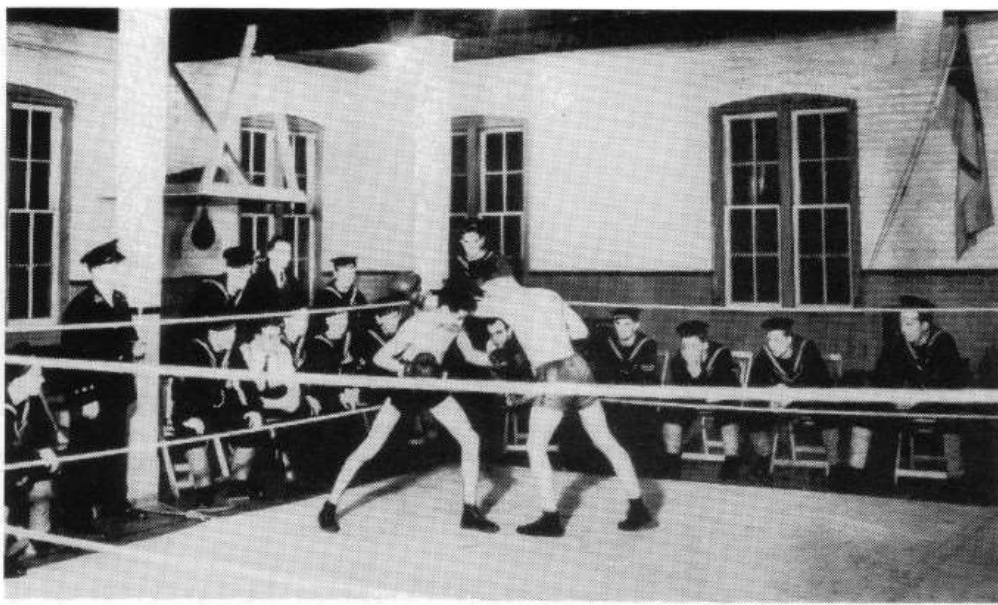
The Hamilton Division of the RCNVR moved to the vinegar works on Stuart Street in 1935. (Heddon)



The remains of 41 Stuart Street after the upper floors were destroyed in a 1948 fire. (Williamson)

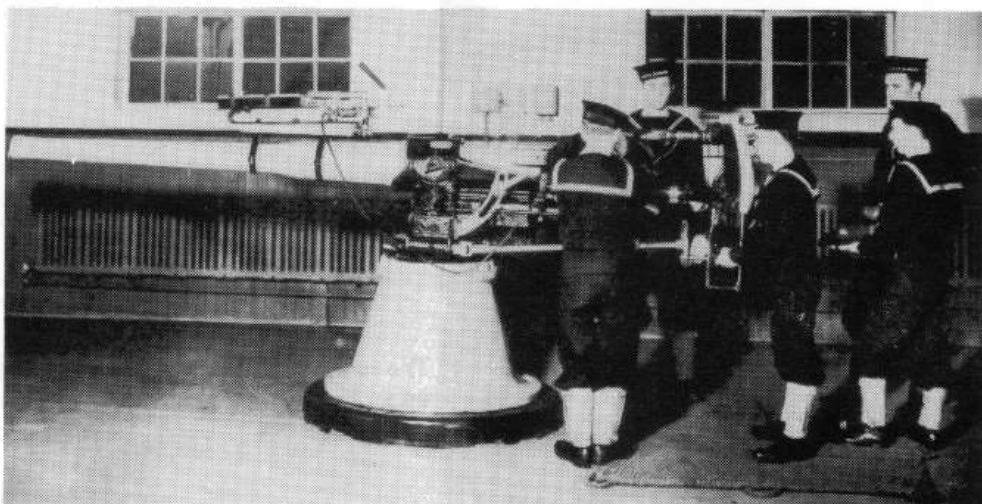


The First RCNVR personnel from Hamilton to travel to Halifax for summer training in July 1923.



Lt Yeates first arranged for boxing lessons for the RCNVR to ward off northend bullies. Chief Yeoman White times a match at Stuart Street circa 1937.

Chief Yeoman of Signals White (centre) and the Senior Chiefs and POs of RCNVR Hamilton Division circa 1937.



The gun battery at the rear of Stuart Street circa 1937.



The seaman's lounge at the Stuart Street Division circa 1940. (Heddon)



(Left)
RCNVR march past city hall for the Royal Visit, 1939. (H. Seager)



(Below)
RCNVR parade up Main Street in 1938. H. Seager is the marker. (H. Seager)



Sea Cadets on the courthouse steps circa 1936. Many of these boys joined the RCN in WWII, including Harry "Bunji" Taylor, Ernie Smedley, Jim Wood, Bud Reese, Harold Bothreil, Louis Johnson, John Parrish, Ernie Goodrow, Alex Burns and Walt Nettleton.

(M. McAlpine)

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE

In the 1850's withdrawal of British troops from Canada to deal with foreign conflicts in the Crimea and India brought about the Canadian Militia Act in 1855. This resulted in the creation of a permanent Canadian Militia and the temporary formation of naval companies to defend the Great Lakes.

In a similar way, the German naval threat in 1905 brought about the Naval Service Act in 1910. The departure of the Royal Navy's squadrons from Halifax and Esquimalt was a dramatic event which forced Canadians to think about their naval defence.

The Naval Service Act provided for a permanent naval service called the Naval Service of Canada, re-designated as the Royal Canadian Navy in 1911. By 1913, a group of enthusiasts came forward in Victoria, B.C. with the proposal to form a naval reserve. This group had no official status and no pay but their dedication made a significant impression on Commander Walter Hose, RCN, then Senior Naval Officer at Esquimalt and later first Chief of the Naval Staff.

As the threat of war with Germany became imminent, official action was taken to establish a naval volunteer force in May 1914. This was called the Royal Navy - Canadian Volunteer Reserve and was simply a recruiting device for the Royal Navy. It therefore, met the immediate naval crisis for the RN, but did very little to strengthen the fledgling RCN. With post war reductions in 1920, the Royal Navy - Canadian Volunteer Reserve was disbanded.

Since 1910, Canada had reached no consensus about its navy. In World War I, unlike the army in the field, it had produced no gripping Canadian feats at sea. Generally, Canadians still had no concept of a navy.

In 1923 budget funds for the RCN were cut from \$2.5 million to \$1.5 million. This was scarcely enough money to keep one warship in operation. Walter Hose, then Director of Naval Service, remembered his experience with the self-generated Victoria Naval Reserve of 1913. He knew that there would be no Canadian Navy until it found a place in the hearts and minds of its citizens. To do this he decided to use his small budget to establish a naval presence in every major population centre across Canada.

Thus the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, RCNVR, which became known as the "Wavy Navy" was born. Twelve half-companies with a total complement of 1,000 were initially authorized and seven more would follow by 1939.

As Senior Naval Officer in Esquimalt, Walter Hose had learned that it would be impossible to maintain a permanent naval force without a national reserve. The wisdom of his policy was proven during the Second World War. Eighty percent of the total enrollment in the RCN came from the RCNVR, and these recruits possessed enough basic training to enable them to put to sea within a few days of their arrival at coastal ports.

In Hamilton, a Half Company of the RCNVR, with a complement of fifty men was authorized on January 31, 1923. To establish this Company, the Minister of Defence requested the assistance of the Hamilton Branch of the Navy League of Canada. The local director, Capt. Geo. J. Guy was asked to mobilize support, report on drill space availability, and recommend the names of volunteers. A member of the Navy League Executive was Howard Yeates.

On March 26, 1923, it was announced that the Company Commanding Officer, Mr. Howard Yeates, with a distinguished career in the Royal Naval Air Service was attested as a Lieutenant in the RCNVR. In his civilian life, he was a partner in the law firm of Bell, Pringle and Yeates located in the Sun Life Building on the corner of Main and James.

There was no training space available in the local armouries, so the Company was housed temporarily in the Navy League Headquarters at No. 614 Imperial Building on the corner of Main and Hughson.

The quarters for the first RCNVR divisions could hardly be called ideal. One division was located in an old fire hall, another in rooms over a laundry and others in workshops, basements, and warehouses. The Hamilton Half Company does not appear to have been an exception. The Imperial Building was not an adequate facility. In one of his first letters to DND, Lt Yeates announced, *"I have taken the liberty of exercising an option on a fairly large store house on the Bay front at \$100.00 a month. This building is approximately 38 feet wide by 140 feet in depth. It has three floors which could be turned into a gymnasium, drill hall, training space, and weapons range. The building extends to the shores of Hamilton Bay and would be an ideal location for carrying out boat work."*¹

This building, built in 1869 and designated a historic property, was the former site of the Reid Engine Works and Grant's Sail Loft at 469 Bay Street North near the corner of Bay and Burlington Streets. From the street, it looks like any ordinary single storey building. Only from the water can its attributes as a naval reserve training facility be appreciated. Lt Yeates reported his change of address to Bay Street on November 2, 1923, and quickly found that added to his "multifarious" problems was the inadequacy of heat in the fifty year old sail loft building. Harry "Bunji" Taylor remembers the building when he was a sea cadet. The top deck which was at street level contained the Quarterdeck, office space, storage and a band room. The second deck down was a drill deck. The lower deck had an earthen floor and was used as a rifle range and boat storage.

RCNVR ratings were paid 25 cents per drill and were issued with left over uniforms from World War I, including collars with wavy tapes stitched around the edge, which distinguished Volunteers from the permanent force. The officers were paid nothing and had to provide their own uniforms. The war-surplus collars of the men eventually disappeared but the officers kept their "wavy navy" gold rings on their sleeves until after World War II.

As a vestige of yester-year, the men trained with wooden cutlasses as well as two .22 Lee Enfields, one 12 pounder and two sets of signal flags. They donated from their pay to the ship's sports fund and Lt Yeates arranged for his men to receive boxing lessons from a professional fighter. In this way, the sailors earned the respect of the north end bullies.

Lt Yeates made the following report on Company activities on December 12, 1923, *"We have arranged a series of indoor soccer games with local regiments at the armouries. Our football and baseball teams are doing very well and hope to enter the city league. I find that this introduction of sports makes the men keener and improves attendance. I am also giving a small prize to the smartest dressed man on parade."*²

It should be noted that this report was duplicated and sent to all other half companies as an example of good administration. Lt Yeates was commended for the the zeal and active interest that he had shown in the inauguration of his company.

On May 7, 1923, Petty Officer Instructor Fred Bates arrived from Halifax. He was in charge of all instruction and administration until 1933 when a problem arose over mishandled funds. He was in fact the first Regular Support Staff (R.S.S.). One of his first tasks was to manage the renovations to the training facilities on Bay Street with money donated by the Navy League. Bates was a popular Petty Officer, but in 1934 he was replaced by CPO Hughes.

¹ NSHQ files, National Archives of Canada, April 7, 1923

² Ibid, Dec. 12, 1923

The other officers that Lt Yeates recruited were; Sub-Lieutenant H. L. G. Westland, Surgeon Lieutenant H. C. Nash, and Engineer Lieutenant Georges Desbarats.

When the RCNVR scheme was started, Hamilton was the first city to reach its quota. The unit had recruited 56 men and had 25 on the waiting list. Hamilton was rated as the best unit in administration and training.

Every man had to commit to 32 drills a year on Tuesdays and Thursdays and two weeks' training in Halifax. In addition three men from Hamilton were selected to take a cruise in HMS *Hood*, while four ratings took an extended cruise in HMS *Capetown*, and three in HMS *Constance*.

The RCNVR had two major items of training equipment. One was a 27 foot Montague rig whaler. The other was a 12 pounder gun.

The whaler arrived on a railway flat car and was duly launched with all the appropriate ceremony. It proved to be a great attraction. Not only was it used for training but for social events as well. It was in constant use, especially on weekends.

Every unit was to have received a 12 pound gun. No description can be found of this ordinance, but since several of the original naval companies hold a 12 pound field gun and carriage on their inventory, it is assumed that these weapons have a common origin as a standard 1923 issue to the newly established half companies.

To confuse the matter, there is a record of another 12 pound gun issued to local Sea Cadets in 1924. It was described as a long 10 foot barrel attached to a fixed flared pedestal, altogether weighing nearly two tons. The gun had been the armament of a mine-sweeping trawler in the North Sea where it had been engaged in attacking German submarines during World War I.¹

This weapon would have been too heavy to move easily, so it is assumed that when the Capitol Theatre requested that the RCNVR enact a prologue on stage for the showing of the naval film "Zeebrugge", the lighter, portable 12 pound field gun was used.

The prologue was entitled, "A Night Attack on a Submarine". A 12 pound gun and two machine guns were placed on stage in front of a seascape. The curtain went up with the theatre in darkness. A signal was flashed, a searchlight played over the audience and a bugle sounded action stations. A dim blue light showed the gun's crew closing up to bring their gun into action. After firing six rounds at a submarine, the target was reported sunk. The house lights came up as the gun's crew secured and marched towards the footlights to the tune of "Rule Britannia".²

The show lasted a week and the unit was complimented by the media for a job well done. It was just the kind of public exposure that the fledgling RCNVR needed in March 1925.

Herbert Seager, one of 14 sons of Mr. and Mrs. George Seager, the ubiquitous Navy League family that gave a combined total of 167 years of war service to their country, remembers the 12 pound field gun. As a sea cadet in 1934, he recalls sharing the barracks on Bay Street with the RCNVR. The field gun, stored in the basement along with the whaler was used on ceremonial occasions. Herb Seager later went on to join the RCNVR and obtained a first class P.T. instructor's certificate. He was Hamilton's naval representative at the coronation of King George VI.

¹ Hamilton Herald, December 1924

² Report to Naval Secretary, DND from Instructor Bates, NSHQ file, National Archives, March, 1925

This same 12 pound naval field gun remains on the naval reserve inventory after 70 years of service and continues to be the centre piece of all ceremonial occasions right up to the present day. The firing pin wore out and the wheels threatened to fall off. It was overhauled during Cdr Lee's tenure in 1973 and completely restored in 1987. This was a monumental problem as wooden wagon wheels are no longer an everyday item in our modern world. The restoration problem was solved by PO2 Al Carrol, (*Star* R.S.S.) and RCSCC *Lion* Commanding Officer, SLt Roy Morley who both have facility for doing the impossible.

The 12 pound deck gun on a fixed pedestal, that had been presented to the sea cadets in 1924 made a re-appearance in 1936 when a gun fitting this description was fitted to the main deck in the new naval division building on Stuart Street. RCNVR veteran, Bill Lawrence, recalls that this gun was used for drill purposes but was never fired indoors because it had quite a kick to it. With the outbreak of World War II, this weapon was recalled by Naval Service Headquarters and probably ended up on the quarterdeck of a mine sweeper.

On November 1, 1929, LCdr Yeates who had been promoted exactly a year earlier, retired leaving his second in command Lt Westland as Acting Company Commanding Officer. However, on December 2, Lt Westland declined command because of business pressure and recommended that Lt William George Beaver take over. He was an electrical engineer employed by Westinghouse and in a position to give more time to the RCNVR. Consequently, he was appointed by the Minister of National Defence on December 15, 1929. The Chief of Staff, Walter Hose, commended Lt Westland for stepping aside to permit one of his junior officers to take command.

Lloyd Westland was a lawyer with an office in the Lister Block on James Street North. It would be another five years before he had an opportunity to assume command as indicated by the following memorandum.

Ottawa
19 April, 1934

Lieutenant H. L. G. Westland, RCNVR is recommended for promotion to Lieutenant Commander and for appointment as Company Commander of the Hamilton Half Company, RCNVR - to date 1st April, 1934, in both cases.

The present Company Commander has been transferred away from Hamilton by his employer and is not now in a position to undertake or supervise the work required.

Particulars of service, LCdr Westland are as follows:

Previous service -

120th Battalion, Private Feb. 1916

RNCVR W/T operator July 1916 to Apr.. 1919

Present occupation -

Barrister

P. W. Nelles
Captain, R.C.N.
Acting Chief of Naval Staff ¹

¹ NSHQ file, April 19, 1934.

Three significant events happened during Westland's term of command. First in the autumn of 1935, the unit's colours were donated by the Caxton Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. These colours were hand made by the ladies of the Order. On March 24, 1936, these colours were deposited at the altar of St. Peter's Church on Main Street East, where they still hang today. It is interesting to note that during the church parade in 1936, veterans recall that it rained and soaked the entire company. On the last parade to St. Peter's Church in 1980, it rained again and buses had to be ordered to return the ship's company back to the base.

It was announced by H. Lloyd G. Westland on July 2, 1935 that the unit's address was changed to 41 Stuart Street between Bay and MacNab, beside the Customs House. Westland found that as the Company expanded, there was not enough room for its requirements at 469 Bay Street which it shared with Sea Cadets. The new home of the Half Company was the former Williamson, later Dominion, Vinegar Works. It provided much better classroom and office space, a drill floor, and messes with fire places. The steam heat provided a much more comfortable environment in winter. This building no longer exists as all but the lower floor was destroyed by fire on January 23, 1948.

Once the Half Company was installed in their new location in 1936, instruction came from Ottawa to change the name to, the Hamilton Division, RCNVR. At this point, it would be worth mentioning a brief response by William Beaver to the Naval Secretary on February 14, 1933. *"The opinion of the Hamilton Company is that Units be known by the name of their cities as at present."* This would suggest that consideration was being given to using ships' names for RCNVR units. But for the next five years the local RCNVR unit would be known as the Hamilton Division.

John Cyril Hart became the Commanding Officer February 4, 1937 and served until June 10, 1940. He was the manager of Best Weather Strip Company on James Street South. Sailors report that he ran a tight ship. When appointed, he reported that he had the following officers on strength: engineer Officer LCdr(E) S. J. Liddington, employed at Canadian Westinghouse; Paymaster, Lt C. W. Tummonds, employed by the Canadian Bank of Commerce; Lt W. R. White, employed by the Landed Banking and Loan Company; SLt E. A. Colquhoun, unemployed; and Surgeon, LCdr W. D. Swan.

In 1937, two more types of reserves came into being. One was the Supplementary Reserve, and the other was the Fishermen's Reserve. The former consisted largely of yachtsmen while the latter consisted of west coast fishermen.

As the war clouds darkened in Europe, Lt Hart reported that the Hamilton Division RCNVR was sharpening their shooting skills. On March 16, 1939, in competition with the 91st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the RCNVR scored 456 points against the Highlanders 409 with Able Seamen Gleadow leading the way with 94 points. As a result the RCNVR retained the Swan Trophy and the Highlanders went away to practice some more.

The reserves were placed on active service nine days before the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939. The first thing that the Hamilton Division did was commence guard duty at Divisional Headquarters with the first ratings to report for active service. They were: LS L. Seager, LS R. Seager, AB R. Gleadow, OS W. Rees, AB J. Moores, OS K. Tilbury, OS R. Webster.

At that time, there were less than 2,000 officers and men in the regular force and 2,000 in the reserves. Most of those who were subsequently to join the naval service during the war were enrolled as naval reservists. The recruiting activity at each Naval Division became a priority. The constant flow of recruits undergoing six weeks basic training in preparation for a draft to Halifax, changed the nature of the Hamilton Naval Division. Thus began a new chapter in the history of the naval reserve in Hamilton.

CHAPTER THREE

A STAR IS BORN

The War and Post-War Years (1939-1950)

With the beginning of World War II, all reserve naval divisions took on the recruiting role envisaged by Admiral Hose. A naval presence in every major population centre in the country enabled the navy to recruit and train personnel to man the convoy escorts that were so essential to winning the Battle of the Atlantic.

It was the Commanding Officer's mandate to make sure that the navy participated in every public relations activity. To give the navy a higher profile, a small bugle band was formed and the 12 pound gun was carted out on every occasion.

Most of the Hamilton Division went to Halifax in the first draft, leaving behind only a skeleton crew to administer the ship and handle the training of new recruits. The principle instructors were CPO F. White and LS H. Seager. The ship's writer was Jimmy Fraser and the coxswain, CPO Cross.

Jim Fraser joined the RCNVR in 1938 when it looked like war was about to break out in Europe. He went to Halifax in the summer of 1939 for his annual training and expected to be called up on the first draft. When he got back to Hamilton, he volunteered for a stop-gap position as typist in the Division's office. A few weeks later, war broke out and he signed up for the first draft but he was considered too valuable as a ship's writer during the recruiting rush and his request was denied. He continued to sign up for successive drafts to the coast, but it was always the same story. In desperation, he approached Lt J. C. Hart, his former commanding officer who was the drafting officer in 1944. Thus four years after his first request for a draft, Jim Fraser was finally on his way to Halifax.

However, because some administration and training staff such as Herb Seager and Jim Fraser were held back at the Division, we do have some continuity of collective memories of the Hamilton Division on Stuart Street at that time.

The drill deck was on the top deck and regular monthly dances were held there sponsored by the MacNab Chapter of the I.O.D.E. The Coca Cola Company provided free coke for the dances, and games for the messes. The messes were on the second deck and during the war they were nicely furnished with fireplaces built by Englis Construction and panelled wood work by "Earl" the ship's carpenter.

The ship's office was at the front of the main floor. There was also a weapon's lock-up and a gun battery at the rear where a 12 pound deck gun was mounted minus its breach.

The drafting process for war service involved sending personnel who had completed their basic training to the coast. Naturally the first drafts consisted of those men who were in the RCNVR before the outbreak of war. Amongst those men were Joe Noyes, Ed Rattray and Len Seager.

Joe Noyes was a tailor at Firth Brothers when he joined the RCNVR in 1939. As a tailor, he particularly remembers how difficult it was to get a complete, well fitting uniform. A

number of lads eventually went to Toronto to buy their own caps so that they could wear the rest of their uniforms.

He was in the first draft from Hamilton in May 1940. There were over 40 men in the Hamilton draft which went by train to Toronto. They picked up more men at each major city on their way to Halifax. Joe remembers how they had a three hour lay-over between trains in Montreal. A very large Ontario contingent of excited sailors flowed out into the streets of Montreal where, in contrast to their very clamorous patriotic hometown send off, they did not receive a very sympathetic welcome. A near riot broke out.

Ed Rattray who left in the second draft from Hamilton in July 1940 also remembers Montreal. Because of the trouble there with the earlier draft, the sailors had to wait on the platform between trains and the gates were locked to keep the public out.

When Ed joined the RCNVR in 1939, he participated in the patriotic welcome and parades that were held for the visit of the King and Queen. When the war came and the RCNVR was mobilized, he was happy to leave his job at the Glendale Cotton Mills where he worked twelve hour shifts for less money than he could get with the navy.

He ended up in HMCS *Kenora* in the 14th British Minesweeping Flotilla. She was a good ship, but something of an orphan, being the only Canadian ship in a British squadron. This was compounded by being the name-sake of a very small northern Ontario community which had no patriotic organizations such as Navy League. Ed remembers that all the other ships got parcels and ditty bags, but not *Kenora*.

Another of the original members of the RCNVR before the war and one of the first to report for active service was Len Seager. He became captain of the 3 inch gun's crew on HMCS *Assiniboine* when she engaged a surfaced German submarine for several hours in a running gun duel before finally getting into a position to ram.

Len joined the Reserves again after the war and served with distinction at *Star* until his retirement as a Chief Petty Officer. His widow, Irene continues to help in the Chiefs and Petty Officers' mess as a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. His son Ron carries on the family tradition as a member of HMCS *Star*.

Once all the RCNVR members of the Hamilton Division were drafted out, attention could be directed to the new recruits. Some of these men included Doug Harrison, George Heddon, Norm Webb, Vern Smart and Dave McAlpine. Their collective memories of this period share some common themes.

They all left their jobs to join the navy. Their experience at the Hamilton Division was very short, only six to twelve weeks and they were all anxious to get off to Halifax. Some recruits attended evening drills twice a week while waiting for a class to form.

Dave McAlpine was the Assistant Manager at Loblaws when he joined in May, 1940. He told the recruiters that he worked at Dofasco because he didn't want to end up being assigned to a galley. He was twenty two years old at the time and about to be married to Margaret Woods. Like the rest of the recruits, Dave was paid \$48.00 a month, lived at home and brought his lunch in a brown bag every day during basic training.

He remembers that their training consisted mainly of marching, communications and general seamanship. They studied from a model of a whaler cradled in its davits and then marched to the boat sheds on Bay Street to work with the real thing. They practised flag

hoists and semaphore on the second floor of the Stuart Street Headquarters, then did flashing exercises between the MacNab Street and James Street bridges over the C.N.R.

Every day began with drill and calisthenics in the compound on the east side of the Division building. This was followed by a mile run around the neighbourhood, incorporating as many hilly streets as possible. For those who didn't take their work seriously, LS H. Seager had a special solution: run up and down the railway embankment on Stuart Street.

Herb Seager had to be one of the shortest men in the Canadian Navy. Whenever he was on parade he looked like he was standing in a hole. He barely came up to the arm pits of most of the recruits. But he was tough and had a voice like a cannon. He was nicknamed "boomer".

Marching seemed to take up 60% of the training program. The men marched everywhere: to swimming lessons at the YMCA, to whaler pulling from the boat shed on Bay Street, and then for more drill, down Bay Street and up MacNab. As a little diversion from the drudgery of their drill, the marching men would blow kisses to the cheering women workers leaning out of the windows of the local cotton mill.

At least once a week each recruit had to stand guard duty at the front entrance from eight to midnight. Things always got interesting when the Bayview Tavern closed and the drunks came by. One night, a drunk started beating up his wife, and when the duty sailor intervened, both the man and woman started beating up the sailor. To reduce their boredom, the guards used the wooden hydro pole in front of the main entrance for bayonet practice.

Dave McAlpine and his draft were sent to Halifax in October, 1940 by train. He applied for ordnance training and was sent to HMCS *Acadia* which became the camera ship for the movie "Corvette K225", starring Randolph Scott. Dave and the rest of the crew were all navy extras for the film.

Like so many other recruits from Hamilton, Dave ended up in the North Atlantic theatre of war, did a trip to Murmansk and finished the war in the Pacific at Okinawa in the cruiser HMCS *Uganda* (later renamed *Quebec*).

When the war was over, he was sent to *Star* for demobilization. He was given a month's leave until his papers could be processed, then told to report at a given time with his hammock, gas mask and helmet in order to sign his discharge papers. During his four years away from Hamilton, *Star* had moved into its new headquarters by the bay. He remembered thinking how temporary the new war-time construction appeared compared to the brick construction of the Hamilton Division where he had signed up.

George Heddon was in the November draft of 1940 with Alex Tenent, Frank Goldsmith, Jack Denny, Jerry Rosenberg, Jack Gibbons, Al Jackson, and Smith. The drafts were getting smaller after the rush of the first year, and ship building was beginning to outstrip manpower resources.

George became very active in the RCN veterans association after the war.

During the first 18 months of the war there were many changes. In 1940 the administration of the naval reserves was moved from Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa to the Commanding Officer Reserve Divisions (CORD) in Toronto. The senior officer appointed there was Cdr E. R. Brock.

In Ottawa, the Director of Personnel, Captain Harold Grant, was faced with the problem of manning six old USN four-stackers and ten new corvettes. He needed 300 trained RCNVR officers by the Spring of 1941.

This demand for qualified officers at the coast caused a rapid turnover of commanding officers at the Hamilton Naval Division. Lt William Morrison, son of the City Mayor, replaced John Hart in June 1940. Within five months he was drafted and replaced by Lt Frank Waterman in November 1940. Only three months later, he turned command over to Lt Walter Thomson on 15 February 1941; who in turn was replaced by Lt John McFetrick after only three months, on 1 May 1941.

McFETRICK

LCdr John McFetrick brought to his command a continuity of service and flamboyant style of leadership that made him a very popular and successful commanding officer. He directed a record growth of the Naval Division that was to be named HMCS *Star* during his appointment and moved the division into its present buildings on the bay front.

When he took command in 1941, the strength of the unit was 100. After 2 years he had 900 officers and men on strength with nearly 5,000 sent forward for service at sea. His record of enlistment placed Hamilton amongst the best divisions across Canada.

He was born in England and moved to Canada as a boy. He joined the navy during the First World War where he served aboard minesweepers, sloops and cruisers. In 1939 he was one of the first officers to re-enlist in the RCNVR. In his civilian career he was a senior partner in the investment brokerage firm of McFetrick and Company in Montreal and after service on the east coast he was posted to *Star*.

One of the first things that he did upon arrival in Hamilton was to recruit a band which he knew was essential to his recruiting plans. By November 1941, he had a forty piece brass band under the leadership of Lt John C. Loughheed and SLt Fred Horton.

Once he had a first class band, LCdr McFetrick took his unit on parade several times a month during the good weather. Here are a few examples of their activities in 1943:

Aug. 5	Parade to Eastwood Park for Sports Night
Aug. 7	Recruiting Parade with field gun to Gore Park
Aug. 12	Ship's Company Parade to Army Trade School for Boxing Competition
Aug. 22	Decoration Day Parade at Harvey Park
Sep. 1	Ship's Company Parade at Mount Hope for Boxing Show
Sep. 3	Ship's Company Parade to Scott Park for Hamilton Lions Club Carnival
Sep. 7	City Parade on the occasion of Italy's capitulation
Sep. 12	Church Parade to Christ Church Cathedral
Nov. 11	Armistice Day Parade
Nov. 16	Entire Ship's Company paraded to the Navy Show "Meet the Navy".*
Nov. 22	Ship's Company Parade to Gore Park for Navy Week

*The navy show, "Meet the Navy" was a Canadian wartime stage musical that toured Canada with such success that it went on to the London Hippodrome. It was a fast-moving, zesty, tuneful comedy that featured the show stopper tune, "You'll Get Used to It."

LCdr McFetrick had a lot of personal contacts and was on a first name basis with Mayor Morrison. He had a talent for making things happen and introducing innovations such as; specialist training, UNTD, training vessels and a new training base, the first in Canada.

PENNY

To add to the showmanship of his parades, LCdr McFetrick introduced a navy mascot, his Great Dane, "Penny".

Vern Smart was the Quartermaster in 1941 and he had the dubious honour of being in charge of Penny during parades. Vern was rather slight of build and found that Penny was a handful to master especially when something took his attention in another direction.

The dog certainly was a crowd pleaser, marching down the street at the head of the parade with Vern in tow. Citizens would watch and wave as Penny surged past, straining to make a friendly visit with the crowd, lick a child's face or howl painfully whenever the band played an A sharp note.

The strategy worked. The navy got a lot of press and Penny's picture appeared in the Spectator. A portrait showing the Great Dane with a grim look of determination was used to promote a "Victory Loan" drive.

HAIDEE & PATHFINDER

LCdr McFetrick knew the values of promoting a naval presence in the community and HMCS *Star* received a very high profile under his command. He also knew that to take advantage of the navy's special appeal he needed a training vessel on the lake.

In July 1941, the Hamilton Naval Division received its first training vessel, identified as VR-1 and later called HMCS *Haidee*. She was an 85 foot twin diesel converted pleasure yacht with a crew of 20. She was usually tied up at the foot of James Street.

HMCS *Haidee* was mentioned in a newspaper story on Monday November 17, 1941. Two members of the RCNVR, Quartermaster A. J. Vancise and OS George Hooker rescued seven year old W. Bodden from the water at the foot of James Street. Both men were working on HMCS *Haidee* at the time of the rescue.

Haidee did not stay in Hamilton very long. By 1942, she was in Windsor and on May 3, 1943, her name appeared in the Monthly Report of Proceedings of HMCS *Hunter* after undergoing an extensive engine overhaul.

The reason that *Haidee* was sent to Windsor is that *Star* took possession of an even larger pleasure craft called *Pathfinder* on November 28, 1941. Built in Racine Wisconsin in 1896, she was first registered in Canada at Midland in 1920, and transferred to the Yacht *Pathfinder* Limited in Toronto in 1934.

This 150 foot vessel had an iron hull, triple expansion four-cylinder steam engine, using fuel oil to fire the boilers. Her maximum speed was 21 knots with a cruising speed of 16. She had accommodation for 40 men. She appeared better suited to the type of specialists trades training that had commenced in Hamilton trade schools in 1942.

Correspondence concerning *Pathfinder* is included here because it illustrates the conditions of the war period and the problems that *Star* may have encountered in operating this training vessel, better than any story that can be told.

H.M.C.S. STAR
Naval Service
Stuart and McNab Sts.
Hamilton
May 21, 1942

Secretary, Naval Board
Department of National Defence,
Ottawa, Ontario

Submitted for Headquarters' consideration and approval that a Ship to Shore W/T be installed on H.M.C.S. PATHFINDER, attached to this Establishment for training purposes.

The necessary equipment has been offered gratuitously to the Naval Service and the proposed installation has been approved by the Flotilla Engineer Officer.

It is respectfully submitted that if this proposed installation meets with Headquarters' approval, that a wave length and Identification Call Letters be allocated for this facility.

J. McFetrick
Lieutenant, RCNVR
Commanding Officer
H.M.C.S. "STAR"

On the surface, this would appear to be a logical and routine request that would augment naval training and improve both the safety and efficiency factors in the training program, at no expense to the navy.

Not so! The curt reply from the Secretary of the Naval Board can be felt burning through the pages even 50 years later.

MEMORANDUM

27/5/42

1. With reference to your submission No. 18-7-3 of May 21, it is NOT* approved to install any W/T equipment in H.M.C.S. Star for ANY* purpose.
2. Unnecessary W/T traffic is a danger and causes interference with essential service.
3. If you have any men capable of operating such a service, you are to forward their names to N.S.H.Q. and they will be DRAFTED* to sea going appointments where they are urgently required.

BY ORDER,
SECRETARY, NAVAL BOARD

*Author's emphasis

The following observations may be made with regard to this memorandum. *Star* was considered as nothing more than a drafting centre for manpower, and should not hold on its staff anyone who could fill an essential war billet. There may also have been a serious concern about security. No information about the navy or its training program was to be made available to the public by W/T traffic.

The few people that remember *Pathfinder* recall that she had a lot of brass fittings, even a brass boiler and engine room, that kept a lot of trainees busy with a polishing cloth. Spare parts were hard to come by and frequent breakdowns kept her out of service for long periods.

In addition to training, *Pathfinder* frequently served in other capacities as illustrated by this "WAR DIARY" report for September 2, 1943. "*H.M.C.S. Pathfinder with whaler's crew, swimming, baseball and boxing teams to H.M.C.S. York for inter-divisional sports. After a hard fought contest, Star lost the whaler race by a close margin, the tug of war event and the baseball game. Star emerged the victor in all boxing bouts, and all but one of the 8 swimming events*".

From 1923 to 1950, *Star* was pre-eminent in the sport of boxing, a probable influence left from the early Bay Street days and the boxing lessons introduced by C.O. Yeates. The team travelled to army and air force establishments in southern Ontario to beat up on all comers. When the new base was opened in Eastwood Park, a large dais was built at the west end of the drill deck which served as a boxing ring.

The boxing heritage was reinforced by the presence of Lt Bobby Pearce, world champion sculler and boxer, who joined *Star* in 1943 as P.T. instructor. He was still active at *Star* in 1949.

Pathfinder was last photographed at the seawall in front of *Star* in May, 1946. She was sold to Roy Thomas French of Midland in 1947 and scrapped eleven years later.

SEA CADETS

The sea cadets, sponsored by the Navy League of Canada had been in existence since 1917. They were recognized by the Dominion Charter in 1917, although the Navy League of Canada had sponsored cadet training as far back as 1902. It was not until 1941 that the navy began assisting in their training and administration. In June 1941, there were 23 corps. By the end of the war, there were 92 with an enrollment of 15,000, providing a large pool of young men well initiated in their naval training. In 1943, the Navy League of Canada undertook plans to erect a new cadet centre for R.C.S.C.C. Lion and N.L.C.C. Cougar.

HMCS STAR COMMISSIONED 1941

The commissioning of all of the existing RCNVR Divisions took place on November 1, 1941. This date is given in a reference called "The Development of the Naval Reserves in Canada". The present names of most of the RCNR Divisions emanate from this date.

Despite its significance, the Directorate of History in Ottawa can find no source or reference document for this date. There are no newspaper stories or references in ship's

records. Personnel serving at *Star* during that period can remember no ceremony or even a pronouncement.

Research of ship's records show that in early November 1941, correspondence was still addressed to the former title of Hamilton Division RCNVR. Not until November 24, 1941 did the Hamilton Spectator make a reference to the Naval Division as HMCS *Star*. Why this event was unheralded is not clear. Commanding Officer McFetrick took every opportunity to put the navy in the news, but singularly not on this occasion.

There may have been an attempt to avoid any controversy about the loss of the name Hamilton from the title of the RCNVR. Coincidentally on November 14, 1941, the Spectator published a large picture with the following caption, "*A Destroyer Bears the Name of Hamilton.*" The story explained how one of the fifty old U.S. destroyers turned over to the British for Lend Lease, was assigned to the Canadian Navy. It was named HMCS *Hamilton* in accordance with the policy of naming these ships after places in both the old world and the new. Thus it came to pass that our city had a destroyer serving in the Battle of the Atlantic. Alderman Bill McCulloch claims that this ship was really named for Hamilton, Bermuda which may have been true up until it was turned over to the Canadian Navy.

At any rate, ten days after this major news release, came the first reference to HMCS *Star* in the newspaper. The Spectator printed a story about the formation of a 40 piece naval band at HMCS *Star*.

Since the names of cities were being used to name warships in the Canadian Navy, it would appear logical to provide the naval reserve divisions with other names appropriate to Canadian history. It is clear that names were not simply pulled out of a hat and that ample consideration to heritage association was given in making the selections.

The reasoning process involved in these deliberations has either been lost or not documented. No commissioning ceremonies were held and no announcements made. It appears that the stone frigates of the RCNVR in each major Canadian city were quietly launched into history without any fanfare, an event lost in the more momentous war news of that time.

EASTWOOD PARK

After the Hamilton Naval Reserve Division was commissioned as HMCS *Star*, Ellis Corman, M.P. for Wentworth announced that the federal government intended to erect a new naval barracks on reclaimed land on the waterfront at Eastwood Park. It was to be the first new establishment in the navy's inland flotilla of training ships called stone frigates.

This was not a popular announcement for northenders who discovered that their access to the seawall, a popular part of Eastwood Park along the bay front, would now be cut off by the Department of National Defence. The land, some 9.23 acres owned by the Parks Board, the City and the Harbour Commission, was purchased for \$20,000.

Eastwood Park and its concrete revetment wall along the bay has an interesting history. It is named after city alderman John Eastwood who as a park's board representative fought for the establishment of the park in 1913. His plan was to extend the original Catharine Street wall, built in 1904, all the way to Wellington Street.

Part of this revetment wall makes up the waterfront at HMCS *Star*. The wall (0.5 km long) was a favourite place for northenders to take a stroll. The bayshore in this area was extremely shallow. So much so, that at Wellington Street the water was only 2-1/2 feet deep, 100 yards from shore where the Victoria Yacht Club was built on stilts. The revetment wall provided boaters with a landing place in deeper water.

The present location of the brewery in the south east corner of the park was originally the site of the Hamilton Sewage Disposal Works. The rest of the 2.5 square kms. behind the revetment wall was a landfill site, or to be more specific, the city dump. In 1900, clouds of smoke could be seen rising from the burning rubbish.

To the west of the Catharine Street headland were several boat works, ice storage houses, a bathing beach and the sail loft that used to be the home of the Hamilton Naval Company of the RCNVR in 1923.

TRADES TRAINING

On May 7, 1942, LCdr McFetrick announced to the Spectator that *Star* and Hamilton would be involved in a new training program for the RCNVR.

Because of the growing demands for technical skills in the modern navy, the Naval Service had decided to give specialized training to its new recruits before sending them to the coast. Each major naval reserve unit was assigned a specialist category of training. *Star* was to train personnel in radio and electricity.

Approximately 130 young men from across Canada had to be assigned quarters in Hamilton. Their training was divided between *Star* and one of the two secondary schools involved in the program. Some sailors were sent to Westdale Technical School for radio work while others attended classes in electrical engineering at Hamilton Technical Institute.

Thus *Star's* role changed from a simple recruiting centre to one of specialist training for men from various parts of the country. The enrollment of the unit began to grow very quickly as a result. In February of 1943, an Inspection Report verifies this:

Number of Officers borne Part Complement	20
Number of Dental Officers	2
Number of Officers borne on Divisional Strength	34
Number of Ratings on Active Service (Trades training)	608
Number of Ratings on Divisional Strength (recruiting)	281

TOTAL 945

With such a large complement, *Star* had to carry a full medical and dental service. It was especially important that men left training for sea, with a good dental record because there were no dentists in the North Atlantic.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

The Hamilton Spectator made the following report on the laying of the foundation for the new navy base in Eastwood Park.

"In brilliant sunshine on the bay front Saturday afternoon, April 24, 1943, church dignitaries, government officials, 1,500 naval officers and ratings and thousands of civilians watched the Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, Minister of National Defence for Naval Services, officiate at the laying of the first foundations for the new naval training quarters of H.M.C.S. Star. A guard of honour from the ship's company presented arms during the historic ceremony and the ship's brass band played softly.

Into the side of one of the first piles driven (LCdr McFetrick reported that it was the last piling) was placed a canister containing an autographed copy of the day's issue of the Spectator, silver coins and a navy list bearing the names of all officers, their rank, seniority and place of appointment. (Jim Fraser, ship's writer at that time, believes that the piling was in the North-East corner of the building). This is in keeping with the traditional placement of the corner stone and would place the piling under the N.E. corner of the Wardroom.

Among those who autographed the paper were the Navy Minister; Captain E.R. Brock, (CORD) Commanding Officer Reserve Divisions; Senator J.J. Bench, Mayor William Morrison, Thomas Ross, M.P.; Ellis Corman, M.P.; Clay Merrell, American Vice Consul; Ralph C. Ripley, Hamilton Branch of the Navy League of Canada; and LCdr John McFetrick."

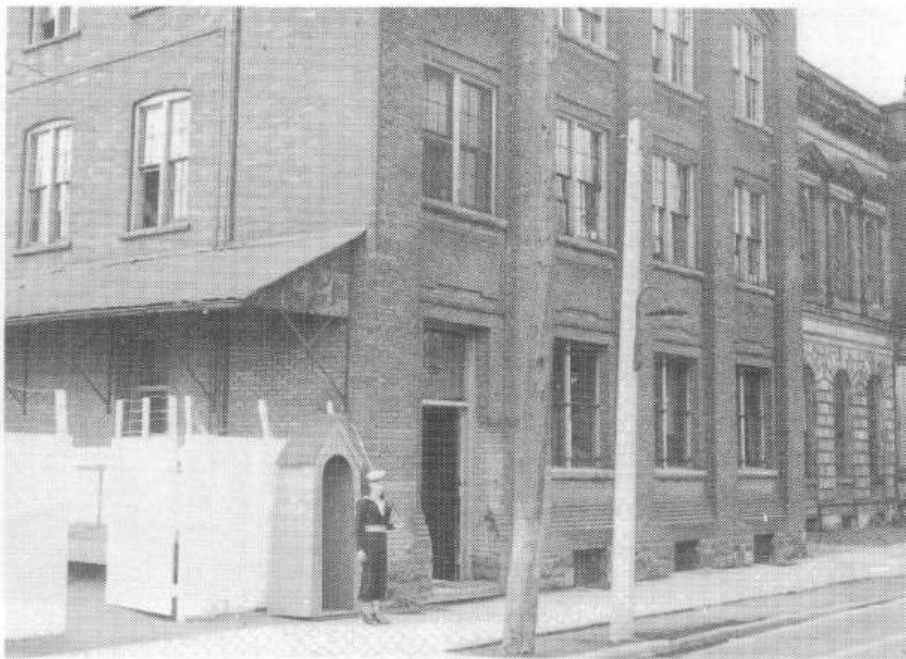
Laying the foundation was the climax of a busy afternoon. Earlier that day the entire ship's company, four platoons of W.R.C.N.S from "Bytown" and the "Lion" sea cadets paraded to publicize the opening of the Canadian Naval War Exhibition by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Hon. Albert Mathews at the T. Eaton Company.

The new training facilities were desperately needed as Wally Mellor recalls. He joined *Star* on Stuart Street on his 18th birthday, July 22, 1943. He had already been overseas with the army, but was sent back and discharged when they found out that he wasn't old enough. The Stuart Street premises were so crowded that his draft took all their classes in the McIlwraith School on Murray street behind *Star*.

They did a lot of marching, especially to the YMCA pool for swimming lessons. One of his classmates, a red head by the name of Fitzpatrick, had joined the navy despite his fear of water. He was terrified of the swimming sessions at the pool. But later in the war he jumped overboard to save a gunner who had been blown into the water by an explosion. For this he was mentioned in dispatches.

By 1943, new drafts of sailors were sent to Cornwallis to complete their training. As they marched up James Street behind the large navy brass band to the T. H. & B. station, all the merchants applauded, cheered and passed out gifts to the passing sailors carrying kit bags over their shoulders.

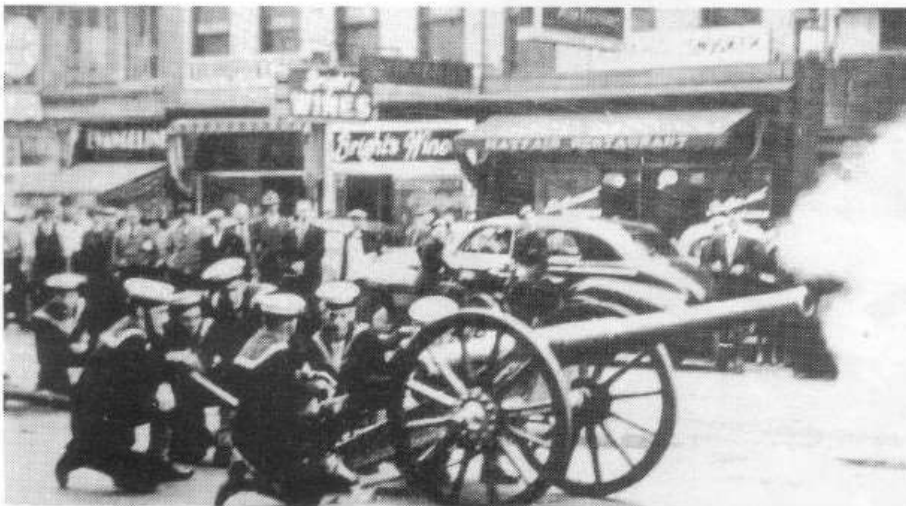
The contract for Hamilton's new Naval Training Centre was awarded to the W. C. Brennan Contracting Co. for \$125,000. The structures of frame and steel girders was given priority in building materials and was to be completed in four months.



From the beginning of WW II in September 1939, a sentry was posted at the entrance to the RCNVR building on Stuart Street. (National Archives PA 145 897)



(Above)
H. Seager, cenotaph sentry,
November 11, 1939.
(H. Seager)



(Above)
12 pound gun fired at Gore Park, November 11,
1939.
(H. Seager)



Recruits for the May to October draft of 1940 in front of Stuart Street. L-R: E. Rymer, unidentified, A. Allison, Dowling, D. McAlpine, unidentified, unidentified, N. Vickers.

(D. McAlpine)

Recruits were marched everywhere.
The X.O. SLt Padmore leads a training
parade on Stuart Street. LS Seager is
the platoon marker. (Seager)



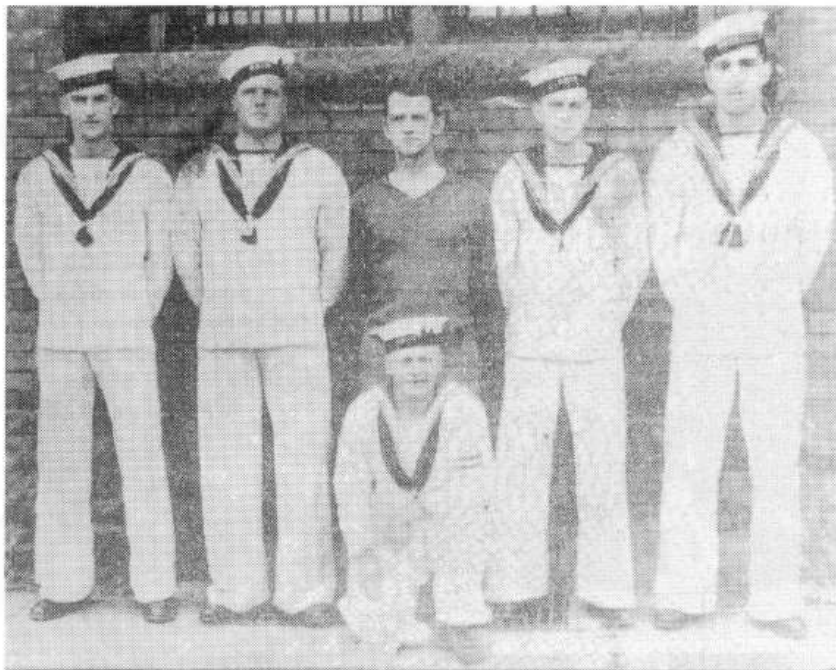
Recruits of the RCNVR, Hamilton
Division, whaler pulling on the bay,
1941. (Spectator)

Swimming classes were a part of
recruit training in 1941.
(H. Seager)



Lt McFetrick, C.O., and SLt Galway
lead the class of '41 across the C.N.R.
bridge on McNab Street.

(D. Harrison)



(Left)
Boxing Team in front of RCNVR Barracks.
L-R: A. Pine, A. Passmore, W. Matteson,
L. Miller, E. Kasoian. PT1 H. Seager, team
trainer.
(Seager)

(Below)
LS Seager instructing sailors awaiting draft in
1940.
L-R: L. Stephenson, F. Ralston, W. Theaker,
R. Donaldson, H. Briggs.

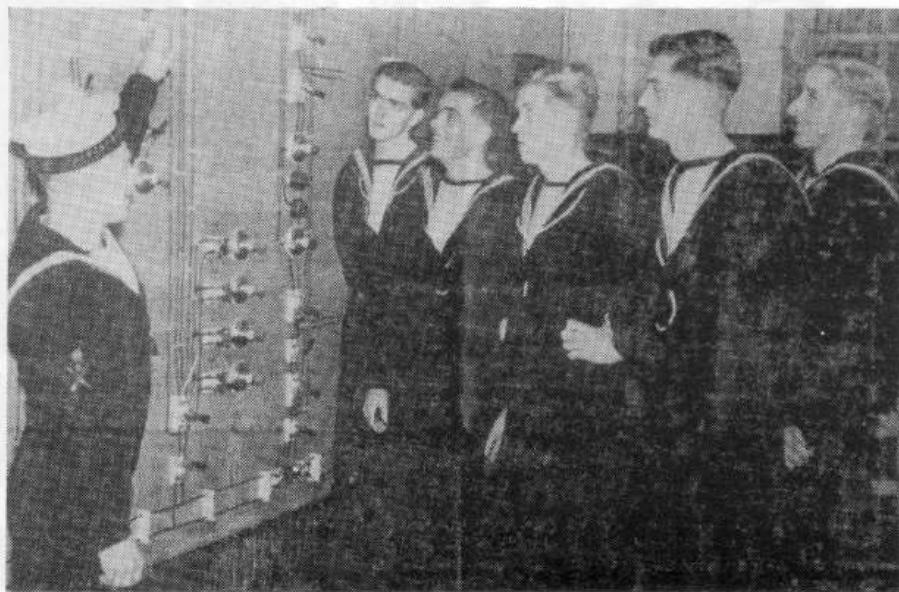
(Spectator)

P.O.W. Fraser, C.Y.S. White
With Original Company
at H.M.C.S. Star

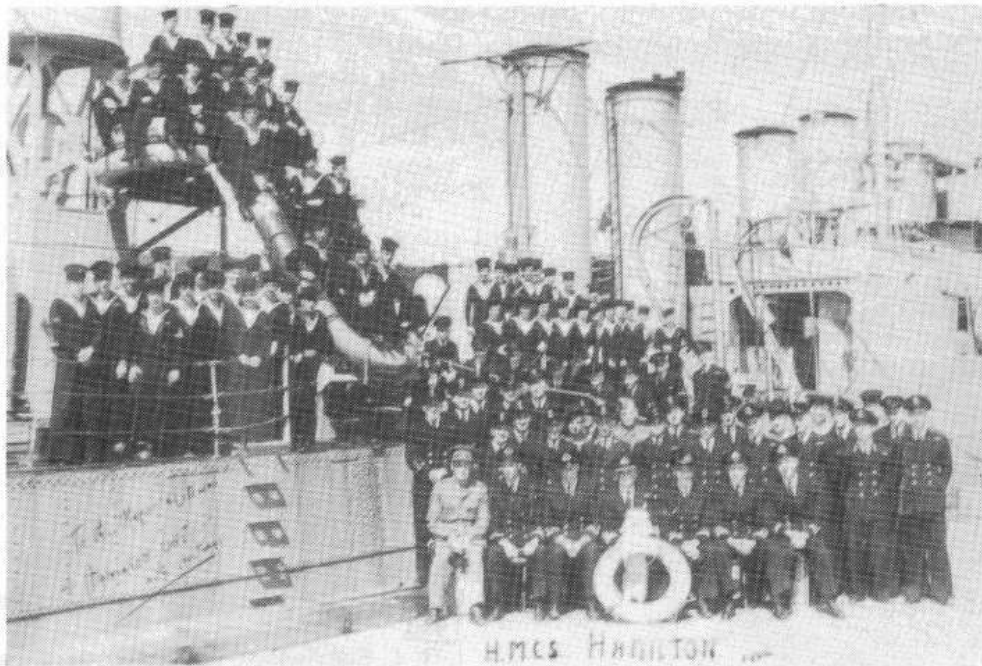


P.O.W. Fraser C.Y.S. White

(Spectator 1942)



Hamilton recruits in Halifax, October
2, 1940 awaiting a draft to ships or
courses.
(D. McAlpine)

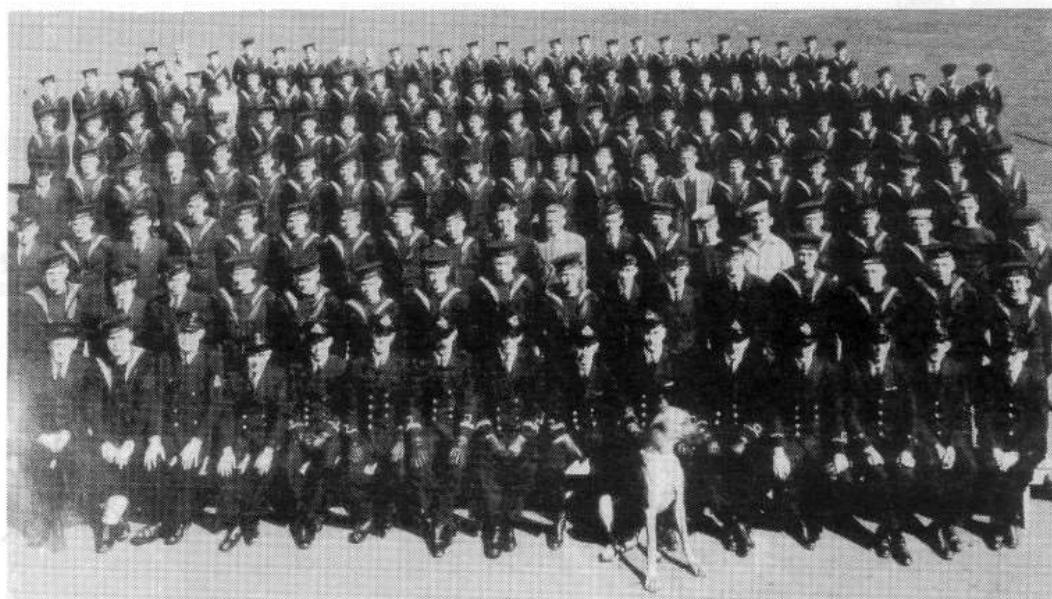


In 1941, a Lend-Lease four stack destroyer was named HMCS Hamilton and the RCNVR Hamilton Division became HMCS Star.
(Parkdale RCNVA)

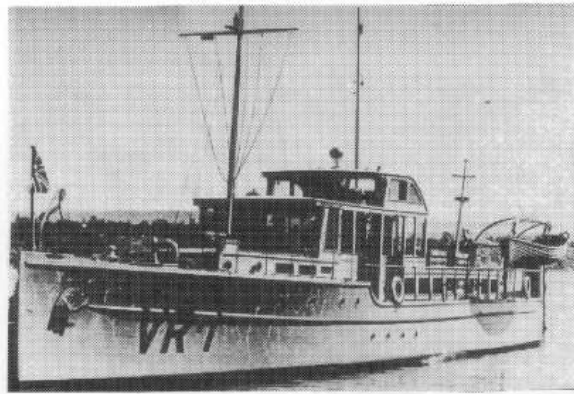
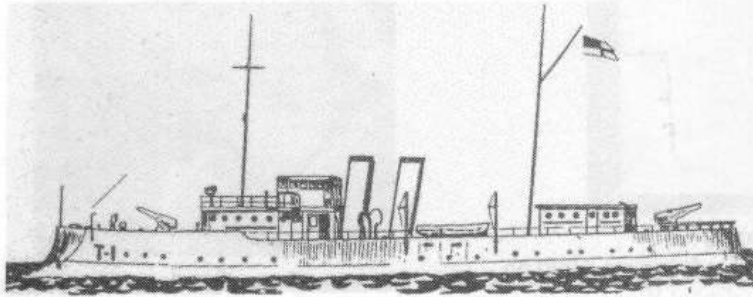


Wardroom April 1943.
Rear: Ray Synnette, Art Mears, Ed Green, Harvey Smith, Don Jamieson, Ivan Startup, Don Bethune.
Front: Rod Douglas, R. Dickie (M.O.), J. McFetrick (C.O.), Mary Baxter, Art Ashton (X.O.), Bill Newbiggin (A.O.), John Ferguson and Al Cockrill.
(Bethune)

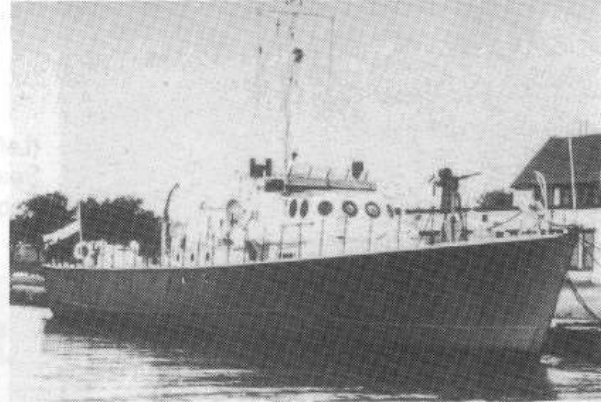
Ship's Company Photograph, March 1943, in front of the C.N.R. Station. Mascot "Penny" in the front row.



(Below)
 Pathfinder came to star in November 1941. She was
 150 feet long. Her deck guns were made of wood.
 (J. Thornton)



(Above)
 HMCS Haidee VR-1 July 3, 1941 at the
 foot of James Street. (Spectator)

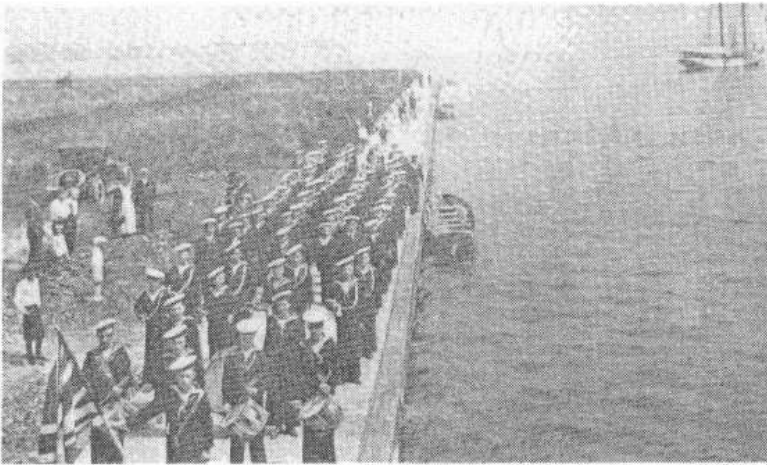


ML 106 HMCS Beaver, June 28, 1948 after com-
 missioning at Star upon arrival from Sorel, Quebec.
 Lt Garth Rowsome RCNR in command, Lt Don Be-
 thune RCN as X.O.. (Spectator)

(Above)
 HMCS Pathfinder in front of
 Star, May 3, 1946. Note the
 main entrance gate was off
 the parade square.
 (National Archives PA180164)



(Right)
 Crew of HMCS Pathfinder
 circa 1943. Pop Carey rear
 left and Lt McFetrick C.O.
 front centre. (Heddon)



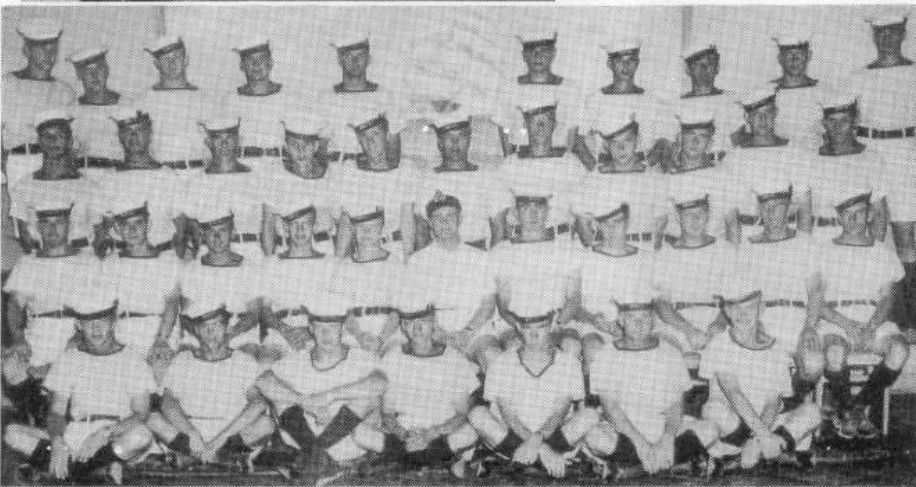
(Above)
Sea Cadets circa 1930 on
Revetment Wall.
(P. Murphy)



Mascot Penny sits for a Victory Loan
Drive, 1943. (Spectator)



(Left)
Seager brothers in Halifax 1943.
Bob, Len, Ben and Herb.
(Seager)



Marge Warren, shown in
1985, was one of the first
women to join the WRCNS
in 1943. (Spectator)

SLt Keily's Assiniboine Division, Seaman's Lounge, 1943. (N. Elley)



28th Draft from Star, January 17, 1944. Cedric Mitchell #4 in front row. (C. Mitchell)



Pathfinder crew at the 62nd
Henley Regatta, Port Dalhousie
1943. (N. Elley)

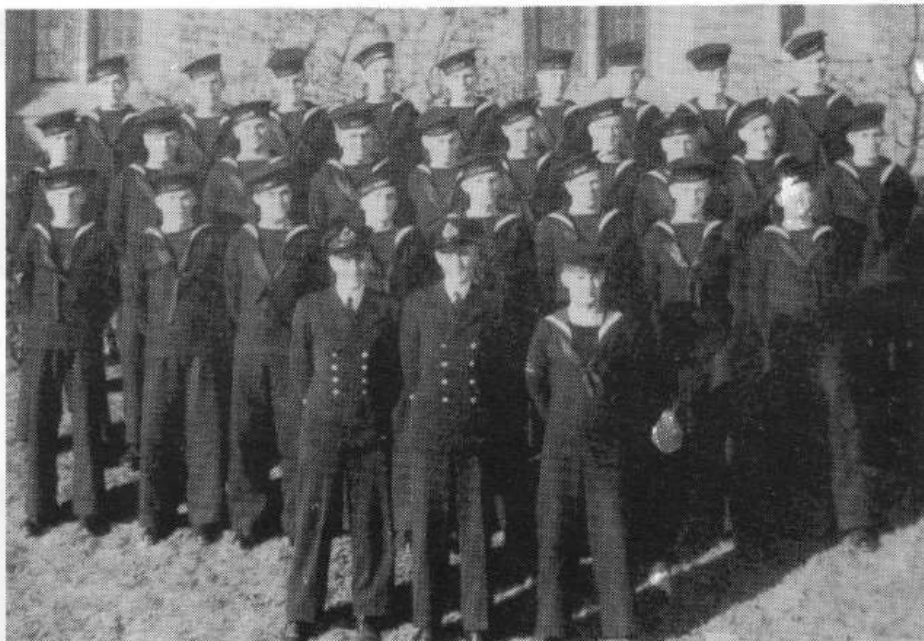
First UNTD in Canada at McMaster University, 1943.

Front: SLt Stone, LCdr McLay, LS Beverage.

2nd: Dewdney, Elliott, Fox, Pring, Downing, Stratton, MacDonald, Quirk.

3rd: Beaumont, Gibson, Coubon, Smith, Harper, Lyne, Graham, Wilde, Scarftt, Edwards.

4th: Shore, Shelley, Naylor, Jenkins, Stranks, Johnson, Camden, Lewis, Petrie.



UNTD Bermuda Cruise 1946.

Rear: Quirk, Jamieson, Douglas, Outerbridge, MacArthur, Virtue, Syroid.

Centre: Lowrie, Wylie, Beeler, Sfasiuk, Robinson, Nevins, Vano, Saar.

Front: Johnson, Sharp, Jenkins.



(Above)

UNTD Cruis 1946.

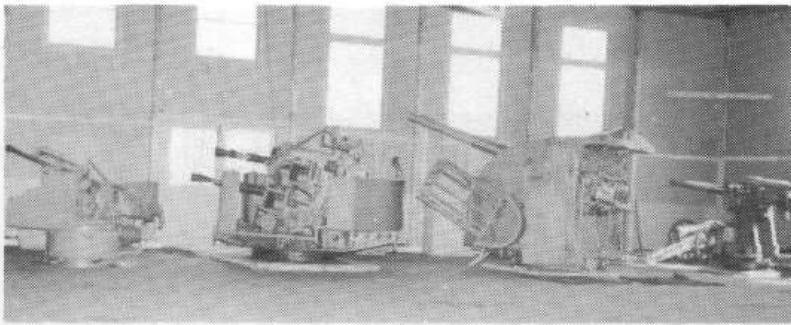
OS Sharp, Wylie, Robinson supervised by officer candidate K. Quirk.



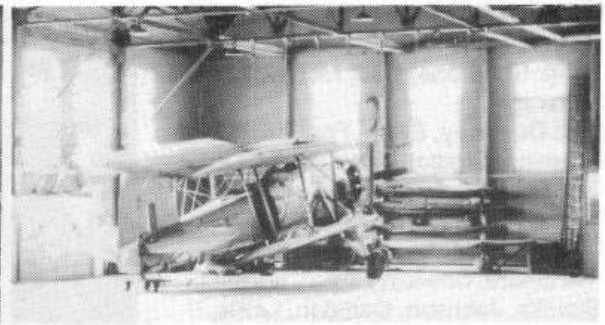
(Left)

UNTD 1947.

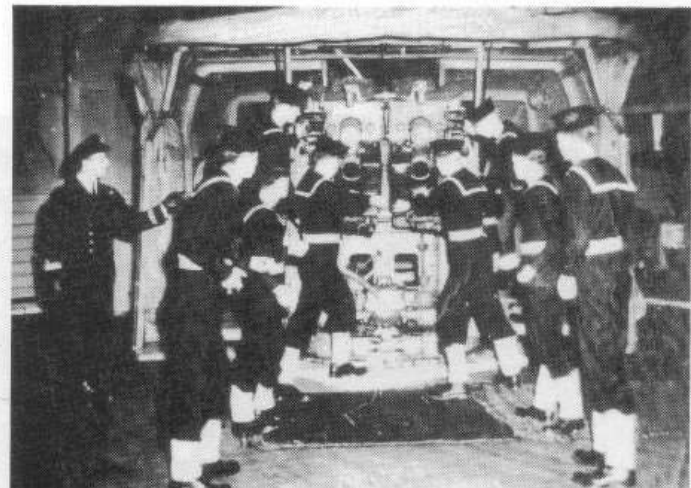
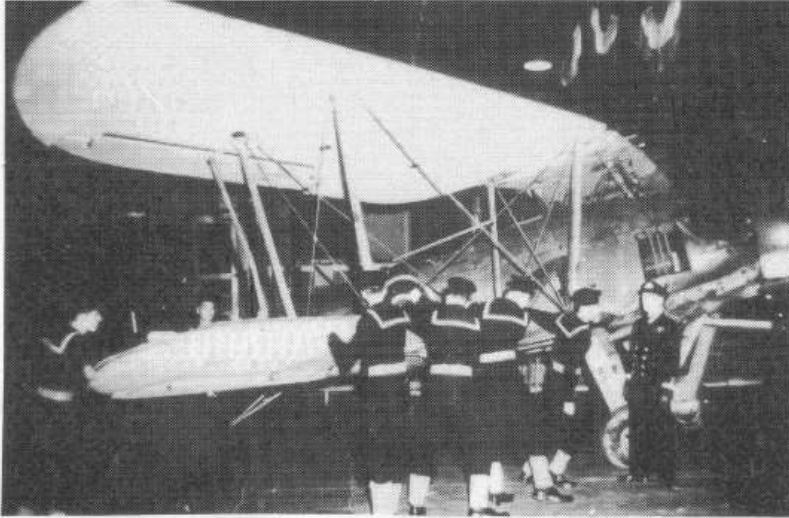
Photograph taken in the Seaman's Lounge at Star includes G. Hutton, Wm McCulloch, O.C. J. Jamieson, Lt Bethune and Cdr McLay.



Drill Deck 1947



(National Archives of Canada PA 1810162 and PA 153022)



Star Open House 1948

(Spectator)

WRENS (WRCNS)

The serious shortage of sailors for sea billets forced the Naval Service to organize the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service on July 31, 1942. Young women across Canada, aged eighteen to thirty-five were urged to join the Wrens to release men from shore duty for sea service. There were plenty of volunteers with 2,000 applicants at the outset, and 4,000 within a year.

A basic training centre for Wrens, HMCS *Conestoga*, was commissioned on June 1, 1943 in Galt, Ontario. The ship was a requisitioned correctional institute formerly called Grandview School for Girls.

In Hamilton, Third Officer Brock, W.R.C.N.S. Recruiting Officer, commenced recruiting local women using office space in the C.N.R. Station, during the month of April, 1943.

Among the first Hamilton women to enter the W.R.C.N.S. were: SLt Dorothy McQueen, wife of Col. M. V. McQueen serving overseas with the Canadian Army in Italy; Surgeon Lt Marian Templin; SLt Mary Bankier; and SLt Mary Pitcher.

The type of jobs done by the WRCNS can be illustrated by this list of Hamilton women who joined the Wrens in 1943.

Postal Clerk, Fleet Mail Office	- Marjorie Warren
Motor Transport Driver	- Alice Thompson
Communication Centre Messenger	- Margaret McIntosh
Confidential Books Clerk	- Betty MacLeod
Ship's Office Stenographer	- Lola May
Wireless Telegrapher	- Dorothy Jackson
Naval Stores Supply Assistant	- Ada Hyde and Ada White
Pay Writer	- Genevieve Fearman
Sail Maker (Signal Flags)	- Alison Chandler
Ship's Steward	- Margaret Braxendal and Anna Sekela
Sick Berth Attendant	- Evelyn Begg, Doreen McVittie, Barbara Smith, Dorothy Lott, Ethel Tootill, Nadien Eberth
Naval Clerk	- Margaret Pain (sister of Surgeon Lt Pain, HMCS <i>Star</i>), Shirley Watt (wife of Chief John Watt, RCNVR), Katherine Cudlip, Stella Wilk and Eleanor Nesbitt

Vice Admiral Percy W. Nelles, Chief of Naval Staff said of these women on the first anniversary of the WRCNS; *"I wish to thank the patriotic women who have entered their country's service and have added so capably to the combat strength of the navy by helping to man the shore establishments in this country. In one short year you have proved yourselves of immeasurable value to the naval service by taking over many tasks with skill, diligence and cheerfulness. As Chief of Naval Staff, I am proud of your record and the contribution you are making to the final victory".*¹

As Cdr Tony German CD, RCN, said in his recent book, *"while it was not an official objective that the Wrens would improve male morale, it definitely did. It was unfortunate that the Naval Service didn't take a more enlightened and realistic outlook sooner to produce more Wrens. It would have done a lot for shoreside efficiency and morale."*²

¹ Hamilton Spectator, Sep. 30, 1943

² Tony German, The Sea is At Our Gates (McClelland and Stewart Inc, 1990), p. 191

UNTD

The concept of the University Naval Training Division began with Professor Jack Baker at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. He noted that while the army and air force had a plan for recruiting officers from the student body at the college, the navy had no such equivalent. His son Bill was interested in joining the navy as an officer. At that time, the only option that a young man had was, direct entry as a midshipman if under the age of 19 and as an acting sub-lieutenant if over 19 years of age.

The candidates had to pass a battery of tests and an interview board. If successful, they entered the RCN for officer training. This meant that they left their college or university education behind and prepared for war service.

Professor Baker felt that the navy needed a plan whereby a young man could join the naval reserve, remain at university and work on qualifying for a naval commission during summer vacations.

In November 1943, he took his plan to LCdr McFetrick. As CO of *Star*, McFetrick assigned a young SLt, Don Bethune to help Baker draft up a proposal to pass on to C.O.R.D., Captain Brock, in Toronto. He liked the idea and sent it forward to Ottawa.

The plan was drawn up under the title of Canadian University Naval Training Service. However, it wasn't until the name was reduced to an acronym, that an astute naval typist, much to her embarrassment, noticed how inappropriate the initials would be. A revised title produced the name U.N.T.D., University Naval Training Division. Despite the organizers' careful efforts to select a scrambled set of letters that would avoid any disreputable sound, the nickname UNTiDy evolved.

Professor Baker, as father of the UNTD program, was brought into the RCNVR as an acting commander and given the position of Staff Officer Cadets. He held this position until after the war when he was succeeded by Cdr H. Little, RCN. Cdr Baker selected LCdr McLay to head up the program at McMaster University which became the first and most successful UNTD program in Canada.

Students joined the UNTD as ordinary seamen. If they passed their first summer and an interview board, they became officer candidates and were identified by a white cap tally. After completing their fourth year they became acting sub-lieutenants. In 1949, the seaman's rig was dropped and all UNTD cadets wore battle-dress uniforms as officer cadets.

Since its inception, the UNTD at McMaster has enrolled nearly 1,000 cadets. Almost thirty percent of all the trainees completed the naval requirements and graduated from University. Amongst the first to do so were Jack Jamieson '48, Emil Bankoff '48, Allan Coombes '49, Bill McCulloch '50 and Gil Hutton '50. A complete list of all graduates up to 1962 can be found in the UNTD Scrap book at *Star*.

The UNTD was a vital training program for the Naval Reserve and Regular Force. Without it, the high calibre of the RCNR could not have been maintained. The quality of leadership generated from this system has produced all the commanding officers of *Star* except one, since 1968.

OPENING THE FIRST NAVAL RESERVE BUILDING

Construction on the new naval reserve buildings for Hamilton progressed quickly and excitement grew as the completion date approached.

On the day before the commissioning the Spectator gave the public a sneak preview of the new division headquarters. The story is worth inclusion here for comparison to the facilities as they exist today.

"The white and green new buildings set in the expansive green of Eastwood Park on the water's edge, command a wide view of Hamilton Harbour.

The Star is comprised of two buildings. There is the ship proper, erected nearest the water. Across a paved parade ground is the two storey barracks block.

Going aboard in the stern of the ship which is at the east end, you come upon the quarterdeck, where the ship's bell is mounted. There is a raised desk for the officer of the day beside a small cabin with a telephone switch-board. Here to is the Commanding Officer's cabin beside the entrance to the Wardroom, the ship's office and accounting office.

The Wardroom with its fine stone fireplace and panelled walls, has a wide front window overlooking the harbour. The builder provided beams at their own expense to avoid cutting up the Wardroom with columns. The officers are indeed grateful for the aesthetic features of this room.

Off the drill deck on the north is a men's recreation room, Sea Cadets' room, classrooms and seamanship rooms.

Forward in the ship (which is the western extremity) is the recruiting office, the dental clinic, the surgeon lieutenant's office, clothing stores, carpenter and paint shops, bosun's stores and boiler room.

The foundations are concrete. Steel trusses are used in the drill deck superstructure. The siding is of rigid, long-wearing asbestos shingles.

The barracks block contains the ship's galley which is equipped with a modern hotel kitchen. The men draw their rations cafeteria style, with 125 men seated at one time. Also on the first deck opposite the galley is the petty officers' quarters and a laundry room.

On the second floor there are two dormitories, separated by washrooms. Steel rods are suspended in the dormitories from which the hammocks of the men are slung." ¹

¹ Hamilton Spectator, Sep. 30, 1943

Some of the key administrative personnel in HMCS *Star* at that time were:

Executive Officer

Lt F. C. Aggett of Toronto, a veteran of service in both the North and South Atlantic in Royal Navy ships

Recruiting Officer

LCdr J. W. Dresser from Montreal, a veteran of World War I

Surgeon Lt John Rathburn of Toronto, served two years in the Royal Navy before coming to *Star*. He was assisted by Surgeon Lt Al Pain

Dental Officer

Captain G. Adams of Toronto, assisted by Captain W. Nursey, both of the Canadian Dental Corps.

Training Officer

SLt John Ferguson from Weston, Ontario

Education Officer

Lt Alex MacKay from Chatham, Ontario and a graduate of McMaster University was also a specialist in physical education

Physical Training Officer

Lt Robert Pearce of Sydney, Australia was both the undefeated amateur and professional champion sculler of the world and the heavyweight boxing champion of the Australian Army

Special Services Officer

SLt Howard Caine, born in England, spent six years locally in radio broadcasting. He was in charge of entertainment and public relations

Chaplains

Rev. J. L. Anderson and Father Mattice

Accounting Officer

Pay Lt William Newbigging of Ecclefechan, Scotland, was formerly employed by the Bank of Montreal

Finally the great day for HMCS *Star* and the naval community arrived on October 1, 1943. As part of his address during the commissioning ceremonies of the new buildings, the Minister of Defence, the Hon. Angus L. Macdonald paid great tribute to, *"the sons of Hamilton who have won glory for themselves in the naval service of their country."*

He also praised the work of the commanding officer LCdr John McFetrick who directed the ship's record development and achieved a *"magnificent recruiting record"*, becoming one of the largest recruiting depots in the Dominion. He then announced that officer's promotion to the rank of Commander, effective that day.

The program began with a luncheon in the seaman's mess. Following that, the Minister and Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Percy W. Nelles, CD, RCN, inspected the honour guard, and ship's company along with units of the Wrens from HMCS *Conestoga* and cadets of RCSC Lion. Mayor William Morrison K. C. declared that Hamilton was proud of their new ship, the first of a series of new land bases for the RCNVR in Canada.

It was to be a facility unprecedented in size, space, and location. Although a model for future RCNVR construction, no other naval divisions could duplicate its spacious waterfront setting. It remains after nearly 50 years, an asset that makes *Star* a singularly outstanding Naval Reserve Establishment.

After all the euphoria of the commissioning ceremonies died away, one statement made at that time rings down through the decades, *"It shall always be a proud and happy ship, a splendid ship on which to serve."*¹

¹ Hamilton Spectator, Sep. 30, 1943

LOST AT SEA

The memorial on the quarterdeck of *Star* records the names of the 54 men who entered the RCNVR at Hamilton and made the "supreme sacrifice". It would not be possible to include all of their stories in this history of *Star*. However, a cross-section of four stories, illustrating the variety of ships and war conditions met by these brave men is appropriate as part of this record.

Ordinary Seaman Walter Armes of Charles Street was drafted to the small auxiliary minesweeper HMCS *Bras d'Or*. She was an old ship, built in 1919 and converted to a "light" ship for most of her life. Based in Rimouski, she patrolled the Gulf of St. Lawrence and had to her credit, the capture of an Italian merchantman, *Cupo Noli*, which had been attempting to escape Canadian waters on the eve of Italy's declaration of war. On October 19, 1940, *Bras d'Or* was shadowing a Roumanian freighter when she disappeared with loss of all hands.

HMS *Jervis Bay*, a converted merchant cruiser was a British ship whose crew was augmented by Canadians. Ordinary Signalman William H. Danby from Hamilton was one of those Canadians. In November 1940, the Battle of the Atlantic had entered a new phase when surface raiders such as the pocket-battleship *Admiral Scheer* broke out into the Atlantic to harass convoys. *Jervis Bay* was the solitary escort for Convoy HX84, consisting of 37 ships. When the *Admiral Scheer* was sighted, the convoy was scattered and *Jervis Bay* headed directly for the German Goliath. Her brave sacrifice allowed all of the convoy except for five merchantmen to escape. Ordinary Signalman Danby went down with his ship in one of the most gallant actions of the war.

In February 1942, Canada's theatre of war in the North Atlantic expanded. With growing confidence, her escort groups were to escort convoys all the way across to Ireland. Lt Robert Hughes found himself on the first "Newfie-to-Derry" run. He had been a newspaperman before the war and joined the navy in 1939. He was serving in the corvette HMCS *Spikenard*, senior ship of the escort, for convoy SC-67. On the night of February 10, with a high sea running, *Spikenard* was zig-zagging on the starboard wing of the convoy, when she and the freighter next to her were torpedoed almost simultaneously. It wasn't until the other escorts realized that radio contact had been lost that *Spikenard* was suspected as sunk. In the bitter cold, the rescue search began the next morning. There was heavy loss of life. Only eight survived out of the entire crew. Robert Hughes was not one of them. The family suffered a double tragedy when Robert's young brother, David was also lost at sea later in the war.

The Destroyer, HMCS *Athabaskan* was known as one of the happiest ships in the Canadian Navy. As D-Day approached, she in company with *Haida* was protecting the western flanks of "Operation Neptune" in the English Channels on April 29, 1944. Two German destroyers were using the French coast to shadow their movement as the two Canadian ships closed for battle. One German ship was set on fire and run aground, but *Athabaskan* took a torpedo hit in the stern. At first it did not appear too serious, but fire reached the after magazine and *Athabaskan* blew up. In the Engine Room, Artificer Walter Love of Chestnut Street, Hamilton, was unable to get out and went down with his ship, leaving a wife and three sons who had moved to Dartmouth to be near him during the war. Of her entire crew, 128 were missing, 83 became prisoners of war and 38 were rescued by *Haida*.

These are only four heroic stories of Hamilton's seagoing sons. There are many more; Leading Stoker Cyril Kitchen, Able Seamen Hugh Todd and Albert 'Babe' Allison or SLt Fred Ker; and 46 more. They are all special men and have taken a hallowed place in our naval heritage.

NAVAL HEROES

Hamilton sailors displayed dauntless courage and resourcefulness during World War II and were a credit to their native city and the RCNVR. The Distinguished Service Medal was awarded to CPO Donald Portree, Torpedoman Dan Gearing and Signaller Eugene Tobin.

Chief Petty Officer Portree was an engine-room artificer aboard *Assiniboine* when she rammed and sank the German submarine U-210 after a blazing gun battle in the Atlantic. In the heat of the battle, he led a party of men of the forward fire party to extinguish a serious fire on the exposed flag deck.

In a similar fashion, Torpedoman Gearing was cited for his efforts in helping extinguish a dangerous fire which raged in *Saguenay* after a skirmish with a submarine. He removed ammunition from the forward magazine and helped extinguish the blaze which was perilously close to the magazine. His quick thinking in shutting down the ventilating fans helped contain the blaze.

Signalman AB Tobin was decorated for his action in capturing the German Submarine U-501. In a heavy sea, he left the corvette *Chambly* to board the submarine, taking the crew captive at the point of a machine-gun.

The Order of the British Empire was awarded to Engineering Lieutenant John Savory for gallantry on two different occasions. During the salvage of the Merchant vessel "*Matthew*" which had been rammed, Lt Savory went aboard to assist the crew in helping keep their ship afloat until it reached port. On another occasion he took part in towing a disabled destroyer to port during a North Atlantic Gale. Such an upper deck operation can be extremely hazardous during bad weather.

Further recognition for members of *Star* came after the war in 1947. Cdr Sam Ross had the pleasure of presenting the British Empire Medals to Yeoman of Signals F. R. M. Holk, CPO W. F. Carey, and Telegraphist T. H. Vlachos.

Telegraphist Vlachos gained his award for "Outstanding efforts in furnishing valuable information which enabled the navy to maintain an essential plot on the the position of U-boats." His work saved many lives and valuable shipping, hastening the end of the war.

According to his citation, CPO Carey discharged his duties as an instructor at *Star* with greater than normal diligence at all times. He proved to be an invaluable trainer of seamen and disciplinarian for new entry ratings.

Petty Officer Holk received his medal for his long service with convoys since the beginning of the war. He had consistently carried out his duties in a highly commendable manner. By his tact, leadership and untiring devotion to duty he had been a credit to the Naval Service of Canada.

At the same time, Chief Stoker Harry Lane received his Long Service Medal, and the whole affair proved once again the outstanding quality of Hamilton's naval personnel.

1945 AND THE POST-WAR YEARS

After the highly successful four year appointment as first commanding officer of HMCS *Star*, Cdr McFetrick returned to Montreal to command HMCS *Donaconna*. He turned command of *Star* over to Cdr Reginald Jackson O.B.E. in February 1944. Cdr Jackson was a native of Calgary for which he received the nick name of "cowboy". He spent three years commanding escort ships in the Atlantic before his appointment to *Star*.

As the war moved into its final stages two types of specialist training were commenced at *Star*. Both were related to the war in the Pacific where the aircraft carrier was supreme.

Naval air mechanics were sent to *Star* for courses and then posted to Hagersville for further training at the Commonwealth Air Training facilities there.

The Otis Fensom plant in Hamilton was a major producer of a new type Bofors gun for ships. Veteran seamen out of frigates and destroyers were sent to Hamilton for specialized training to meet the kamikaze threat in the Pacific. Part of their training took place at the Otis-Fensom test firing grounds.

By the end of the summer 1945, special training and recruitment were all over and *Star* had to prepare for a new activity. Boasting one of the finest recruiting records in Canada - seven percent of the 100,000 officers and ratings in Canada's war-time navy - *Star* was expected to become one of the busiest demobilization centres.

Cdr Colin Glassco reported that to handle the expected 7,000 officers and ratings expected to pour through the division on their way back to "civvy" street, he had assigned four personnel selection officers and two rehabilitation liaison officers to direct a flow of 25 men daily into peace-time occupations.

As *Star's* role changed from recruiting to demobilization, there were a rapid series of changes in command, with the executive officers stepping up to fill the vacancies left by the departing commanding officers.

In 1946 command was passed in sequence from Cdr C. S. Glassco to LCdr R. G. Baker, to LCdr W. H. Adamson, to LCdr S. F. Ross.

With the appointment of Samuel Foster Ross as commanding officer on May 1, 1946, *Star* reverted to a peace-time naval reserve establishment. At that time *Star* was the fifth largest naval reserve establishment in Canada, being surpassed only by Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Star's peace-time complement was set at 65 officers and 735 ratings. This was the equivalent of the entire naval reserve in 1923. It was expected that two thirds of the complement would consist of ex-servicemen who would be welcomed back into the peace-time navy.

A permanent staff consisting of a staff officer, an assistant staff officer, an accounting officer, a recruiting officer and several petty officer instructors were stationed at *Star* for instructional, administrative and maintenance duties. The first staff officer assignment went to LCdr J. Stewart, RCN, of Cowichan Bay, B. C.

During the war, *Star* had been only a recruiting and basic training centre. Now, training equipment had to be installed at *Star* to cover training in a variety of branches including; gunnery, radar, asdic, torpedo, communications, engine room, electrical, accounting and medical. Oerlikon, Bofors and twin four-inch guns were installed as a gun battery on the drill deck.

In addition to this, the Department of National Defence announced in October 1946 that it would be establishing a Naval Reserve Air Arm in Hamilton with an enlistment quota of 41 officers and 205 men. Flying training was expected to take place at Mount Hope with the co-operation of the Royal Hamilton Aero Club. Aero engines and a Swordfish aircraft were sent to *Star* to assist in carrying out air mechanics training.

At the end of the war, the RCN purchased 36 seafires for No. 1 Training Air Group. In 1949, twenty-seven of these aircraft were made available to naval reserve divisions. Two were sent to *Star*. Seafire SR464 was landed at Hamilton Civic Airport east of Parkdale Avenue and with wings folded was towed to *Star* where it was put on display alongside a Swordfish bi-plane on the sports field behind the Wardroom. Seafire PR410 was also assigned to *Star* and has been photographed facing the bay. In 1954, PR410 was sent to Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and later scrapped. It is not known what happened to SR464 but it is reported that one of these seafires was moved to the air base at Mount Hope for pilot training.¹

A Hurricane was also sent to Hamilton. It landed at the old civic airport east of Parkdale Avenue. A truck was to tow the aircraft to *Star*. When this arrangement misfired, the pilot decided to taxi to the base down Burlington Street. He folded his wings and got as far as Sherman Avenue before the police caught up with him, or so the story goes.

It was also at this time that the RCNR and RCNVR were amalgamated to form a single organization known as the RCN(R). The wavy navy stripe disappeared at this time.

The year 1948 recorded two significant events that should be recorded as a part of *Star's* history. On January 24, 1948, fire destroyed the former naval barracks on Stuart Street. A spectacular blaze swept through the Cabot Macaroni Company plant as firemen attempted to battle the flames in sub-zero weather. Only the ground floor walls were left standing and later rebuilt into a one storey office space.

One of the disadvantages of the revetment wall in front of *Star* was that it was wide open to a north easterly gale. On December 15, 1948 such a storm swept down suddenly on *Star*, pounding an 85 foot patrol vessel and the tug *Youville*. The wooden vessel was dashed to splinters and sank. *Youville* took on sufficient water to also sink while being towed into the lee of the Wellington Street dock. As a result of this disaster, a breakwater was constructed to provide shelter for the *Star* basin.

The training program underwent considerable changes in 1949. It was obvious that the Reserves had taken more than they could chew in 1946, and some consolidation was necessary. Besides providing general training, specified divisions were made responsible for specialized training in gunnery, communications, torpedo anti-submarine and navigation direction.

¹ Lee W. Walsh research material and Gord McNulty photo collection

SUMMARY OF THE WAR YEARS

The War Years left *Star* and the city of Hamilton with an incredible legacy. In its primary role as a recruiter, *Star* excelled, producing 229 officers, 6,976 men and 285 wrens for the war effort. This in turn provided this community with one of its finest assets - the naval veteran, some of whom remained at *Star* to carry on our naval heritage directly. Others formed an important support organization known as Veteran's Association and helped maintain a naval presence in the region.

The war brought great and lasting changes which we continue to celebrate 50 years later. The ship's name was established on November 1, 1941. It is a name rich in naval history and parochial significance. The first permanent naval barracks constructed solely for the naval reserve were completed on October 1, 1943, on a waterfront site with excellent berthing facilities for large naval ships. The decades ahead would illustrate the full potential of these facilities.

Two organizations were introduced that have played and continue to play a significant role in the life of *Star*. The Wrens, formed on July 31, 1942, introduced women to the naval service and they form 35% of the unit strength today.

In November 1943, Professor Jack Baker, with the support of senior officers of *Star*, created the UNTD organization which continues to provide a well trained cadre of reserve officers without which the naval reserve could not function.

Finally it was the legacy of Walter Hose that enabled Canada to make a major contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic. Without the formation of the RCNVR in 1923 that battle may have been lost. Instead the future was secure. Canada trained and equipped the third largest allied navy in the world.

In the after glow of this achievement, and with all the war surplus equipment, the navy thrived in the postwar years. Hamilton in particular moved into another era of naval sublimity. These were called the Flagship Years.



CHAPTER FOUR

FLAGSHIP YEARS

From 1951 - 1968, HMCS *Star* experienced a seventeen year prominence in naval circles. During this period HMCS *Star* was placed in the unique position of housing the national headquarters for training and administration of the naval reserve. With this accrued status came a prestige unknown on the Hamilton military scene before or since that time.

These have been identified as the flagship years when the Great Lakes (summer) Training Centre, COND and HMCS *Patriot* took up occupancy on the Hamilton naval base. This brought a cadre of career senior officers, chiefs and petty officers to our community and gave it a naval flavour usually experienced only in Halifax or Esquimalt. It also brought many benefits such as improved facilities, mess activities and social events that were the envy of many other naval establishments.

This windfall was in part the product of excellent planning and geography. During the war years, Hamilton was provided with a naval reserve facility second to none on a deep water, spacious, prime waterfront property: a legacy which no other naval reserve base in Canada has ever enjoyed. Hamilton is also blessed with a central location in the heart of the country with access to national transportation routes and one of the finest inland water systems in the world.

G.L.T.C. 1952

The outstanding training facilities at *Star* were first recognized nationally by the sea cadets who conducted a two week Sea Cadet Officer School for 137 instructors in 1951. Lt W. F. Pop Carey was the staff instructor. The Reserve Training Establishment (Great Lakes) began in the following year. It was a cumbersome acronym and it later became simply GLTC. The Training Officer at HMCS *Star*, LCdr G. T. Munn wrote a very concise report on summer training in 1954,

"For the past three summers, New Entry sailors from Reserve Divisions scattered throughout the 10 provinces of Canada, have received their two weeks of summer training at the Great Lakes Training Centre. This centre, located at HMCS Star, has, in each succeeding year, trained an ever increasing number of New Entries. Three years ago, 3 Fairmiles provided the necessary training facilities; two years ago it was necessary to employ 2 Gate Vessels to handle the doubled numbers of trainees; this year over 300 New Entries were marked "Trained" and to accommodate this "flood" it was necessary to press 3 Mine Sweepers and 3 Fairmiles into service.

"Star" New Entries made a fine showing and it is gratifying to note that practically every man in the New Entry Class was able to take advantage of this much improved type of New Entry Training."

Although they trained at *Star*, the Commanding Officer, Cdr G. Parke was not responsible for the summer training. However, he did have the added burden of administrative duties.

Thirteen *Star* New Entry Seamen were trained that year at G.L.T.C. while 10 New Entry Wrens completed their training at *Cornwallis* on the East Coast. It is interesting to note that after 1945, the WRCNS was disbanded but in 1951 women were once more enrolled in the RCNR.

WRENS REACTIVATED 1951

A recruiting drive for women to work in radio communications began in July 1951. On the first day more than a dozen applicants appeared at *Star* and many more made enquiries. Part of the reason may have been that for the first time women were offered the same pay as men in similar rank and duties.

The Wren's mess was located on the north side of the west corridor leading from the drill deck. It is presently the space occupied by the Executive Officer. Although only a platoon in strength, for their size the Wrens were always the most active part of the ship, raising money, sponsoring social activities, fiercely 'competing' for the best attendance record in the ship, and challenging any mess to a knock 'em down, drag 'em out volleyball or baseball game. Whatever the occasion, whether decorating or coat checking for social events, the Wrens always provided the women's touch. Besides their yearly Christmas party and carol sing, the Wrens held an annual mess dinner every Spring at the Fischer's Hotel to renew old acquaintances with former mess members. The social highlight of every year for the ship's company was the Hard Times Dance sponsored by the Wrens. Elizabeth Osborne's 1957 publicity for their big event tells the whole story in Starshells.

The Wrens of H.M.C.S. "STAR"

Will tell their friends, both near and far
That the night is coming - it's almost here,
For the biggest social splash of the year!

March the 30th is the date,
So grab yourself your favorite mate,
Put on your jeans and your old plaid shirt,
Or your faded blouse bedraggled skirt.

For that's the night, whether rain or snow,
We'll be ready to really let ourselves go.
Some swing and sway, and some rock and roll,
And that old square dance that's good for the soul.

It's our "Hard Times Dance" we are talking about,
So come on, everybody, and give us a shout.
For tickets one dollar per head seem just right
For a guaranteed slap-happy, fun-loving night!

The Wrens from *Star* were amongst the best in the country. In 1966 Wren Patricia Hunter won the Best Wren Award at CFB *Esquimalt* and Wren Jacquelin Watson took third place in a coast-to-coast contest to pick the Wren cover girl of 1956. The choices were made on the basis of beauty, smartness, personality, charm and intelligence. That same year Wren Joan Osborne reported this mess news to Starshells.

"Communications must have been good between Star and Griffon during the Christmas Holidays and presents were of a sparkling variety. Now there is one communicator who won't be operating much longer. Best wishes to Ex-Mess President, Wren Watson."

There were many Wrens that were engaged or married to sailors during this period. Wren Barbara Gotch reported to Starshells that the following Wrens were forming their own navy; Wrens Scavarda-McAllister, J. Carpenter-Bowen, M. McIntosh-Head, K. Switzer-Slatts, S. Raynsford-Morris, B. Churchill-Ellison, and P. Singleton-Pare.

Marriage wasn't the only drain on the Wren's mess. A number of young women transferred to the R.C.N. for special duty: Wrens N. Clarke, J. Frieman, J. Bowen, S. Stretton and O'Sullivan, to name a few.

The opening of a navy film in Hamilton was always an opportunity for personnel from HMCS *Star* to do some public relations for the navy. On April 18, 1956, the Wren Division was present at the Tivoli Theatre for the opening of the classic espionage film, "The Man Who Never Was".

A wide range of trades was available for Wrens initially, after completing new entry training. In 1954 Wren Joyce Kierstead reported for her mess that every Saturday and Sunday, seven Naval Air Wrens invade the VC 920 Squadron at Downsview. The transportation to and fro leaves much to be desired in the winter months but the excellent training offered makes up for the lack of comfort.

Training programs were conducted in air frames and air fitters (engines). Cdr G. H. Parke reported in September 1953 that,

"A considerable amount of surplus equipment, mainly Seafire and including the two Seafire XV's is held. It is hoped that suitable Harvard instructional equipment and lesson plans may be made available for this training season."

This would explain why for many years, until it was given to the Canadian War Plane Heritage, a four bladed Seafire propellor was part of the regalia on the drill deck.

By 1957 however, all this had changed. It had become necessary to limit the branches for which Wrens could apply to Supply, Communications and Medical. The Air Fitters and Riggers disappeared, and so did a unique part of *Star's* history.

More space than is available here would be required to tell the entire story of the young women with the special bent of character who would be sailors. It is best summarized in this poetic gem written by ex-Wren Patricia (Allan) Rae and published originally in the "Tiddley Times".

*"I joined the Wrens!...
Travel was in my blood,
And ships and sailors
Were a daily sight
Within a Western ocean port
Whose docks and wharfs
Were ever my delight.
And thus I went to Galt
To "Contestoga"
Frigate all of stone. -
I learned the language
That the Navy spoke;
We drilled, saluted, marched
And marched again
Without a groan.-*

*But all at once
The magic bubble broke;
I was a Wren,
So men
Could go to sea;
But working parties
Completely baffled me,
Until I realized:
"Of course
I joined the Navy to replace
Man's faithful friend
The horse!"*

NAVAL RESERVE HEADQUARTERS MOVES TO HAMILTON - 1953

In the Spring of 1953, the Hamilton Spectator reported that "Hamilton's long and conspicuous contribution to the Royal Canadian Navy will be acknowledged here when the national headquarters for the naval reserve is located at HMCS *Star*. Commodore Kenneth Adams, R.C.N., former commanding officer of the aircraft carrier HMCS *Magnificent*, will be received on *Star's* parade ground causing the command centre of Canada's 6,600-man reserve to be switched from Ottawa to Hamilton. Canada's Naval Reserve, with its 22 shore establishments was launched in 1923 by Rear-Admiral Walter Hose, C.B.E., CD, R.C.N., as a means of getting the best training for the most men out of the tiny budget allotted to him".

The Director of the Naval Reserve had been in Ottawa since the founding of the Naval Reserve in 1923. Officially, the new establishment was to be known as C.O.N.D., Commanding Officer Naval Divisions and the move to Hamilton would allow C.O.N.D. to operate the Great Lakes Training Centre more effectively where it was expected more and larger ships would be operating in the summer.

Commodore Adams graduated from the Royal Naval College of Canada in 1922. He earned his Master's Certificate in the Merchant Service before joining the RCNR in 1928. Beginning in 1943, he commanded the destroyers, *Assiniboine* and *Ottawa* and the auxiliary cruiser *Prince Henry*, and then the destroyer *Iroquois*. In 1946 he commanded the Cruiser HMCS *Uganda*. His second in command is Captain Angus Boulton who also has a distinguished service record and most recently has been Director of the Naval Reserve in Ottawa.

C.O.N.D. shared facilities with HMCS *Star*, using the south block, until a new headquarters building could be built. On October 14, 1954, Rear Admiral Walter Hose, a veteran of 44 years in the R.C.N. and known as the "father of the Canadian Navy Reserve", officiated at the cornerstone laying of the new headquarters building. In his address he said,

"Here in Hamilton, 1,000 miles from the sea stands the heart of the Canadian Naval Reserve, representing 40 years of progress. When this building is completed it will be a structure to be proud of and it is very rewarding to me to see such great development in the navy."

The new building when completed, would have cost \$300,000. It would be a fifty room, two storey brick structure with 20,000 square feet of ground space. The foundation of the building required 90-foot pilings dug into the unstable soil of the harbour frontage. The plan called for many modern amenities, including fluorescent lighting, aluminum windows, board rooms and a library for a staff of 126 including 43 officers.

The contractor can be very proud of his work for after forty-eight years the building is in excellent condition and its design still very functional.

CONFERENCES

The spacious training facilities and meeting rooms adjoining the amenities of the messes has made *Star* an excellent location for large gatherings and conferences.

As a sign of the times, the first radiological defence course in the Hamilton district was held on May 20 - 24, 1952 in *Star*. The course was sponsored by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office for fire department and civil defense personnel.

In 1953 C.O.N.D. welcomed staff officers from 22 Naval Divisions to a week long administration conference at *Star*. Chairman of the conference being held here for the first time was Captain P. D. Budge, Chief of Staff at C.O.N.D. Highlight of the conference was a tour of the harbour in *P.T. 706*. Lt W. M. Beckett, S.O. *Star* was the unofficial host for the week.

Vice-Admiral E. R. Mainguy, O.B.E., CD, R.C.N., arrived at HMCS *Star* on November 1, 1954 on the occasion of his visit to the Reserve Commanding Officers' Conference. This was the first of a decade of week-long conferences hosted by HMCS *Star*. Such responsibilities taxed the resources of the unit to the fullest.

TRAINING SHIPS AND CRUISES

During the flagship years there were more training vessels using the excellent sea wall facilities at *Star* than ever before or since.

For part of this period HMCS *Star* had the ultimate luxury of possessing on permanent loan, her very own tender, a type B. Fairmile, HMCS *Beaver* 706. She was a war surplus coastal patrol vessel, former *M.L. 106*. In 1947 she was converted from gas to diesel at Sorel, Quebec and assigned to *Star* in the summer of 1948. Ross Bennett, now Commodore retired, remembers being sent as part of the crew to bring her up the St. Lawrence. Thus began a history of many weekend training cruises to various ports on Lake Ontario, in particular, Rochester.

Lt R. Bennett reported that,

"On Friday evening September 17, 1954, the annual "officers' Training Cruise" aboard HMCS Beaver proceeded out the Burlington Canal on a "zig-zag" course for Rochester N.Y. under the command of Cdr Curtis.

Our departure was late as a result of both electrical and engine trouble, but the all-officer crew, with the exception of PISWS McPeat as steward, and ABCK2 Smith as cook soon secured for sea and closed up watches for the night.

With a rather heavy following sea, the quartermasters zig-zagged their way eastward with only a few incidents of chasing the "lubberline" around the compass. Beaver and her motley crew arrived at Rochester at 0800.

Leave expired at 0200 Sunday morning, and there being no mishaps ashore, Beaver slipped Rochester at 0400 and after a busy day arrived at Star at 1750.

Training during this time at sea included such evolutions as firing signal rockets, firing Very's pistols, firing smoke floats, firing .303 rifles, firing .22 revolvers - in fact it was an all-fired good week-end.

"Medals" were presented for this cruise in the best "semi" fashion, complete with vari-coloured ribbons, to the following:

*Lt. H. Tilbury - Best Hawser Humper
Lt. F. Chambers - Best Sculler
A/Lt J. Jones - Captain of the Heads
Surg. Lt. Burwell - Best Deck Scrubber"*

Later that same month SLt J. Heptinstall reported a very different kind of operation aboard HMCS *Beaver*. As the result of a sailing accident involving three sea-scouts and their officer off Oakville, an attempt was made to co-ordinate the rescue resources of the Canadian Power Squadron, the Hamilton Harbour Police and the Royal Canadian Navy. On September 25, a dinghy was set adrift on Lake Ontario and a planned "Operation Rescue" was put into effect. The exercise was recorded for posterity by CHCH-TV. It was noted that the only signalman aboard HMCS *Beaver* was a wren who did a very fine job. In the afternoon the missing dinghy was recovered. The entire exercise proved that other sailing tragedies could be avoided with a co-ordinated effort.

CPO Harry Laird remembers another adventure with the Fairmiles in 1954. Five of the vessels; *Beaver 706 (Star)*, *Moose 711 (Griffin)*, *Reindeer 716 (York)*, *Wolf 762 (Hunter)* and *Raccoon 779 (Prevost)* were assigned as picket vessels on the race course for the Harnsworth speedboat races in the Detroit River. The event featured the fastest boats in the world.

The races were exciting enough but on the way back across Lake Erie, *Reindeer* had an engine room fire and had to be towed to the Welland Canal. In the canal, *Beaver* entered a lock with a coal burning tug. As the water level dropped, the lock filled with black smoke which was drawn into the engine room by *Beaver's* powerful ventilator fans. It was almost as bad as an engine room fire. Harry won't forget how his crew were almost asphyxiated waiting for the lock gate to open.

The 200th anniversary of the White Ensign on the Great Lakes was celebrated in the summer of 1955 with the largest assemblage of training vessels ever seen in these waters. The first British vessels put "to sea" on Lake Ontario in the summer of 1755 when the sloops HMS *Oswego* and HMS *Ontario* were built at what is now called Oswego N.Y. They were the first of six ships built to form a fleet intended to cut the lines of communication between the French forces on the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi.

The festivities began on the evening of August 2 when 15 warships in harbour at HMCS *Star* illuminated the waterfront with a dazzling display of fireworks. On August 16, the entire G.L.T.C. fleet designated as the 11th Coastal Escort Squadron under the command of Rear Admiral Kenneth F. Adams departed HMCS *Star* for 15 hours of fleet manoeuvres and tactical exercises on Lake Ontario. This was the first time that an admiral had commanded such a fleet on the lakes. The squadron consisted of 15 ships made up of the following elements; Algerine fleet escorts - HMCS *Portage*, *Wallaceburg* and *Minas*, Bay Class Sweepers - HMCS *Gaspe*, *Trinity*, *Ugana*, and *Resolute*, Gate Vessels - HMCS *Porte St. Louis*, *Porte St. Jean* and *Porte Dauphine*, and Fairmiles - HMCS *Wolfe*, *Cougar*, *Moose*, *Raccoon* and *Beaver*.

The highlight of the day was a full-scale mock attack off the shores of Frenchman's Bay east of Toronto. Following that, the area was closed to shipping for six months after a depth charge fired by HMCS *Wallaceburg* failed to explode.

The day was completed when the three larger ships anchored off Port Credit where the Odeon theatres gave a North American premiere of its latest film "Above Us the Waves" starring John Mills and James Robertson Justice. The film tells the heroic story of the midget submarine attack on the battleship, the *Tirpitz*.

The following year, 1956 was anti-climatic in terms of numbers of ships and activities but the two week cruises were becoming far more interesting, reaching out to exotic ports such as Cleveland, Detroit, Sarnia, Port Arthur and Chicago. The three Algerines, HMCS *Portage* (LCdr Lawrence), HMCS *Sault Ste. Marie* (LCdr Stone) and HMCS *Wallaceburg* (LCdr D. Bethune) were the senior ships participating in the GLTC sea training. They were joined by the newly commissioned Bird class patrol craft, HMCS *Cormorant* and HMCS *Mallard* on their way to Halifax from the Penetang and Midland ship yards.

By 1957 the Fairmiles had reached the end of their life expectancy out of salt water. They each fell victim to insidious dry rot and ended up at the Harbour Commission for disposal. HMCS *Cougar 704* saw her usefulness extended by being transported to Dundas where she became the home of that community's sea cadet corps. With the demise of the Fairmiles, regular weekend sea training disappeared from HMCS *Star*.

To partially fill the gap left by the Fairmiles, HMCS *Scatari* was assigned to G.L.T.C. after 1958. She was an old west coast fishing seiner and was the least likely looking naval ship ever seen. Here is how one junior officer from *Star* described his experience in her on a G.L.T.C. New Entry Training Cruise in 1962.

"One sunny July day in 1962, we chugged away from the jetty with the Detroit skyline in the background and proceeded down river to Lake Erie on a training exercise. The Commanding Officer had been ashore attending a public function and arrived on board in his best uniform just before sailing. Shortly after our departure, he turned and said to me, 'Sub, I am going to my cabin to change. Keep her in the centre of the channel, follow that laker ahead and call me if you need me.'

I was filled with elation and confidence at being left in charge on the bridge even if it was only "Scatari". My youth and shiny sub-lieutenant bars were in striking contrast to the age of this worn out veteran of the Pacific fishing fleet that had been transferred to the armed forces as a WWII rescue vessel.

The sun was warm and visibility unlimited. It was a perfect day to be on the water and the cox'n and I chatted idly as there were few navigational chores to occupy my time.

All went well until the laker ahead, an old coal burning relic, shifted in her bearing as the channel swung more to the south, and we fell directly into the black choking smoke drifting back from her funnel.

After an insufferable ten minutes of breathing these fumes, I made a command decision that either we had to issue chemox gear or change station on the vessel ahead. I called down to the engine room for full speed, and proceeded to attempt to overtake and pass the ancient and grimy steamer.

Straining and vibrating from stem to stern, we slowly and agonizingly crept up the port quarter of the old laker. Finally we began to inch our way along the length of this long black hull and success appeared within our grasp when it happened.

Suddenly, from around a bend in the river, screened from our view by the hull of the old laker, appeared the biggest of the red hulled Canadian Steamship ore carriers, riding high in the water on her way up river to Lake Superior.

There wasn't much time to make a decision. Should I press on and brave it through or stop engines and give up all the hard won distance, resigning myself to eating black smoke and soot.

Gripping the bridge rail, I urged our tired old vessel on, wondering what might shake loose with all the vibrating emanating from the engine room. I had, however, underestimated the closing speed of our vessels, and soon all I could do was cringe as we entered the canyon formed by the giant hulls of the passing lakers, close enough to see the rivets on the steel plates.

The Captain was still below, changing and having a relaxing cup of coffee. The whole affair would have gone without his notice if it hadn't been for the bow wave.

Suddenly, we were pitching and rolling in a giant swell of water displaced by the passing of these leviathans. The Captain immediately emerged from his cabin wearing striped boxer shorts and coffee stains on the front of his fresh shirt. His head and eyes raised slowly and his mouth fell open as his reluctant brain began to assimilate the sight of towering steel hulls surrounding him. In stunned awe he slowly exhaled an expletive before stumbling back to his cabin, no doubt to find his life belt or trousers.

As quickly as the scenario had developed, it ended. The ore carrier disappeared around another bend and the old laker veered sharply away to starboard following the channel into Toledo.

When the Captain reappeared on the bridge, the day was warm and pleasant. The lanes ahead were empty and I routinely busied myself with details on the chart, carefully avoiding any eye contact with the Captain." ¹

Many naval ships both Canadian and foreign have visited *Star* during the summer months but nothing has been as significant as the visit in 1959 of the Royal Yacht, HMY *Britannia*.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and His Royal Highness Prince Philip began their seven-week Royal Tour of Canada on June 21 when the *Britannia* was escorted into Gaspe by a fleet of 14 ships of the Canadian Atlantic Fleet, under the command of Rear-Admiral H. F. Pullen, Flag Officer Atlantic Coast. The *Britannia* then proceeded up the St. Lawrence to the official opening of the Seaway on June 26. The President of the United States and Mrs. Eisenhower were embarked for this ceremony. The Royal couple arrived in Hamilton by train on July 2 and after a city tour witnessed the trooping-the-colours by the Argyll and Sutherland at Civic (Ivor Wynn) Stadium.

¹ R. J. Williamson, "Close Encounters", *Starshells*, Fall, 1984, p. 3

On July 13 while the Queen and Prince Philip were touring Canada, the Royal Yacht arrived in Hamilton for 3 days of R & R for her crew. This visit was supported and announced by the Hon. Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and MP for Hamilton West.

The *Britannia* was designed to serve as a naval hospital ship in time of war and was until recently the largest naval vessel ever to have visited Hamilton. She is 412 feet long, 55 feet wide and draws 16 feet of water. She has a gross tonnage of 5,769 and a cruising speed of 22 knots. Her complement is 21 officers and 240 men. Her commanding officer, Rear Admiral Dawnay, reputed to have a pet dislike of tugs, brought *Britannia* alongside in front of *Star* under her own power.

Commodore E. W. Finch-Noyes, Commanding Officer Naval Divisions was the first to board *Britannia* and welcome Admiral Dawnay to Hamilton. It was noted that there was no traditional "piping" as all shrill noises aboard the floating palace, had been banned at the Queen's request.

Before leaving Hamilton, Admiral Dawnay visited City Hall to sign the guest book and related to Mayor Lloyd Jackson how much his crew had appreciated the hospitality of Hamilton, the reception in the messes, the trips to Niagara Falls, the visits to local homes and the baskets of fresh cherries sent from the local orchards.

On completion of her three day visit, *Britannia* backed out of the basin in front of *Star* as on the top deck the Royal Marine Band played lustily and the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" drifted over the bay.

In recognition of the fine reception enjoyed by *Britannia* while at *Star*, a ship's badge and autographed Royal portraits were sent and now hang over the fireplace of *Star's* wardroom.

Eight ships of the RCN, the largest armed fleet ever to have visited Hamilton, arrived on Sunday August 23, 1959 for a two-day stay. They were scheduled to participate in a big NATO naval review at the C.N.E. Warships of this size were never able to penetrate into the Great Lakes until the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The fleet was made up of five destroyer-escorts, HMC Ships *Gatineau*, *Kootenay*, *St. Croix*, *Restigouche* and *Terra Nova*, and the frigates, *Cap de la Madeleine*, *Lauzon*, and *Buckingham*. The visit brought 2,000 officers and men to Hamilton. The messes of *Star* planned a programme of entertainment for the crews during their stay.

There were a variety of reserve navy personalities working out of *Star* in command of training vessels at GLTC: Don Bethune, A. Havasham, Archie Hodge, Doug Woodliffe, Tom Smith and Wally Fox-Decent to mention just a few. The last two went on to reach the rank of Rear Admiral and position of Chief of Reserves and Cadets.

By the late sixties, the heyday of summer training on the Great Lakes had passed. As budgets were reduced, ships were moth-balled and old vessels were simply not replaced. Soon the waterfront at *Star* which had been a hive of activity became, an empty basin occupied only by the Royal Canadian Naval Sailing Association and their guard tug *JC 33* and *Youville*.

AWARDS AND MEDALS

Chief of Staff COND, Captain P. D. Budge, D.S.C., RCN, paid an informal visit to *Star* on November 3, 1953 to address the Ship's Company and present officers and men with Coronation Medals. He was a veteran of D-Day and English Channel action on June 8 and 9, 1944 for which he was awarded the DSC while serving in HMCS *Huron*.

First PO John Quinn in 1954, then CPO M. Macaulay and CPO A. Walker received their **Canadian Forces Decorations in 1956 from Cdr Curtis**. In 1958, LCdr R. Wilson, Executive Officer of *Star*, presented Canadian Decorations for long service to Cdr Boyd McLay, Commanding Officer of the UNTD at McMaster University and to LCdr Campbell Graham, navigation instructor to U.N.T.D. cadets.

The Naval Officers' Association of Canada Trophy for Band Efficiency was awarded to the *Star* Band both in 1964 and 1966. The *Cornwallis* Trophy was presented to McMaster U.N.T.D. in 1967. It was a Centennial Year Award for competition between all U.N.T.D. units across Canada for showing the best improvement in all aspects of training. Ten Centennial Medals were also distributed throughout the ship's company that year, but no one remembers who got them. It is believed that many of them went to the Centennial Guard.

STARSHELLS

During the flagship years, a significant effort was made by *Star* to put on a good show and demonstrate leadership. Cdr Curtis re-instituted the ship's magazine "Starshells" in November 1954 with Lt Fred Brooks as editor. Both officers stated that the voice of our ship's company would carry general news, announcements and goodwill throughout the ship and into the homes of members. Most important but not recognized at the time was that it was also an important historical record of personnel, events and attitudes that cannot be found in annual reports with access to the photo section in COND and through the efforts of the editor, *Star* produced a high quality bi-monthly magazine, the likes of which have only been approached in the last decade with access to sophisticated photocopying machines.

RECRUITING

Recruiting during the flagship years, as now, was a top priority and the results have not changed much over the years. Cdr Curtis and Recruiting Officer, Lt R. Wilson (now Cdr Wilson ret'd) both noted in November 1954 that more recruits were needed to augment the ship's strength of 214. Forty nine interviews had been conducted but 50% were unable to pass the stringent medical and aptitude tests. This prompted Lt Wilson to comment, very likely tongue in cheek, *"by such standards we are one of the most exclusive clubs in Canada."*

Competition with other units was then as now very fierce, and Lt Wilson invited *Star* to meet the challenge by noting, *"Our nearest neighbouring Division has an enrolment in excess of seven hundred. Of the twenty-two Naval Divisions, Star has the tenth largest enrollment. But, Hamilton is the fifth largest city in Canada. By recruiting forty-one new entries we could be the sixth Division in size in Canada. Despite our efforts at advertising and public*

relations, most applicants did not come to us as a direct result of these efforts, but as a result of a member of the ship's company personally influencing them."

Over the last 50 years, word of mouth has been the best recruiting system and if personnel are happy with what is happening in *Star*, if the quality of training and experience is there, the word will get out.

Recruiting reached an unheard of fevered pitch in 1956. The Recruiting Officer, Lt N. Webb reported that *Star* was given a quota of 100 recruits and prizes were offered including a grand prize of an old Morris Minor car refurbished by Hamilton Auto Body. Seventy recruits were brought in but no one won the car which was purchased by the Staff Officer, Lt Palmer. However, the following personnel did win recruiting campaign prizes: Lieutenants; Cozens, Taylor and Webb, Petty Officers; Clark, Dunfield, Kenyon, and Quinn, Wrens; Freeman and Minchin, LS Hunt, Ordinary Seamen; Clements, Doll and Portree.

Of the several students that Lt Webb recruited from his classroom at Delta Secondary School, one of them, R. Williamson, eventually became the ship's commanding officer.

TRAINING

Lt H. Tilbury was the training officer in the fifties and he made the following synopsis of training.

A New Entry recruit is required to train to a set of instructions provided by C.O.N.D. Parts 1 and 2, indoctrination are handled in the division. Part 3 is completed in a ship for two weeks under the G.L.T.C. programme.

*On completion of New Entry training a man or woman may elect one of several branches which are active in HMCS *Star*. It should be borne in mind that it is almost impossible to provide training in all branches of the service in any one Reserve Division and maintain minimum effective class sizes. In 1957 classes were offered in: Communications, Seamanship, Supply, Medical, Engineering and Band.*

*In *Star*, emphasis is placed on Communications because of the proximity of the G.L.T.C. Communications Training Centre. This provides specialized training in this branch to the Chief Petty Officer level.*

Branch training for seamanship is given at the school in Halifax with sea time available in ships on the lakes and at the coast.

*Supply Branch personnel receive their further training at HMCS *Hochelaga* in Montreal.*

Medical personnel do most of their required training in the division but do practical training in various R.C.N. Hospitals.

Engineering advanced courses are given at M.T.E. and at sea as required for Watchkeeping Certificates.

Band personnel do band training after completing part 1 of N.E.T. in the Band School.

It is apparent that a New Entry looking for a long term career in the reserve must choose a branch in which there is a reasonable future.

Band training was a new program at *Star*. In the Fall of 1954, Cdr J. H. Curtis announced that Mr. Ralph Whetstone had been appointed as the new Bandmaster and recruiting had begun for reed and brass bandsmen. Commissioned Officer Whetstone, drew half of his bandsmen from the schools where he had taught, particularly Saltfleet District High. Mr. Whetstone was a member of the Canadian Bandmasters' Association with 20 years of professional experience in the music field. His last assignment was with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

The band began to take on a very professional quality in 1957 when Joe Ward took over as bandmaster and the band participated in their first annual Battle of Atlantic Parade to the Church of St. Thomas in May 1958. Joe was a naval veteran of World War II who was recruited from the music staff of Delta Secondary School by Lt Norm Webb, a fellow staff member. With the dynamic leadership of Joe Ward, it wasn't long before the band had added concert music to their march repertoire as well as a dance combo for mess functions.

By 1961, the band was again leaderless and at the point of folding up. CPO Macaulay was instrumental in salvaging what was left of the band. He knew of a fellow worker at Proctor and Gamble who had recently left the Argyll Band and talked him into joining the navy. His name was Ron Moffatt, and Ron in turn recruited an ex-guardsman by the name of Bill Hodgson who joined *Star* as the Bandmaster. Thus began the development of the present *Star* Band which has remained strong and effective ever since.

This modern growth was helped by the Staff Officer Bands Lt Paddy Gordon, in COND. Using the GLTC concept, he began to assemble musicians from all across Canada to form a composite band for the summer program. By 1963 it had grown to 50 bandsmen including such familiar *Star* personnel as: Seager on trumpet, Pawlek and Goddard on baritone, Buttaro on sax, Kodar on tuba, and Hodgson as band chief.

CPO Murray Black, another Delta teacher, also joined the band at this time. Along with CPO Hodgson as bandmaster, the two NCO's helped recruit new members and maintain the high quality of band performances for the next several years. In both 1964 and 1966, the band won the Naval Officers' Association of Canada Trophy for Band Efficiency.

Such high standards produced a great deal of inspiration on parade and attracted a lot of public attention. Consequently, *Star* was asked to furnish a guard and band for the Naval Veterans' Reunions in Kitchener and Guelph in 1964 and 1965. CPO1 L. Seager was the Guard Petty Officer and he barked and hollered in typical G.I. fashion during every practice drill until the sailors could perform expertly for the Guard Officer, Lt R. Williamson. There was a grand turnout for the parade in Kitchener creating an acute lack of space at the cenotaph for the full complement of guard, band and veterans.

There was no band room initially and the musicians migrated from place to place to practise. In 1966, the band room was above the Chiefs and Petty Officers' Mess. The Band Officer, Lt Roger Elms reported that during rehearsals they provided a form of stereophonic sound through the deckhead to the mess occupants below. One of the band's favourite pieces was the Colonel Bogey March.

That same year, a combined *Star*-Delta Secondary School band played a concert to 800 guests in the Delta auditorium during the month of April. In the summer, 20 members of *Star's* band travelled to Calgary for two weeks summer training as part of a 120 piece marching band for the Calgary Stampede. Despite regulations, the drum-line appeared on parade wearing 10 gallon hats. *Star* also participated in other massed band extravaganzas that summer, one at the C.N.E. Stadium and the other in Ottawa. *Star*, *York*, and *Carleton*

combined for an impressive display that senior armed forces officers would not quickly forget.

Initially, the rest of the ship's company had difficulty accepting bandsmen as "real" sailors until men like Moffatt, Pawlek, Seager, Taylor and Wolf came along. These dedicated musicians became an essential part of the crew by becoming qualified as cooks, drivers, and range supervisors. Having established that standard, bandsmen soon became essential to operations in other departments.

The flagship years also produced a wide variety of training equipment at *Star*. Specialization in communication meant that *Star* had top of the line radio equipment and a large radio mast was located at the east end of the parade square. There was also a

MATSU in a tractor trailer parked outside the west end of the drill deck and in December 1955, *Star* unveiled an electronic gunnery device on the drill deck. The "Portobel" anti-aircraft simulator was designed to train ships' crews in accurate anti-aircraft fire with machine-guns and Oerlikons. The simulator was housed in a huge inflated rubber and fabric dome. A projector threw the image of a dive bomber or torpedo plane at any point in the sky. A computer recorded the hits determined by the speed of the plane and the deflection of the aimer. The whole platform could be made to rock and pitch just like a ship at sea. This device was very popular with both trainees and spectators.

In 1966 Naval Control of Shipping was designated as the primary task of the naval reserve. *Star* established a Naval Control of Shipping office and classroom in the COND building under the supervision of Lt J. Small. Initially, because of the amount of message traffic involved in N.C.S., it fell under the auspices of the Communication Branch.

In the early 1960s Cdr R. Wilson, Cdr C. Thomson, and LCdr E. Smedley were amongst the first of *Star's* officers to complete the NCS course at Patriot. By 1966, Junior Officers such as Lt Mark and Lt Williamson were attending this course. Thus began an endless series of annual NCS exercises called "Cargo Haul".

KITCHENER TENDER

1954 saw another significant addition to HMCS *Star*. In May of that year a tender was opened in Kitchener under the command of Acting Commander J.H.R. Kirkpatrick RCNR, a veteran of **Fairmiles** in World War II. By January of 1955, it was recorded that their unit strength was 40 officers and men with training programs in Communications, Electrical, Quartermaster trades and new entry.

Their success rate was very high. In 1955, four of their men were presented with bosun's calls for attaining the highest marks in their respective ships at G.L.T.C. They were OS P. Tucklensky, OS D. Willsie, AB W. Fatum, and AB J. Bernhardt.

Kitchener had two command qualified officers. Both LCdr W. Piercey and Cdr J. Kirkpatrick could drive the patrol vessels *Wolf* and *Cougar* on weekend cruises to Youngstown or Oswego, N. Y.

The Kitchener Tender took part in a variety of public relations activities such as; Church Parades in Fergus to the Church of the tender's chaplain, Rev. Wallace, Garrison Parades and Remembrance Day parades to the cenotaph in Kitchener. On January 23, 1957 the ship's

company of Kitchener Tender paraded in Guelph for the premier of the film, "The Battle of the River Plate".

In 1963 Cmdre P. D. Taylor D.S.C., CD, RCN, as C.O.N.D. presided at the opening of the *Star*-Kitchener Tender building. He was accompanied by Cdr R. Wilson, C.O. of *Star*. That same evening, Cdr W. Piercey retired as C.O. of the tender. Ironically, just over a year later, the Department of National Defence announced that the Kitchener Tender along with several divisions would be closed as part of fiscal restraints. Thus a healthy and productive appendage was amputated.

STAR MEMORIAL

A memorial panel of mahogany, glass and bronze, erected to the memory of those members of the RCN who enlisted at HMCS *Star* and subsequently gave their lives in the service of their country, was unveiled at a dedication service on Sunday, May 27, 1956. The memorial to lost seamen flanked by white ensigns can be found on the west bulkhead of the quarterdeck.

The dedication service was conducted by the Rev. H. M. Pentland, Protestant chaplain at *Star*, and the unveiling was performed by Rear Admiral Kenneth Adams and Commander John H. Curtis, commanding officer of *Star*. Leading Seamen Charles Downey, and Joseph Flarow, resting on arms reversed acted as memorial sentries for the service. The dedication followed the church parade of *Star* and *Patriot* personnel to the Church of St. Thomas marking the annual celebration of the Battle of the Atlantic. All next-of-kin were invited to attend and participate in the dedication service.

SOCIAL AND MESS ACTIVITIES

The flagship years gave rise to many social events, some of which have survived to this day. The messes were well run and greatly patronized. All of this related to the fact that Hamilton was the third largest naval facility in Canada due to the augmentation of the Reserves with the permanent personnel of C.O.N.D. and *Patriot*, as well as the crews from all the visiting ships.

The first Command Ball was organized in 1952 by Captain Baker who was the founder of the University Training Division. The theme for the Command Ball on May 27, 1955 was Paris in the Spring and the drill hall was decorated with flowers amid street scenes of Paris. It was a great party, especially for Commodore Adams who that very day received news of his promotion to Rear Admiral. Henceforth the Command Ball was renamed the Admiralty Ball and it became the social event of the season. On June 2, 1956, the *Spectator* called it a brilliant occasion with 600 guests attending and gave it a full page spread. The HMCS *Star* Band under the direction of Warrant Officer Whetstone provided the music for fox trots, waltzes and polkas. The cost for this extravaganza based on a fishing village theme was \$12.00 a couple.

There is a reference in Starshells to the Admiral's Trafalgar Mess Dinner in October 1955 and the suggestion that because of its success it might become an annual affair. Well indeed it has and is still going strong in 1991 despite efforts by Maritime Command to discourage this celebration as a non-Canadian event.

Cadet Terry Whelan reported in November 1954 that last winter the three services from McMaster held a very successful dance in *Star*. It was the first of what was to become an annual affair known as the Tri-Service Cadet Ball. The centre piece in '54 was a field gun. With an air force theme in '55 there was talk of a Sabre jet maybe. The Tri-Service Ball lasted for a decade until the UNTD, C.O.T.C. and U.R.T.P. plans were phased out by integration.

The earliest reference to the Hamilton Garrison Officers' Sports League was by Cdr Parke in his Report of Proceedings 1953. The navy lost their baseball games to A & SH 36-0, and RHLI 25-1. However, this was explained by the fact that the navy pitcher had been drafted to a ship. Other teams in the league were RCASC, Combines, and RCAF. These winter baseball and volleyball games were played in the armouries with each mess taking its turn for the social afterwards. Wives and sweethearts were invited as spectators followed by dancing and refreshments in the mess. There were ongoing attempts to form mess teams for hockey, volleyball, deck hockey, badminton and baseball. These met with varying degrees of success.

A valentine tradition was started on February 19, 1965 that has carried through to this day. It was the occasion of the first "Dine-the-Wives Night". The port and starboard tables extended the full length of the drill decks with 100 guests seated for dinner. This event gave the wives and sweethearts of the officers an insight into the mess dinner format. It was a way of showing appreciation to the ladies for the time their men spend away from home with the Reserve. Besides giving the ladies a chance to sport their latest fashions, it also provided an excellent evening of entertainment and fine eating. Most of this was made possible by wardroom steward Leading Seaman Murray who for several years did a fine job of completing arrangements for many dinners and social functions.

The Chiefs and Petty Officers mess has always been noted for the greatest variety and frequency of social events. A highlight of the social year was the annual visit by the Chiefs and Petty Officers from Rochester New York. One of the earliest visits was described in "Starshells" for the weekend of October 24, 1954.

[upon their arrival, the ladies were taken on a shopping spree while the men went for a cruise around the bay with Mr. Drolet of the R.H.Y.C. A delicious meal of chicken was prepared by the C & PO's Women's Club under the supervision of Mrs. L. Seager. After dinner there was a tour of the city, followed by dancing and a late supper of lobster, oysters, shrimp and clam chowder.]

An added twist to the event was made in September 1964 when the trip to Rochester was augmented by a visit from the *Porte St. Jean*. It was reported that the Semis were greatly impressed by the combined effort of the ship's company to visit by road and by sea.

The biggest social event was the annual mess dinner. The Chiefs and Petty Officers mess was too small to hold this function during the Flagship years so it was held in local halls. The sixth annual mess dinner on November 19, 1954 was held at Mount Albion. P.O. Tremblay presided over the dinner and a presentation was made to P.O. Woolvette for his work as a one-man entertainment committee. Congratulations were in order for P.O. Macaulay on his promotion to Chief and to P.O. John Quinn for receiving his CD. These dinners attracted up to two hundred guests and were sometimes catered on the drill deck or at the Hillcrest Restaurant in the 60s.

The social calendar in the Chiefs and Petty Officers mess was always full with parties at Christmas, New Years and Hallowe'en, on dart nights, bingo games and while entertaining other messes. With associate membership the mess had close to 1,000 members and had to be expanded. It moved into its present facilities in 1959.

SAILING ASSOCIATION

It is believed that like many other things, the Royal Canadian Naval Sailing Association made its way to Hamilton with the RCN officers at G.L.T.C. and C.O.N.D. The first reference to the association's activities was by Cdr Parke in his Report of Proceedings for the summer of 1953. The association's headquarters were in Ottawa and their purpose was to teach sailing through recreation and develop competitive skills for participation in regattas.

All ranks of *Star* were invited to join and it proved particularly popular with the Wrens and retired naval and militia personnel. Bob Wilson (Cdr ret'd) and Teddy Harvey (Nursing Sister ret'd) were staunch supporters as were Robin Leckie and P.O. (ret'd) Marge Warren, Corresponding Secretary of the Ex-Wren Association and Secretary Treasurer of the RCNSA for more than a quarter of a century. Commodores for the local sailing association during this period were Cdr Fred Bradley, LCdr A. Boutchard, and Lt Bill Cheek.

The sailing association provided six additional dinghies to *Star's* quota of four. This was a boon to summer training at *Star* for the next 30 years. In 1986 long after the RCNSA was forgotten, COND attempted to requisition what they considered surplus dinghies at *Star* to equip the new Quebec Naval Divisions. They almost got away with it until it was remembered that the dinghies belonged to the RCNSA.

Each summer members of the *Star* branch of the RCNSA would compete in the Mainguy Trophy Regatta sponsored by the RCYC in Toronto, and *Star* was always included in the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club annual sail past.

The RCNSA brought a great deal of recognition to *Star*, and some excellent crews were developed for national and international competition.

In 1966, PO1 Martin Pawlek (Coxswain) and Lt Bill Cheek (crew) were chosen to represent Canada in the World Championship 420 Competition in Palamas, Spain. Air Transport Command got them as far as Marville, the RCAF base in Northern France. They then boarded a train for the two day journey to Spain via Paris where a stop-over permitted sightseeing, then on to Barcelona and eventually Palamas. The European competition was stiff and *Star's* RCNSA crew finished in the last third. However, it was important for the Canadian team to be there to invite everyone to the 1967 International Regatta to be held in Kingston, Ontario in conjunction with the Centennial celebrations.

The *Star* R.C.N.S.A. again qualified for international competition in 1969 when Martin and Len Pawlek represented Canada at Sandhamn, Sweden.

It is easy to see why the *Star* branch of the R.C.N.S.A. has made a place for itself in this 50th Anniversary History of HMCS *Star*.



Wren Officers 1950. Nurse Teddy Harvey, SLt Marjory Flett, Nurse Joan Taylor. (Spectator)



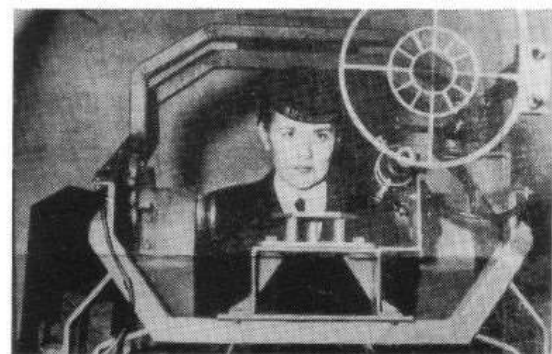
Annual Mess Dinner July 1956. B. Steventon, Lt Jean Crawford-Smith, J. Watson. (COND)



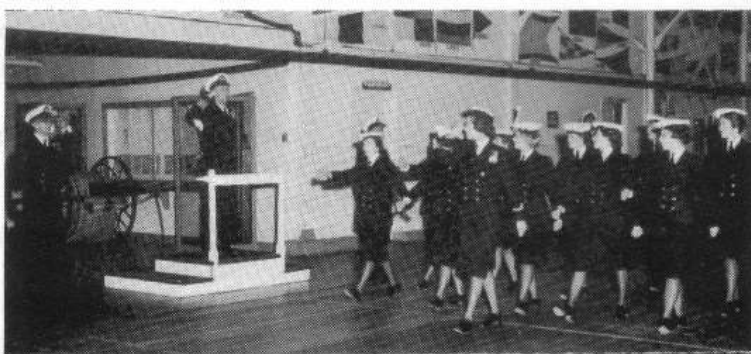
Wren's Covergirls 1956. Jackie Watson, right, receives presentation from Maj Gen Rockingham (Crowsnest)



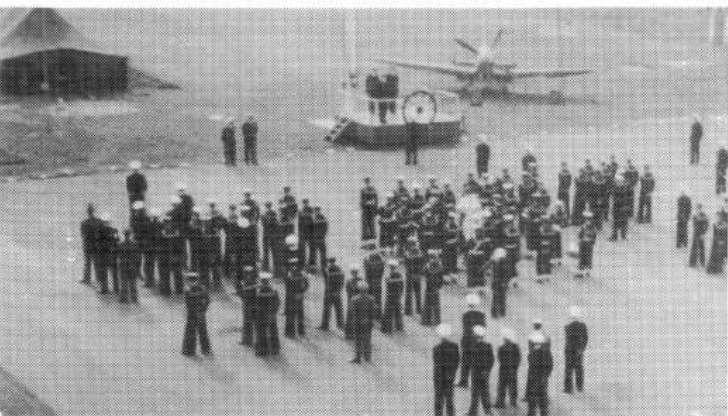
Captain Houghton and SLt A. Eade with Wren's platoon 1963. (Starshells)



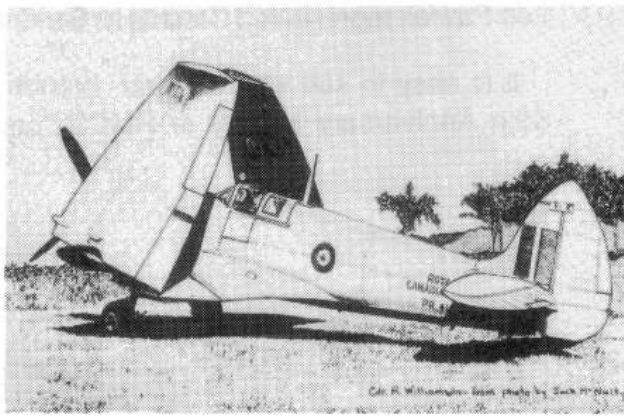
AW1 B. Steventon takes aim in the aircraft gun simulators 1955. (Spectator)



Wrens march past for Houghton - Wilson Change of Command 1963. (COND)



1952 Regatta. Seafire and tents in background. (CFB Ottawa)



Seafire PR 410 at Star 1949.

(McNulty)



Air Sea Rescue Demonstration September 1, 1952
(CFB Ottawa)



Star Regatta September 1, 1952. Walter Hose presents trophy to Lt Tilbury.
(CFB Ottawa)



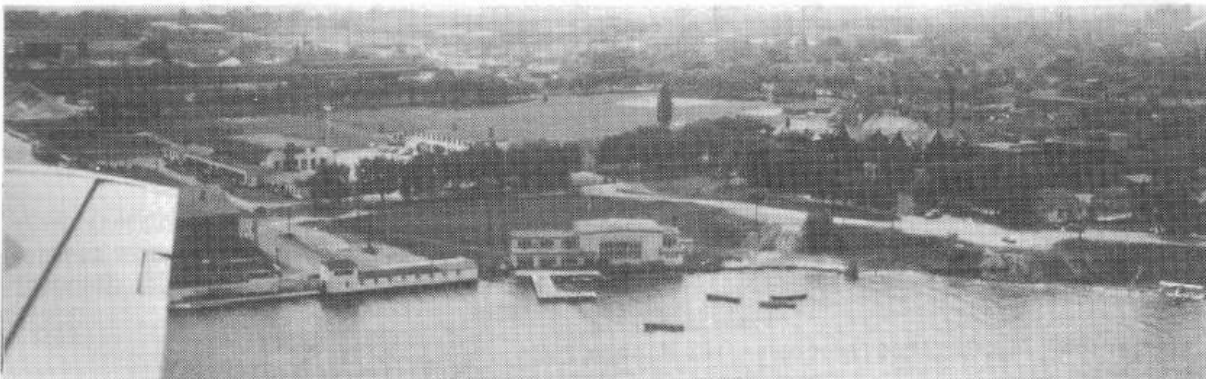
War Canoe, Star Regatta 1952
(CFB Ottawa)



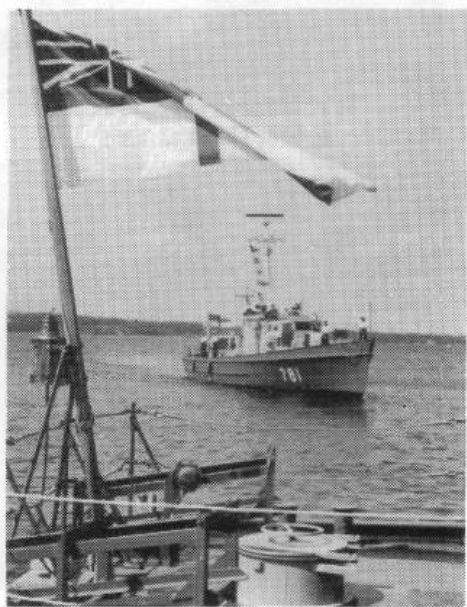
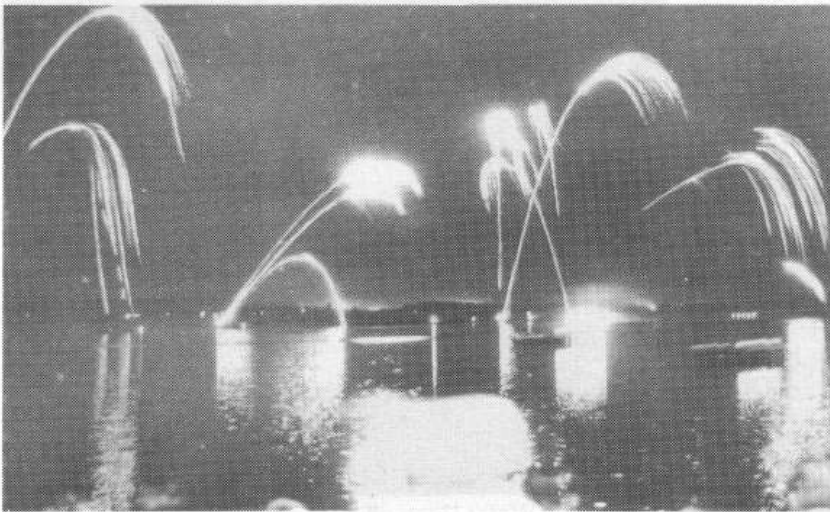
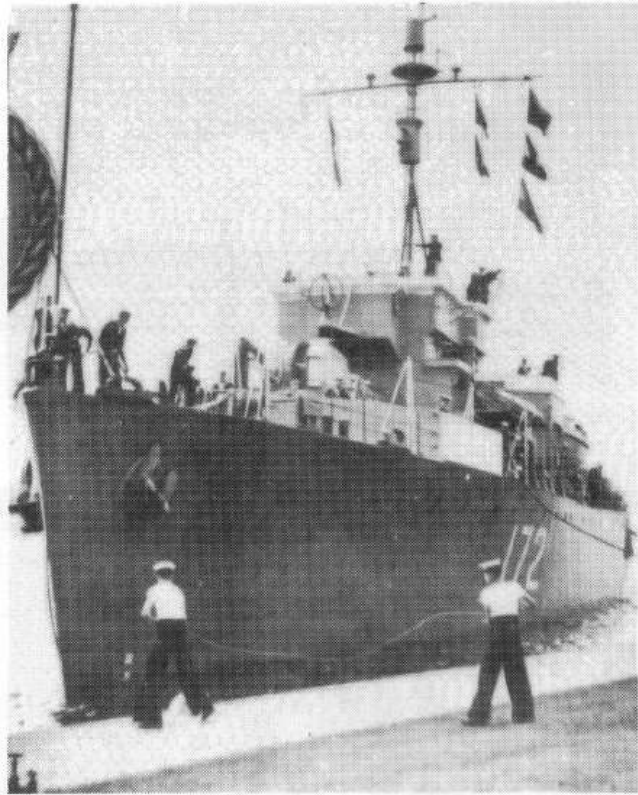
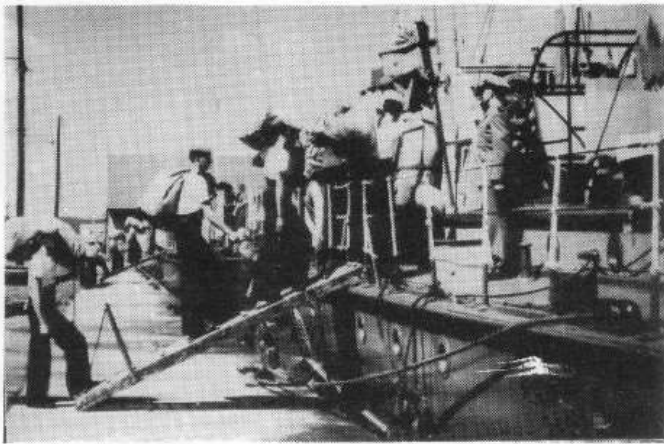
Former Star CO's host Rear Admiral Walter Hose, October 1954.
Rear: Morrison, Jackson, Parke, Curtis, Glassco, Waterman, Adamson.
Front: Westland, Yeates, Hose, Hart, COND K. Adams.
(COND)



Rear Adm Water Hose officiates at the cornerstone laying of the COND building October 14, 1954. (COND Photo)



Aerial view from
Lion August 6,
1953.
(National
Archives
PA180167)



- (Above, Clockwise)
1. HMCS Wallaceburg 1955
(COND)
 2. ML 781 Cormorant 1956
(Nat. Arch. PA 180165)
 3. GLTC ships celebrate
Bicentennial, August 3, 1955.
(Special Collections)
 4. Scatari assigned to GLTC,
April 6, 1957.
(COND 7877)
 5. Fairmiles boarded for summer
training 1953. (Bennett)

Sunday Divisions June 1956. Algerine Mine Sweepers : 169 Portage, 172 Wallaceburg, 176 Sault Ste. Marie.
(D. Bethune)



Tom Smith, future SNRA, at Star with
HMCS Scatari (Starshells)



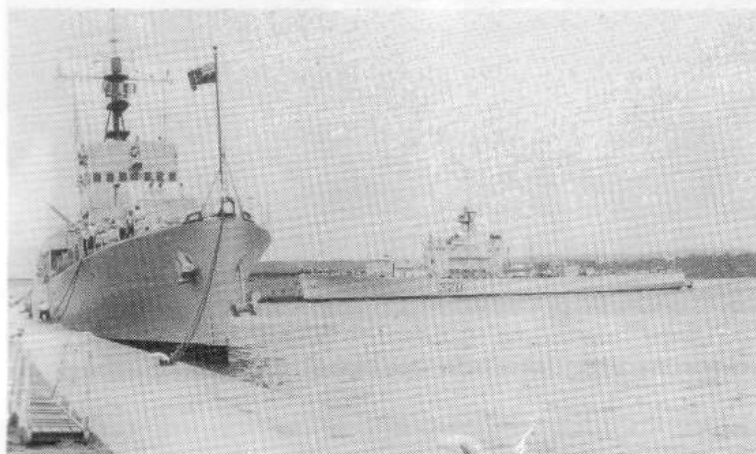
HMV Britannia arrives at Star July 13, 1959.

(COND Photo)



Largest Maritime Fleet to visit Star August 23, 1959, for the NATO Naval Review at the C.N.E..
HMCS Gatineau, Kootenay, St. Croix, Restigouche, Terra Nova, Cap de la Madeleine, Lauzon, Buckingham and
Scatari.

(COND Photo)



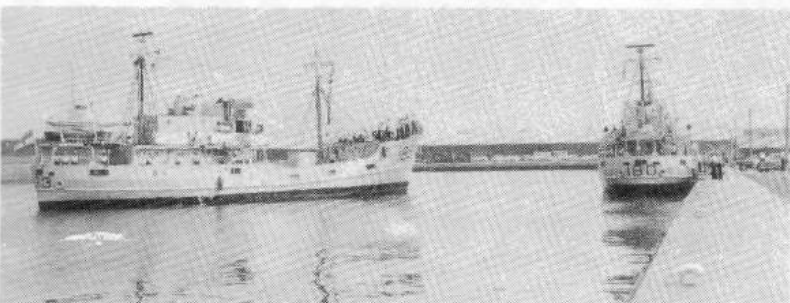
Frigates at Star May 1962.
Inch Arran 308 and Victoriaville 320.

(COND Photo)



USS Daniel A. Joy at Star July 1962.

(COND Photo)



(Left)
Porte St. Jean and Porte St. Louis come
along side Star September 1962.

(COND Photo)



Refurbished Morris Minor was the Recruiting prize in 1956.
(Spectator)



Reserve Band composed of reservists from all across Canada at GLTC Star August 1962.
(COND Photo)



Wren Watson with recruiting prizes 1956
(Spectator)



Recruiting Officer Lt Norm Webb 1955.
(Starshells)



RCNR Band Trophy June 1966 held by CPO Hodgson while PO V. Evendon and B. Usher blow their horns. (Special Collections)

(Right)
1964 RCNR Band Trophy. Band Officer Lt J. Watt. Bandmaster CPO W. Hodgson.
(Band Photo Album)





Opening Kitchener tender building 1963. (Murray)



Chiefs and P.O.s of Kitchener tender 1961. (COND)



Admiralty Ball 1963. (Murray)



Unveiling Star Memorial May 27, 1956. (Starshells)



Admiralty Ball June 2, 1956. (Wilson)



(Above) C&P.O.s Rochester Exchange 1963. (Spectator)

(Right) Admiralty Ball Committee 1963. (Spectator)





Star Officers greet Adm Adams 1957. (Starshells)



LCdr Wilson presents CDs to Cdrs McLay and Graham 1958. (Spectator)



Third Escort Squadron, HMCS Sioux, Haida, and Nootka visit Star June 1963 for the 40th Anniversary of the Naval Reserve. (COND)



Sailing Association behind 779 Racoon July 1955. (Starshells)



40th Anniversary Reunion of Commanding Officers.
LCdr L. Westland, Lt W. Morrison, Cdr R. Jackson, Cdr C. Glassco,
Rear Adm W. Hose, LCdr H. Yeates, Lt G. Beaver, Cdr R. Wilson, Lt
J. Hart, Capt W. Houghton, Lt F. Waterman, Lt W. Adamson
(COND)



Father of the Naval Reserve, Rear Adm W. Hose unveils gallery of Star Commanding Officers. (COND)

UNTD 1958.

Rear: Mitchell, Thompson, Johnson, Wallis, unidentified, Loton, Huffman, Jordan.

Centre: Vince, Jansen, Roy, Williamson, Spaven, Hall, McLean, Kadonaga.

Front: Millard, Gibson, Ziegler, Cdr McLay, Knight, Griffin, Robinson.

Absent - Lee.

(COND)



Officer Cadets form Honour Guard for Rear Adm Hose November 1954. (Spectator)



Capt Houghton inspects UNTD, 1963 (COND)



Year 1 UNTD McMaster and OAC 1963.

Front: Bush, Graham, Bieber, Engel, Christie, Paterson.

Rear: Harvey, MacLellan, Cook, Foss, Vanderwekken, Collins, Osborne, Harris.

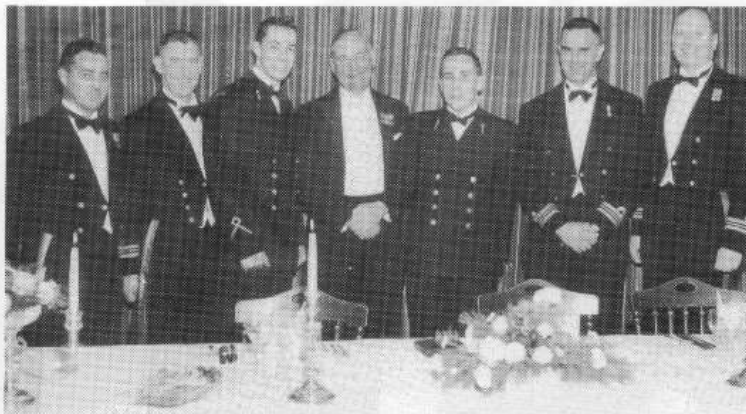
(COND)



UNTD January 19, 1964.

LCdr Bennett, C.C. Francis, Cdr Wilson, Cadets Ferguson, Dulmage, MacGillivray.

(COND)



Cadet Mess Dinner February, 1963.

LCdr Ellis, LCdr Carpenter, C.C. Gill, Cdr Little, C.C. Elmes, LCdr Bennett, LCdr Jamieson.

(COND)



S.O. and Mrs. Don Sheppard; C.O. and Mrs. Sam Ross; Rec. O. and Mrs. Robert Wilson at 1950 Baptism. (Wilson)



COND, Cmdre E.W. Finch-Noyes, Star Guard May 3, 1960. (COND)



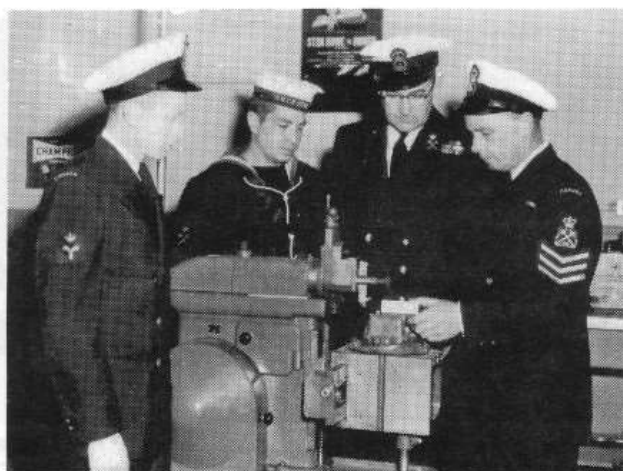
Capt Houghton, LS Gorda and AB Rossi. (Starshells)



January 19, 1964 Christening. Mr. and Mrs. Ross Jones with son Paul, LCdr and Mrs. J. Jamieson with son John, Chaplain G.A. Logan, LCdr and Mrs. R. Bennett with daughter Julie. (Bennett)

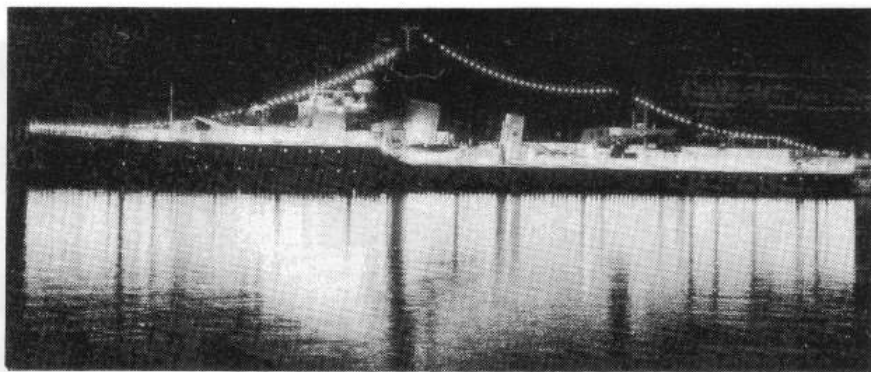


Anti-Submarine Range Recorder 1960. ABTD D.A. Bodden, LSTD A. Hyrnick, P1RN K. Crowder. (COND)



April 6, 1960. P1ER V. Campbell, P2SH Bill Ross, C2SH Frank Dayo, P1ER Jim Marriette.

HMCS Haida illuminated at Star
June 1963. (COND)



(Below Left) Mrs. A. Taylor,
President of Ladies Auxiliary
presents leopard skin to Bandmaster
R. Moffatt 1962. (McInnis)

(Below Right)
E. Williamson presents scholarship to
RCSCC Dundas, P.O. Wrathall.
(Spectator)



Ladies Auxiliary 1961. Dallas Taylor, Helen Faiclough,
Gaye McCulloch. (Taylor)



Ladies Auxiliary Spring Hat Party. Eileen Williamson, Jane
Holloway, Sadie Tilbury, Hazel Middleton. (Taylor)



Auxiliary Meeting March 1964. Verna Watt, Marg Wilson, Ann
Taylor, Fran Shea, Lucy McNeel, Teddy Harvey, Joyce Allen.
(Watt)



Teddy Harvey, unidentified, Rudi DeGidts, Dallas
Taylor, Ann Taylor. (A. Taylor)



CPO Vardy at the organ in the well deck. CPO Dunfield and unidentified PO select Music. (Macauley)



November 11, 1961, Remembrance Day Parade. (COND)

(Right)
LS Bruce Rushton sounds Last Post for CPO Vardy from the well deck of Porte St. Jean as Cdr Tilbury salutes. (Spectator)



(Below)
Burial at sea for CPO Vardy, May 11, 1966. LS Gunther Boshold delivers the wreath to Lake Ontario. (Spectator)



Wake for the RCN February 1, 1968.
L-R: Unidentified Patriot Officer, Surg. LCdr McCoy, SLt Brandis, Lt Vita, Don McGee, Lt P. Westbrook, LCdr Smedley, LCdr Eade. (Murray)



Change of Command, May 20, 1964. Cdr Wilson, Cmdre Taylor, Cdr Tilbury.
(COND)



Annual C.O.'s Conference, November 25, 1961. Cmdre P.D. Taylor greets Vice Adm H.S. Raynor C.N.S. and Rear Adm J.B. Caldwell, Chief of Naval Technical Services.
(COND)



February 16, 1965. The white ensign is hauled down for the last time. Ceremonial party: Padre Watson, R. Seager, Cdr Tilbury, Lt Small, CPO Macaulay, CPO Holk.
(Macaulay)



Cdr Tilbury receives Star's white ensign from CPO Wylie.
(Starshells)



Lt Small salutes the debut of the Canadian flag February 16, 1965 as CPO Wylie holds the folded white ensign.
(Macaulay)



Radio Communication April 26, 1960. P2CR Carl Hunt, C1CR M. Macaulay.
(COND)

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The 1960s were marked by a number of anniversary celebrations, including the Silver Jubilee of the Navy, the 40th anniversary of the naval reserve, and the Canadian Centennial.

The 50th Anniversary fell officially on May 4 - the date in 1910 on which Royal Assent was given to the Naval Service Act - but special activities began on Sunday, May 8, 1960 with a nationwide Battle of Atlantic Parade.

After the church parade, *Star* held an open house from 1330 to 1730 hours. The program included a fly-past of Avenger aircraft from VC920 squadron, displays of naval activities and equipment including the mobile anti-submarine unit, dinghy sailing and a naval sunset ceremony by the band and guard of *Star* and *Lion*.

Star made the 50th Anniversary the main theme of the annual Admiralty Ball on May 27, 1960. On May 8, a one-hour documentary, "The Navy Looks Back", was broadcast by the CBC. The voices of officers and men who helped bring about the RCN and who served during the early days gave authentic reports of the navy over its 50 years. The destroyer escorts *Columbia* and *Chaudiere* visited Quebec City, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton during the month of May.

Of far greater significance to *Star* were the celebrations in 1963 of the 40th anniversary of the formation of the naval reserve in 1923. It was the brain child of Rear Admiral Walter Hose who as Director of Naval Service in 1923 first formulated the plans for reserve divisions.

Rear Admiral Hose and Commodore P. Taylor representing the Chief of Naval Staff were guests of honour at an anniversary dinner in the Wardroom for all former commanding officers. Seated at the head-table with the guests of honour were Cdr H. Tilbury, president of the dinner, present Commanding Officer Cdr R. Wilson and the three oldest surviving C.O.s; LCdr R. H. Yeates, 1923-29; Lt G. Beaver, 1929-34; and LCdr L. Westland, 1934-37. Eleven of the seventeen former commanding officers were able to attend and gathered on the quarter deck after dinner for the unveiling of picture gallery of all former commanding officers. An excellent job was done by the C.O.N.D. Staff Officer Information, LCdr A. Jenkins who collected photographs for the gallery. To top off the anniversary the Third Escort Squadron consisting of HMCS *Sioux*, *Haida* and *Nootka* came to Hamilton as part of the GLTC sea training program. Our own Don Bethune was in command of *Nootka*.

The summer season of 1967, the Canadian Centennial year heralded a unique visit of a NATO squadron consisting of; HMCS *Saguenay*, USS *Zellars*, HMS *Euryalus*, and HNLMS *Rotterdam*.

During the summer the GLTC Squadron of *Porte St. Jean* and *Porte St. Louis* took part in the Canadian Centennial Warship Visit Program for the Great Lakes. Centennial visits were made to nine Ontario ports adding greatly to local celebrations.

The squadron was also employed on escort duties with the centennial voyageur canoe pageant, accompanying *Les Voyageurs* from the Lakehead across Lake Superior, through the Sault, and along the northern shore of Lake Huron.

On June 30, 1967, *Star's* Guard and Band augmented by *Lion's* Gun's Crew, all under the command of Lt F. Lee performed a centennial flag and sunset ceremony at Gage Park before

thousands of spectators. The Salvation Army Concert Band performed a concert in the band shell followed by a centennial fireworks display.

On Saturday July 1, all Reserve units paraded from the armouries to Dundurn Park for a 100-gun salute by the 8th Field Artillery followed by a march past at City Hall where Mayor Vic Copps took the salute.

U.N.T.D.

After eighteen years as Commanding Officer of the McMaster University Naval Training Division, Cdr Boyd McLay, CD, retired in 1961. He had been the C.O. of the U.N.T.D. at McMaster since its inception in 1943, a continuity of service unique in the annals of the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve. He saw 700 young men trained in the ways of the sea and the duties and responsibilities of naval officers.

Despite his busy schedule as professor of Physics, Cdr McLay managed to find time to preserve photographs and news clippings of the U.N.T.D. in a scrap book which is probably the best record of U.N.T.D. candidates in Canada. Because of its value, the book is kept under lock and key in the cabin of the Commanding Officer of *Star*.

The book contains a list of all the U.N.T.D. cadets who received their officers' commissions at McMaster, relevant news clippings from World War II and invaluable captioned pictures of cadet groups from various years. The photographs show the transition in uniforms, and training as well as the types of training vessels ranging from cruisers to fairmiles.

A reception was held at HMCS *Star* to honour Cdr McLay and his wife upon his retirement on May 20, 1961. Former cadets presented him with a naval officer's sword and scabbard, mounted on a mahogany plaque with an engraved inscription. Cdr McLay was succeeded by LCdr J. Jamieson, the first cadet to complete the postwar U.N.T.D. program at McMaster.

In 1963, the U.N.T.D. at *Star* celebrated their 20th anniversary with a dinner and an address by Cdr C. H. (Herbie) Little, one of the founding fathers of the organization in 1942. By 1963, there were 700 McMaster students who had enrolled in the U.N.T.D. Of these, 140 had been successful in their training and were granted commissions in the RCNR upon completion of their degree program at McMaster. Nine joined the RCN, including Wm. McCulloch, R. Gladman, Neil Orr, John Hobbs, R. Nevins and Gary Collins. Others continued to serve in the Reserve and reach higher rank. These were John Jamieson, William McCulloch, Bob Munn, Len Hansell, Fred Todd, Jim Forrester, Aubrey Millard, Roger Elms and Joe Homer. Three cadets rose to command *Star*: Fred Lee, Robert Williamson, and Ross Bennett who achieved the rank of Commodore and held the position of Senior Naval Advisor.

During the flagship years, the newly converted frigates became the main training platform for cadets. This allowed cadets to take training cruises to popular destinations such as United Kingdom, Bermuda, Hawaii, California and Alaska. Occasionally, some cadet crews got short changed with trips to Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island. The frigates were large enough to give a real taste of navy life, but small enough to allow cadets to develop as an integral part of the crew.

The frigates, however, were phased out in the early sixties, the last of them being dedicated to the training of Royal Roads cadets. U.N.T.D. cadets were then relegated to coastal patrol craft such as the converted Y.F.P. and gate vessels. Cruises were then restricted to coastal waters. In 1960, after the first Y.F.P. cruise to Alaska, senior U.N.T.D. cadet R. Williamson from *Star* submitted a conversion plan for Y.F.P.s incorporating a navigation bridge above the wheelhouse. Subsequently all Y.F.P.s were converted following the specifications of that plan and they made satisfactory coastal patrol vessels once their fresh water tank capacity was expanded.

There are hundreds of stories that could be told about the misadventures of U.N.T.D. cadets under training. This story is a first-hand account by one of *Star's* cadets, and is certainly representative of the types of misfortunes that plagued neophyte cadets. Names have been changed to protect the innocent.

"On a windy July night in Drew Harbour on Vancouver Island, second year cadet Harvey settled into the middle watch on board YMT 10, anchored off the log strewn sandy beaches of Rebecca Spit. The wind was sweeping dark clouds across the face of the full moon, casting strange shadows in the dense British Columbia forest. Solitary breakers were crushing on the tidal flat at the southern end of the bay.

Harvey was all alone. The rest of the ship's company were all below, sound asleep after a hard day's work on a navigation exercise, charting the anchorage of Drew Harbour. Their security was in Harvey's hands.

Making his rounds, Harvey inspected the galley first, making himself a peanut butter and jam sandwich. He proceeded next to the engine room and made a quick check on the generators before going forward to inspect the anchor cables. After checking the anchor bearings, he filled in the log noting that the wind was force five on the Beaufort scale.

At exactly 0100 hours, Harvey set out to perform what was a most important duty on this chart-making exercise; to record an accurate hourly tide pole reading from a marker set up on an old piling some fifty feet from our ship.

With flashlight and notebook in hand, Harvey stepped gingerly into the skiff that was tied to the stern of YMT 10. As he cast off for the tide pole he suddenly realized with dismay that he had forgotten something. There, on the stern of the YMT, agonizingly out of reach, lay his oars.

As the distance widened, and with mounting alarm, he reached out for the side of the ship, grasping for any handhold. His fingers fell on the rubbing strake just as he lost his balance. He held on tenaciously, his body bridging the gap. His alarm turned to panic as his cap floated past his nose and the front of his shirt began to get wet.

Harvey was really in a predicament. Attracted to the glamour of life at sea, he was now acutely aware of his inability to swim. Spurred on by this thought, and using his knees for leverage, he made a desperate effort to draw the dinghy back under his centre of gravity. However, in reaching out for the gunwhale with one hand, he lost his grasp on the rubbing strake with the other and rolling into the safety of the dinghy, he drifted away from the security of the ship.

In this situation, Harvey did the only thing possible. He shouted for help. But his voice faded on the wind as he floated out into the darkness. The only reply was the sound of snoring and heavy breathing.

The next morning, the training lieutenant noted as he stirred in his bunk that the morning was exceptionally bright. Then checking his watch, he bounded to his feet and pyjama-clad, searched out the morning watchman in order to discover why he had not been shaken at his prescribed hour.

The morning watchman, like everyone else was sound asleep in his bunk where he had been all night. It soon became apparent that the middle watchman and the skiff were missing. All that was found were the paddles and a cadet cap floating in a kelp bed.

We examined the evidence in disbelief and felt sorry for the officer in charge who was going to have to explain to his superiors how he, a naval reservist, had lost a service dinghy as well as an officer cadet while at anchor.

Just as the lieutenant began to develop indications of apoplexy, someone on deck noticed a lonely figure wading up the beach. For the next hour we listened with relief and mild humour to Harvey's night long adventure in an open boat and his five mile hike back through a forest filled with imaginary bears. He concluded his story with a clear intention of re-mustering to the supply branch."¹

CHANGES OF COMMAND

On December 2, 1953, Cdr G. Parke, Commanding Officer of *Star* for the previous three years announced his retirement. The new commanding officer was to be LCdr J. H. Curtis, the former executive officer.

Cdr Parke joined the navy in 1937 when he graduated from Kings College. He served at sea as gunnery officer in *Dawson* and *Shediac*. In 1944 he was appointed to *Cornwallis* where he completed the gunnery specialist course. He ended the war on the staff of Captain "D" Halifax. He joined *Star* after the war as gunnery officer. He was President and Managing Director of Parke and Parke Ltd. Ten years after leaving *Star*, he died suddenly of heart failure while on a business trip to New York.

Cdr Curtis joined the RCNVR at Kingston in 1941. He also graduated from Royal Roads and served at sea in the patrol vessel HMCS *Moose*, and minesweeper, HMCS *Rayon d'or*. Later, he commanded the 16th Motor Launch *Flotilla*. He was a representative of Shell Oil Company and on moving to Hamilton after the war, he joined *Star* in 1947 as senior divisional officer and first lieutenant.

Cdr Curtis was an expert in handling small vessels such as Fairmiles. He was very flamboyant and an extremely popular commanding officer. Unfortunately, after he retired from *Star* his personal life deteriorated tragically and he died suddenly of a suspected cerebral hemorrhage.

¹ R. J. Williamson, "Harvey Goes to Sea", *Starshells*, Feb. 1967, p. 10

The next commanding officer would have been LCdr Peter Wright, DSC. He had spent four years as executive officer under Cdr Curtis. He was an extremely capable officer and won the DSO in action against an enemy U boat in the Mediterranean while serving in the R.N. In civilian life he was a professional engineer at International Harvester. According to official accounts he stepped down prematurely because of pressure of business but it is believed that it was the result of a controversy over an unjust regulation. At that time the executive officer was held accountable for all equipment in a ship. This regulation was unreasonably applied to reserve establishments where it could not possibly work. The executive officer was only aboard for a few evenings a week and *Star* equipment was being used every day by COND, *Patriot* and GLTC. His replacement, LCdr Bob Wilson was only made "acting" executive officer as he would not accept the unreasonable conditions attached to the position.

Star was now in a difficult position because Cdr Curtis was due to retire and no experienced replacement was available in Hamilton. To solve the problem the executive officer of HMCS *York*, Cdr W. T. Houghton was transferred over to *Star* in December 1958.

Cdr Houghton began his naval career as a cadet at Dartmouth Naval College, England, in 1924. Moving to Canada in 1927, he joined the RCNVR at the outbreak of World War II. After taking several training courses he joined *Gaspe*, a minesweeper for duty in the North Atlantic. His last ship was *Poundmaker*, a frigate, in 1944. This ship helped with the escorting of capital ships during the invasion of Normandy. He joined *York* in 1946, serving as torpedo-anti-submarine officer until taking up his duties as executive officer of *York* in 1955.

His transfer to *Star* as commanding officer was awkward under the circumstances, but as a dedicated officer he was promoted to the rank of captain while in command, one of the few to ever hold that rank at *Star*. However, as a non-resident, his tenure lacked the personal involvement and community commitment required of a good commanding officer. Starshells and the local press fell silent during this period and not much information has been found. After his retirement he attended a few special functions at *Star*. He passed away in Oakville on February 2, 1991.

He was succeeded by Cdr. R. G. Wilson on February 19, 1963. Cdr. Wilson was born in Coppercliff, Ontario. He joined the RCNVR at Hamilton in 1942 and was discharged as a chief petty officer in 1945. His wartime duties included service at *Cornwallis*, HMC Dockyard Torpedo School in Halifax and at sea in the destroyer *St. Laurent*.

He was enrolled on the active list of the naval reserve as an acting-lieutenant in 1948, and appointed to *Star*. He carried out postwar naval training in HMC ships; *Portage*, *Brockville*, *Port Dauphine*, *Algonquin* and *Granby*. He was promoted to LCdr in 1955 and to his present rank in 1960. In civilian life he was employed at Canadian Westinghouse and was very active in sailing associations. He is a member of NOAC and continues to be an active supporter of *Star*. He now resides in Burlington, Ontario.

Command changed again on May 19, 1964, when Cdr H. C. Tilbury, CD, commenced his appointment. He joined the RCNVR at Hamilton in September 1940 as Electrician V. After training in *Stadacona*, he instructed in Torpedo and Electrical Schools and served at sea in HMCS *Hamilton*. He was demobilized in July 1945 as acting sub-lieutenant and returned to *Star* in September 1949. He was appointed Executive Officer in October 1962 and promoted to commander in January, 1963. His postwar training was in HMC Ships; *Swansea*, *Magnificent*, *Ontario* and *Outremont*. He also worked as a civilian consultant at COND.

In the summer of 1966 Cdr Tilbury was killed in an industrial accident at the Canada Iron Foundry on Burlington Street. As maintenance supervisor at the plant he was working on the repair of a faulty hopper when the carrier fell on top of him. Cdr Tilbury was a very personable officer who cared a great deal about *Star* and the ship's company. His crew held a full dress ceremony in his honour. Following cremation, he was buried in Lake Ontario.

Magistrate Ross T. Bennett was named commanding officer on August 13, 1966 after Cdr Tilbury's death. Cdr Bennett was born in Hamilton in November 1928. He was educated at Hamilton Central Collegiate Institute and McMaster University. He graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School and was called to the bar in 1955. He was appointed magistrate in May 1966.

He enrolled in the RCN(R) in November 1947 and then transferred to the University Naval Training Division at McMaster. He was commissioned in 1951 and served at sea in HMC Ships; *Swansea*, *Magnificent*, *Margaree* and *Cayuga*. At the time of his appointment to commanding officer of *Star*, he was Commanding Officer of the University Naval Training Division at McMaster.

Cdr Bennett was the first U.N.T.D. graduate to command *Star*. From this point forward, all but one future commanding officer would be a product of the U.N.T.D. officer training program. The exception was Cdr Colin D. diCenzo who was appointed executive officer on October 3, 1968, succeeding LCdr Ernest Smedley who retired from the navy after 29 years of service.

Cdr Bennett was very active in the community, especially the boy scout movement. He provided a great deal of leadership and prestige to the navy at a time when support for the military in Canada was declining. Cdr Bennett rose to the rank of Commodore as the Senior Naval Reserve Advisor and was awarded the CMM in 1977. He continues to be very supportive of the naval community in Hamilton where he resides with his wife Lois. Three of their four children joined and continue to serve in the naval reserve. LCdr Jennifer Bennett, CD, presently serves as Executive Officer, HMCS *Malahat*, Victoria, B. C. Lt Julie Brown (nee Bennett) is presently officer in charge of the Naval Reserve Control Centre, Halifax, N. S. and Master Seaman David Bennett serves in *Star*.

LADIES' AUXILIARY

Synonymous with the flagship years was the formation of the Ladies' Auxiliary of HMCS *Star-Patriot* Wardroom. This organization, with roots in the regular navy, gave the wives of officers a chance to get to know each other and socialize while their husbands were at sea. It allowed the women to make their contribution to the naval community and be involved in their husbands' careers in a meaningful way.

Through their social events such as garden parties, Spring tea parties, sherry parties, card parties, costume parties and rummage sales, they raised funds to provide necessities that were outside the scale of armed forces issues.

The records of the Ladies' Auxiliary have disappeared, so all the details can't be provided here. However, we do know that through their fund raising the following presentations were made:

- * 1956 president, Mrs. Robert Wilson presented a trumpet to the band of RCSCC *Lion*.
- * 1962 president, Mrs. Harry Taylor presented a leopard skin to bass drummer R. Moffatt of the *Star* Band.
- * 1966 president, Mrs. Robert Williamson presented an annual scholarship of \$75.00 to CPO David Wrathall of RCSCC *Dundas*. The scholarship was accompanied by a plaque. The recipient had to be continuing his career in the navy.
- * 1967 president, Mrs. R. Williamson presented a mace to RCSCC *Iron Duke*.

The ladies also organized picnics and Christmas parties for the children, but perhaps their most popular event was the Spring hat show where the ladies created their hats from products of their gardens.

Like everything else, the Ladies' Auxiliary ceased to exist when COND and *Patriot* disbanded. They were there to support the navy. When the navy became the C.F. in 1968, support and interest waned. Membership declined and the organization, unable to fulfil its function, ceased.

R.I.P.

OS Bandsman Dorian Smith of Port Dover joined *Star* in 1955. He was 43 years old on January 7, 1957 when he met an untimely death in a highway accident. He left behind a wife and seven children.

On May 11, 1966 a contingent of all ranks stood with an honour guard on the well deck of HMCS *Porte Ste. Jean* and braced themselves against a spiteful wind and gentle rolling of the ship. They were gathered together by their commanding officer, Cdr H. Tilbury to witness a rare ceremony, a burial at sea for one of their shipmates.

Chief Petty Officer Derek Vardy was only 36 when his car went out of control on Highway 403 on April 23. As a member of the Royal Navy he could not resist the offer to become a member of the naval reserve when he came to Canada. He was a talented and popular man. He played the piano at naval parties and conducted some of the best sing-songs in the mess.

As the guard rested on their arms reversed, Chaplain A. W. Watson, fulfilled a comrade's last wish and sprinkled his ashes into the lake that he had sailed so often. Then, one by one, a representative of each mess delivered a wreath into Lake Ontario. The first came from the Executive Officer, LCdr John Jamieson. Then floral tributes came from Chief Petty Officer Edward Dunfield, Leading Seaman Gunter Boshold and Wren June Lester.

The guard officer, Lt R. Williamson, gave the order, "general salute, present arms" and Leading Seaman Bruce Rushton played the last post as the wreaths drifted astern in the glassy reflection of the pale setting sun.

Ironically as Cdr Tilbury saluted from his position behind the bugler, no one could have imagined that we would be repeating this sad ceremony for him just two months later when he was killed in an industrial accident.

A sad ceremony of a very different nature was conducted on February 1, 1968 in the Wardroom. Sixty officers from *Star*, COND, *Patriot* and the retired list gathered for a wake to mourn the end of the R.C.N. as a result of the passing in parliament of the Canadian Forces Re-organization Act. Henceforth the navy was identified as the Canadian Armed Forces Maritime Command. Eventually even the term "armed" was dropped as a result of the continuing process of emasculation of the forces by the government.

An honour guard, including future commanding officers, Lee and Pandzich, escorted a flag draped casket carried by pallbearers LCdr H. McCoy, Lt Phil Westbrook and two *Patriot* officers. Chaplain A. W. Watson read the burial service, all officers affixed their names to a document of remembrance and linking arms sang lustily, "Auld Lang Syne".

END OF AN ERA

In 1964, the world had been at peace for almost twenty years and the Canadian people began to relax their guard. Peace organizations drawing funds from questionable sources, attracted supporters who feared the "bomb" and anti-military sentiment spread its degrading influence across our society. Faced with these attitudes, growing inflation and social programs that soaked up tax dollars like a sponge, the government began a series of financial cutbacks that targeted the military.

The vision of Rear Admiral Walter Hose to build a cost-effective naval reserve when finances were tight, thus enabling Canada to man the third largest Allied Navy during the Second World War, was forgotten. Four naval reserve divisions; *Prevost* (London), *Queen* (Regina), *Queen Charlotte* (Charlottetown), *Nonsuch* (Edmonton) and Kitchener Tender were closed by the Department of National Defence. *Star's* complement fell from over 200 to 130 men and wrens.

The government also promoted a bicultural-bilingual policy. For the military this meant the removal of British traditions and the "Royal" prefix in order to make the armed forces more amenable to French speaking Canadians.

To press this policy even further the government took steps to adopt an official Canadian flag free of any trappings of our founding nations. Thus on February 16, 1965 the new Canadian flag was unveiled in Ottawa and on the Tuesday Ceremonial Divisions at *Star*, the white ensign was lowered for the last time. Three NCOs, CPOs Holk, Wiley and Macaulay made up the colour party that ceremoniously and with deep regret, marched off the white ensign. The Department of Defence was ordered to dispose of all white ensigns from the navy, which they did by selling them to New Zealand at cost. It is curious to note that although New Zealand had a distinctive national flag, they had a use for the white ensign.

To further compound matters, the armed forces were subjected to the pseudo-socialist economic philosophies of Defence Minister, Paul Hellyer who proclaimed that he would give us "more defence for less money". His strategies however, were purely self-serving, intended to propel him into the Liberal leadership. All that Canada's military got out of his half-baked political ideas was less money and no defence.

Rear Admiral Hughes summed up Hellyer's policies very nicely just before he was fired. He said, "*If someone gave me the task of destroying the enemy's armed forces, I'd infiltrate their political system, unify their armed forces, put them in green uniforms, place them on a fixed budget, and leave.*"

The consolidation and streamlining that was implemented by the government brought an end of the flagship years in Hamilton in 1968. COND closed its doors after just 16 years and moved to Halifax. G.L.T.C. came to an end and *Patriot* was disbanded.

The Hamilton Spectator recorded the event as follows:

On February 1, 1956, Chief Petty Officer James Small hoisted the white ensign to signal the commissioning of HMCS Patriot. Yesterday, (September 13, 1968), Lieutenant James Small of the naval reserve slowly pulled down the Canadian flag.

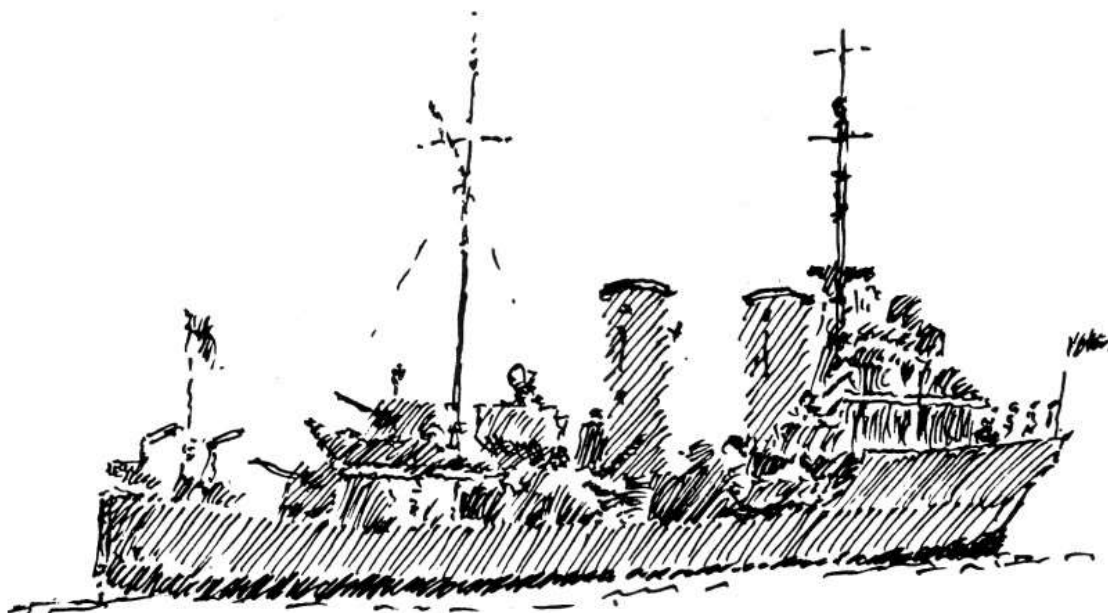
"I'm certainly sad to see this place close," he said. "It served a very useful purpose".

Reeling in the flag was Mr. Small's last official chore for the navy. He retires on October 1.

"We started out small, but grew to be pretty big," said Lieutenant Small, who taught communications to reserve sailors from all over Canada. "We had 60 trainees in our first summer. Our largest crew was 280."

A few weeks earlier HMCS *Porte St. Louis* and HMCS *Porte St. Jean* left Hamilton where they had provided training for GLTC in the summer and training for *Hunter*, *York*, *Cataraqui*, *Star*, *Carleton* and *Donnacona* in the Spring and Fall for the last several years. They headed down the St. Lawrence for reassignment to Maritime Command.

The jetty and adjacent buildings fell silent awaiting the next development in *Star's* history, while the waterfront, once the busiest in the naval reserve became the refuge of Canada geese.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE "GREEN" YEARS

*God and the Sailor we alike adore
But only in danger, not before.
The danger o'er, both are requited
God is forgotten and the Sailor is slighted.*

*John Owen
1563 - 1622*

Perhaps the beginning of the next era identified as the "Green Years", can be best introduced, and certainly most graphically introduced, in the year 1967. It was then that unification came to HMCS *Star*. It will be recalled that unification meant the combination of the three services into a single military Force (C.F.) with common uniforms and common rank designations. It was intended that if we all looked alike, and as it turned out, we did, then we should also be able to live and work together towards a common purpose.

In September 1967, after the closing of the Burlington Street Armouries, the Hamilton Service Battalion quite literally marched in the gates of HMCS *Star*. Although it took a little while longer, in fact, in March 1969, HMCS *Star* became a lodger in what became known as CFRB Hamilton, not to be confused with the Toronto radio station. This radio acronym in fact meant Canadian Forces Reserve Barracks, and as time progressed it became the home for the Hamilton Militia District, a Technical Services group and the Medical Company which broke off from the Hamilton Service Battalion. These, with the Service Battalion and HMCS *Star*, now lived in this locale administered by Canadian Forces Base, Toronto. The anomaly of living together meant that there were a militia headquarters and a militia battalion, together with a naval reserve division quartered in the best inland harbour facilities available to Maritime Command, and supported by a base which belonged to Air Command. There can be little doubt that, with all these lodgers making use of these facilities after the Naval Reserve Headquarters had removed from Hamilton to Halifax, the facilities were put to very good and efficient use.

The construction of a garage and work shop building in which the Service Battalion could maintain their vehicles, some small buildings and a compound for vehicles, played havoc with what had been the playing field and baseball diamond for the navy. Perhaps the most difficult adjustment came in the messes, especially the Seaman's Mess which was too small for the influx of militia members. It was not easy for the navy personnel in each of the messes to graciously accept those persons who were joining them, and particularly since they were of a different service with different traditions and mess etiquette. During these years we saw the loss of two messes which had been common specifically to the navy. Those messes were our Wren's mess and the Under Age Mess. Since time changes many things, it was perhaps inevitable that these messes not only would, but perhaps should have been discontinued. The three remaining messes have survived over the years, and it is a credit to the members of those messes that they have overcome those differences which could have been so divisive had the members not worked so diligently, both initially and continually.

So far as HMCS *Star* was concerned, during the "Green Years" there were other changes to endure as well. Integration and unification brought the change in rank structure, uniforms, methods of training, drill, equipment; and as we have seen, some loss of traditions. Military

matters in general over the next few years went through some tortuous times. Canadians in general were dissatisfied with things military as a result of the unfortunate events unfolding in Vietnam, and the U.S. media's dissatisfaction therewith. This, coupled with the destruction of morale, a by-product of unification and integration, sometimes made it difficult to define the objective of the military forces in Canada. This necessitated a defense White Paper in 1971, which was intended to cure at least some of the ills which had become apparent after 1965 and integration. The goals of the White Paper did not increase the military might of Canada but in fact appeared to diminish it.

All was not bleak however since even in such a "sickly season", trained personnel who are dedicated in their work, as Reserves so often are, can survive even in adversity. The personnel available and the attention which they paid to duty and the use they made of the limited equipment during these years with good results, made these persons a credit to their country.

There were many times during these years when keeping one's eye on the goal was difficult. As an example of that endeavour, perhaps the words of Commanding Officer Fred Lee early in this era were an example of that thinking. He is quoted as saying: *"We are not perpetuating the naval reserve for itself alone, but for its contribution to Canada's Maritime matters. We are presently made up of many officers, wrens and men who have not known war or conflict, and a few who all too vividly remember their own service. We are not now preparing for such catastrophe again but are fighting to maintain the peace we all cherish for our country which is just as much a cause for us as the conflict we hope to avoid. We are needed just as much as we ever were, and in the words of Winston Churchill paying tribute to Reservists, we play the role of twice a citizen."*

TRAINING

Naval reserve training as carried out in HMCS *Star* during these years continued the slow evolution which could be expected with the change in direction of the armed forces at the time. It has been noted that there had been a reduction of equipment for the Reservists to use. By the time this era approached, there were no vessels kept in the Great Lakes for the use of Reserve Divisions during the Fall and Spring of each year. Initially, the two "Gate" vessels were kept for a while, but they too were removed to the east coast in 1968. A vessel which had been used by the RCMP, the *Nicholson*, was obtained for use in Lake Ontario and particularly HMCS *Star* and *York*. Regrettably this vessel, although it continued to serve throughout the era and longer, found itself more often in Toronto than in Hamilton. The ville class tugs *Cavalier* and *Plainsville* have done yeoman service throughout this period but there has always been some difficulty with maintenance of all training vessels on the Great Lakes.

Observing the training in HMCS *Star* on a weekly basis, there were some changes as time evolved. Particularly notable was what old-time navy personnel would recognize as the devolution rather than evolution of foot drill noted at divisions and at evening quarters. The routine seemed to be in a continuous state of flux, causing much confusion and many arguments.

We were, however, successful in maintaining our band which has always been one of our strengths. Through these lean years, its members have provided many a bright spot with their fine performances and dedicated leadership. During these years, the band began to evolve and form a strong nucleus for what later in the era became the formation of the National Reserve Band each summer. The other training within the Unit continued along the lines as could be expected in a Reserve Division in the winter time. The trades training could

be found in each of the following departments: communications, deck, supply, medical and diesel engineering. The equipment for each of these was limited, but the leadership provided by the instructors prevailed.

It is interesting to note that a new form of organization of the ship's company for the purposes of training was started in 1969. Briefly the new system involved the structure of the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer and Division Directors. Various other Officers and other appropriate Petty Officers worked for the Division Directors accomplishing the usual tasks, but without the more identifiable Divisions previously noted in what had been customarily called the "cruiser routine". This structure evolved within two years into one without an Executive Officer who was replaced by two senior Lieutenant Commanders who were expected to alternate the responsibilities normally performed by the Executive Officer. The other Officers and Petty Officers were then assigned to various tasks in much the same fashion as the previously described structure.

In somewhat difficult times, and with faltering traditions, the Commanding Officer in 1972 elected to return to the divisional system with an Executive Officer and Department Heads, which if not more successful at least appeared to be more identifiable to the ship's company.

UNIFORMS AND TRADITIONS

The most difficult adjustment experienced in this era was brought about by the change in the uniforms and the loss of the traditions of service in the Royal Canadian Navy. This was particularly true in those places where the spirit of the navy was reposed throughout the country, that being the naval reserves. It was difficult to adjust to the thought that the traditional navy blue uniform was being replaced by a green uniform, and that this uniform would be the same for all ranks in cut and appearance, including head gear. For sailors the most telling changes were the loss of the connection with their ship found on the cap tallies and the distinctive Maritime rank and trade badges, to say nothing of the loss of the traditional sailor uniform belonging to the men. The distribution of the new uniforms was a tremendous task for the armed forces, necessitating particular patience so far as the Reserves were concerned. Naval reserves always keenly felt the difference between themselves and the regular force counterparts, but during this era they also looked different since distribution of the new style uniform was not completed until late 1973. In October, 1973, the last Unit photograph with personnel in the blue uniforms was taken.

Two added annoyances at this time showed a disregard for morale. First, and by far the more serious, involved the loss of all naval rank designations for at least a short period of time. The other annoyance was a concern because it was somewhat discriminatory in that it only affected naval reserves. All ranks were issued only berets as standard head gear. This practice continued into 1980's.

There were many who simply would not accept these changes, but for those who stayed with the reserves, it appeared that there was only one way to handle these situations, and that was to get on with the job. To the credit of the ship's company in these difficult times, that was exactly what happened.

There were also some less obvious changes to be assimilated or "hoisted in" during these times. Prior to unification, one of the cohesive factors of the naval reserves in Canada was the Naval Reserves Communications Network. Each naval reserve unit had the ability to communicate by radio with another nearby naval reserve unit. On Thursday evenings, the communications net started in Newfoundland and moved across the country to Victoria. The

equipment which was held in Hamilton, because of the previous existence of G.L.T.C. and COND, made our position more fortunate. This was coupled with the fact that on *Star's* nominal list appeared the Senior Communications Instructor in Canada in the person of Lt Jim Small. Early in this era, that radio net was disbanded and the equipment rapidly fell into disrepair, together with the ability of those in the communications trade to talk to their "wingers" across the country.

Sailors, because of the environment in which they live at least while they are at sea, have never been required to be coerced whether in normal conditions or in battle. They did however have a custom which was particularly special to the navy, and that was "grog". It was in this era at the end of 1971 that the Canadian Navy determined that there would no longer be the daily issue of rum in the ships at sea. Although this did not affect the reserve divisions, it became another factor of discontent at sea. It is quite likely, however, that the fact that the ships now acquired their own ability to purchase and serve alcoholic beverages was a progressive step.

All these changes including the loss of the white ensign and the uncertainty of what our ships would wear for "jacks" and "ensigns" in the future, together with a question of whether they would even be called Her Majesty's Canadian Ships, took their toll. It required a great deal of determination, not uncommon to sailors, to continue in the service. There can be no doubt that there was a job to be done and the Maritime Defenses of Canada, even as found in the inposts of our country, had to continue. Although numbers dwindled and peace marches escalated, the naval reserves remained accountable.

REGULAR FORCE SUPPORT STAFF

The daily task of making sure that naval reserve units are shipshape falls to the Staff Officer and his staff of regular force personnel who must ensure that the administration of a reserve ship such as HMCS *Star* continues at all times. In days long gone, the numbers of those "staff" were greater and there was both a Staff Officer Administration and a Staff Officer Training. By 1968, LCdr Howard Markle was our Staff Officer on his last appointment after an able career beginning with war time service. Howard Markle elected to stay in the area and despite his last advertised intention in Starshells to become a "highway flag man", he, in fact for many years ably administered the enormous parking problem at McMaster University. LCdr Markle retired in September 1970, at which time it was determined locally that a Staff Officer was not a necessity and accordingly no replacement was appointed until July 1971. At that time Major (S) J. M. Williams joined HMCS *Star* as the Staff Officer.

Major Williams had come to us from the Staff College in Toronto, and at the end of his term in February 1973, he returned to the Staff College in Toronto as an instructor, but remained living in the area and took his retirement some years later while still living in Burlington. Capt (S) Bob Spicer replaced Jim Williams in February 1973, and guided us through that year and its fiftieth anniversary celebrations. Bob Spicer also had had war time service as a pilot in the Royal Air Force and came to us as a last posting from Camp Borden where he had been on the Administrative Staff for the Air Operations Branch at that base. It will be noted that the ranks of these two Officers reflect the unified structure but needed the (S) designation to show that they were of the Maritime persuasion. By the time Bob Spicer left in July 1977 to be replaced by Lt(N) P. E. Hill, at least some measure of respectability had returned to the rank structure since he was the same rank that Bob Spicer was, although it was still necessary to indicate that he was navy. Peter Hill was a tower of strength at HMCS *Star* and became very much involved with the personnel and the community, and was

promoted to Lieutenant Commander during his stay and before his posting several years later to Ottawa.

During these years the Staff Officers and their able assistants and civilian secretaries survived many crises and maintained a sense of humour at least for the most part. Petty Officers Healey, Stewart and Humphries assisted the Staff Officers with the tasks as chief writers. Integration had evidently produced the first out-of-service member in Warrant Officer Bowes, but for the most part during this era, most of the Regular Force Support Staff were from Maritime Command. Of all the staff who served in these years, it is interesting to note that CPO John Stewart was the only one who, upon leaving the regular force immediately joined the reserves and provided more years of capable service in administrative matters at HMCS *Star*.

THE COMMANDERS

This era commenced under the command of Cdr R. T. Bennett who carefully orchestrated the arrival of the army and became the first Barracks Commander of CFRB Hamilton. In his position as Barracks Commander, Cdr Bennett had to conduct the delicate liaisons with Air Command at Toronto and Maritime Command in Halifax, while playing host to the Hamilton Militia District Headquarters. Specifically, Cdr Bennett also was responsible for the messes which carried their own kinds of problems of personality differences. Upon his supersession as Commanding Officer by Cdr C. D. DiCenzo, Cdr Bennett went on to continue the Barracks Commander role and was promoted to Captain on January 1, 1971. Captain Bennett continued as Barracks Commander with the role previously set out. This appointment extended a career which might otherwise have ended with being Commanding Officer, but his ability was not fully tasked as yet since on January 1, 1974, he was promoted to Commodore and took on the position of Senior Naval Reserve Advisor in Canada. Commodore Bennett was the third person to hold this position which had been created only after unification in the late 1960's. Commodores Oland and Leroyd had preceded Commodore Bennett, but for most reserves in Canada, the person and the position were only names until "Buck" Bennett arrived on the scene to make sure that his presence was felt from one end of the country to the other. There can be little doubt that although he was no longer borne in HMCS *Star*, everyone knew from whence he came. By the time Commodore Bennett turned over to Commodore Fox-Decent on January 1, 1977, he had made the position of Senior Naval Reserve Advisor recognized and well respected throughout the naval community in Canada, in both reserve and regular force positions.

On July 1, 1969, Cdr Colin DiCenzo succeeded Cdr Bennett to the position of Commanding Officer. Colin DiCenzo came to HMCS *Star* upon his retirement from the regular force as an electrical engineering officer. Colin had joined the navy during the Second World War as an Ordinary Seaman and in a very few years had risen through the ranks to become a Chief Petty Officer and was subsequently commissioned from the ranks to an officer and sent to university where he took a Woodrow Scholarship in engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Colin DiCenzo stayed with the navy and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander before retiring in 1965, to take up a position as an instructor at McMaster University. Colin was tireless in his dedication to his profession and contributed many scholarly works by publication.

Cdr DiCenzo was succeeded by Cdr Frederick J. Lee, who was the second HMCS *Star* UNTD to assume command. Fred had had a brief regular force experience, and while attending law

law school in London at the University of Western Ontario, was with the naval reserve unit HMCS *Prevost* as Communications Officer. Upon returning to HMCS *Star* and commencing the practice of law in Hamilton, Fred fulfilled several positions at HMCS *Star* before becoming Executive Officer in 1969, and Commanding Officer on July 1, 1971.

Cdr Lee guided HMCS *Star* through the continued trials of integration and unification, and spearheaded the First National Naval Regatta in 1973. Upon being superseded, Fred Lee also did not leave the naval reserve but continued with the Navy Control of Shipping Section at HMCS *Star*, and then moved to the Judge Advocate General's Branch as a reservist, to become a trained Military Judge before retirement some years later.

Cdr Lee's successor was Cdr M. J. Pandzich who had come to HMCS *Star* from HMCS *Hunter* where he had been a UNTD cadet. Marty had been born in Sault Ste. Marie and attended university in Windsor where he took up his naval reserve career. Prior to becoming Commanding Officer, Marty also had been Executive Officer of HMCS *Star*, and brought with him his talents and abilities in challenging the members of the ship's company in every aspect to improve the unit considerably, and certainly increase the numbers from what they had become over the previous few years. Marty also had busy years in his command while he added new training endeavours and honed the skills of the officers and men under his command. When Cdr Pandzich finished in command, he turned over to Cdr R. H. Bowman. Cdr Pandzich stayed with the reserves and he too assisted in the Naval Control of Shipping world at HMCS *Star*. Marty's employment took him from Hamilton several years later, and he assumed command of HMCS *Hunter*, the ship in which he had started his career. This command commenced in 1989, and in 1990, Marty Pandzich was promoted to Captain while still in Command of HMCS *Hunter*.

THE SHIP

A ship, whether it be a sea-going ship or a stone frigate such as HMCS *Star*, is nothing more or less than the personalities borne in that ship. During this period of time, HMCS *Star* was blessed with many personalities who toiled at the naval reserve in their free time. In most cases, their dedication would pay some kind of price in their other life. As the trappings and traditions seemed to be slipping away, sometimes it took more than a small bit of dedication to stay with the ship.

In each of the messes can be found the individuals who made their messes function successfully and also contributed to the operation of the ship. Not always do you need to look to the senior Chiefs and Petty Officers or Leading Seamen, although those ranks would be attained by those who put forth the most effort.

Throughout this period, the perennial coxswain was CPO Carl Hunt. Here was a Communicator who made himself into a Gunner at least for the purposes of the Parade Square upon which he was Master for so many years. In addition, no one could take away from the dedication and effort put into the Communications and subsequently the Naval Control of Shipping Branch by CPO Malcolm Macaulay.

The Wrens also added leadership as well as the necessary female presence amongst us. During this period we saw Petty Officer Barbara Gotch, now Mrs. Fred Todd, show the sparks and leadership that were needed from outside her actual service as she assisted in social affairs. Donna Wickstrom moved from non-commissioned rate to an officer and attained the rank of Lieutenant while looking after the books and records of HMCS *Star* for many years. June Lester (Hunt) could always be counted on in many of the social and leadership roles within the Wren community, and quietly made her mark on the rest of the ship's company.

As previously mentioned during this era, the Under Age Mess disappeared but through several years at least, the efforts of Steve Greenwood went a long way to provide some spirit to that group who, although they desperately wanted to be in a position of 'drawing their tot' so to speak, they worked hard at any social spirit which they could stimulate.

The Junior Ranks Club as it became, otherwise known as the Seamen's Mess, was a place of spirit. Some of the members in the personages of Semenzow, Hunt, McCue, Trudell, Watson and others assisted in making a strong and interesting group. There was one among the group named LS Brian Williams who regrettably was only with us a short time. Brian's drive and ambition coupled with his natural leadership ability, quickly manifested itself and he attained the rank of Leading Seaman. Brian was an accomplished seaman and good sailor. His interests lay in that field but regrettably cancer took him from us in early August, 1974.

Even in this era, one cannot forget the Seager family since by this time, Ron Seager was replacing his illustrious father and uncles in the naval community in Hamilton. The Wardroom Steward with his Cockney humour and stories of the Royal Navy, added what only PO Bill Murray could add to the Wardroom and Chief's and P.O.'s Mess.

The training during this period took on a definite 'diesel mechanic' flavour in addition to the strong bos'un and communications entries. One of the persons who made use of his diesel mechanic trade far outside the ship's company, was AS McCue who was lucky enough to have himself posted to Egypt in this era as part of the Canadian U. N. forces in that area.

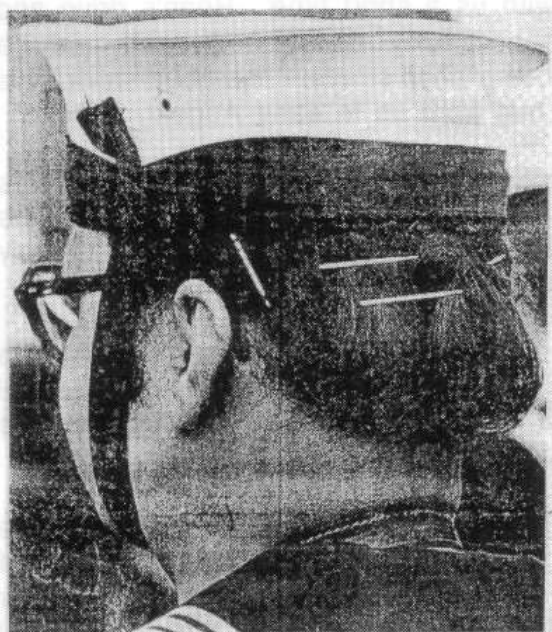
There were lots of adventures at home as well. Who could imagine that the plain little ville class tugs could provide a training exercise which would stimulate a number of personnel for several weeks in the summer of 1974? Exercise "Star Trek" directed by LCdr Bob Bowman and assisted by CPO Bill Ross, took the ville class tugs up the Trent Canal system and back to bring the naval reserve to a part of Ontario where they had not been before. By the time the Olympic year began in 1976, *Star* had already contributed to the Canadian Olympic Regatta, Kingston (CORK), in 1974 - 1975 and finally in the Olympic year, 1976. CPO Bill Ross and LCdr Bowman again, were part of a naval reserve team that assisted greatly in the operation of small vessels and craft necessary in assisting with yacht racing for the Olympics. Some of *Star's* personnel were also used at the Olympic site in Montreal as part of their summer experience in that year of 1976. Since *Star's* location was so well suited on the bay despite silting and pollution adjacent to *Star*, it was still a location for regattas of both naval reserve and sea cadets. On several occasions during these years, regattas were held there and the sea cadets were grateful for the opportunities granted to them with the assistance of personnel from *Star*.

HMCS Star Hockey Team

1967.

"The effort was superior - the team was not quite".

(Lee)



NAVAL PIN-UP

Commander John Greenleaf, who has been in the navy for 20 years, is shown in a pin-up. He is wearing a dark uniform and a white shirt. The photo is a close-up of his face and upper body.



This picture hit the AP Wire service to the world - a great deal of explaining was needed.

(Spectator)



Cmdr. Frederick J. Lee, left, Lt. Cmdr. Archie Hodge and Lt. Cmdr. Harry Taylor Preventing scurvy and keeping away colds.

We all shed a tear the day the rum issue died, December 1971.

(Spectator)

1973 Anniversary Party.

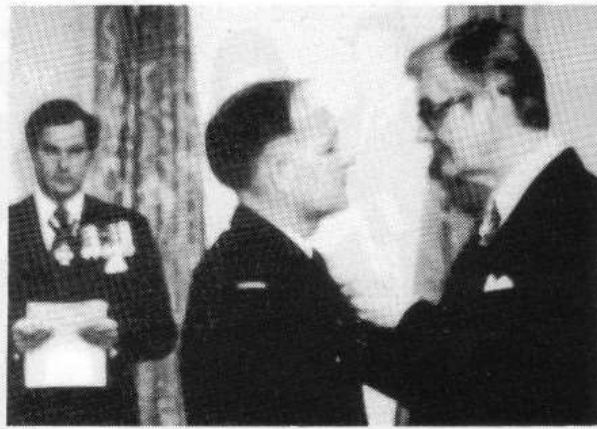
L-R: LCdr Mary Greenwood, CPO1 Harry Laird, CPO2 Ron Moffatt, LS Brian Williams.

(Lee)





(Above)
Marian Macaulay and
CPO1 Macaulay at his in-
vestiture into the Order of
Military Merit, Government
House, Ottawa 1974.



Governor-General Jean Leger presents insignia of
Member of the Order of Military Merit to Chief Ma-
caulay.



(Right)
Investiture of Cmdre R. T.
Bennett into the Order of
Military Merit as an Officer,
1977.

(Below)
Padre Watson gets his CD
from MARCOM - Rear Adm
Timbrell, 1972.



(Above)
Chief Harry Laird received the Maritime
Commander's Commendation for his
exceptional service.



(Above) Visit by Maritime Commander to City and Region, 1972. L-R: Cdr H.W. Vondette, Rear Adm R. W. Timbrel, Cdr Lee, Mrs. Anne Jones, Mayor Victor Copps, Capt(N) Bennett.



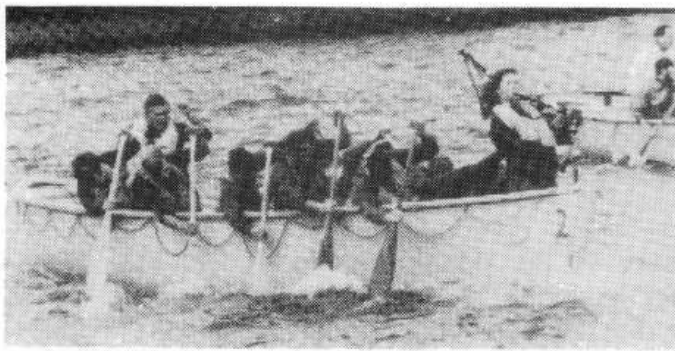
(Above)
1973 Anniversary - Cake Cutting.
L-R: CPO1 M. Macaulay, Cdr
Lee, Capt Spicer. (Staff Officer)



(Above)
1973 Anniversary - C.O.'s
Reunion.
L-R: Capt(N) Bennett (66-69),
Mayor Copps, Cmdre P.D.
Taylor (COND 61-65), Cdr
Ross (46-49), Cdr Lee (71-75),
LCdr L. Westland (34-37),
Capt(N) W. Houghton (59-61),
Cdr R. Morrison (40).



(Right)
Nursing Sisters and Wrens
Uniforms of various eras -
modeled in 1973.



Mary Pederson pipes Scotian to victory in the war canoe race at the national regatta hosted by Star, 1973.



Adm Boyle hands out men's dingy racing trophy and tells Wolf to get a Haircut.



Regatta tug of war. CPO Macaulay and Cdr Lee give enthusiastic support.



Chief and Petty Officers' sailing plaque goes to Len and Marty Pawlek.



Star's officers win the dingy sailing too. Neil Payne accepts.



(Above) Maritime Commander Rear Adm Boyle gets a lesson on the pipes from Scotian's Mary Pederson.



(Left) CPO Macaulay, cox'n of Star's war canoe. (Macaulay)

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAVY

The year 1973 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the naval reserve in Canada. As previously noted, the reserves had been formally launched in 1923 under Walter Hose who rose to the rank of Admiral. Regrettably he did not live long enough to celebrate this anniversary year. The first event of the year celebrated in HMCS *Star* as in other divisions across the country, was in January on the 31st day, being the inauguration date from 1923. The press conference was set up and the following message was received from the Prime Minister.

"The naval reserve is half a century old today. Naval reservists have given Canada 50 years of invaluable service in times of peace and war. The Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve kept the concept of a Canadian Navy alive between the two world wars, provided the main source of manpower for the Royal Canadian Navy during World War II, and since then, has been an integral part of the modern, peace time forces of Canada. It is with great pleasure that I extend my congratulations to the Officers, Wrens, and Men of the naval reserve for a job well done. Today the naval reserve stands on the threshold of a new, evolving challenge: a Maritime Reserve Force. I have the deepest confidence that the naval reserve will continue to meet and surmount the challenges of the future.

Signed Pierre Elliott Trudeau."

On March 15, a Special Ceremonial Divisions took place to celebrate the 50th birthday in Hamilton as this corresponded with the time of the setting up of the original Hamilton Half Company or reserve division. At this event, a number of past Commanding Officers attended at the Ceremonial Divisions inspected by Captain R. T. Bennett. The public was invited to the Ceremonial Divisions and publicity and displays assisted further on this occasion.

Annual inspection was conducted that year under the watchful eye of Commodore A. Hayes, Commandant of the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto. Some publicity was achieved from this occasion but regrettably not of the type that would be popular. One of *Star's* ship's company decided that in place of a haircut, bobby pins pinning his hair up would be satisfactory. A sharp eyed photographer from the Hamilton Spectator spotted the same and the next day a very large front page picture at least made everyone aware that there was a naval reserve in Hamilton and since this picture hit the wire service, many other places heard of it and correspondence flowed.

Another memorable naval reserve experience took place that summer in Canada on the 20-day Arctic Whaler Exercise in Canada's Northwest Territories. Two members of the ship's company from *Star*, Able Seamen Law and Vivian represented *Star* as they travelled 1,200 miles from Yellowknife to Tuktoyaktuk on the McKenzie River Delta. Able Seaman Vivian being a better than average photographer, contributed a number of his photographs to the armed forces publication known as Sentinel which further enhanced the reputation of the reserve and *Star*.

The largest event of the year as far as preparation was concerned, took place on Thanksgiving weekend in early October, 1973. At this time, *Star* hosted the National Regatta for the naval reserve in Canada. Regrettably HMCS *Brunswick* from New Brunswick was not able to attend due to weather and flight conditions but all other reserve divisions did attend and it was truly a stirring sight to see the competitions both on the water and on the land that took place during that weekend. The naval reserve was fortunate to have the Maritime Commander in attendance for two days and Admiral Boyle thoroughly enjoyed himself

according to his reflections upon the abilities of the naval reserve on this event. *Star* was an appropriate host in not winning although we were runner-up to HMCS *Discovery* who did win the Cock-of-the-walk Trophy.

The organization and co-operation which took place within the ship's company was truly remarkable before and during the event. Many members of *Star's* ship's company had to participate many extra hours in order to have this take place. Since the accommodations at HMCS *Star* were inadequate for sleeping, the Royal Connaught Hotel was used and although one ministerial inquiry resulted as a result of a party in an elevator during the night, the behaviour of naval reservists was exemplary throughout the weekend. The "galley" in Building 5 had been refurbished for the occasion and the meals were held in that location during the weekend with the assistance of CFB Toronto for food supplies. Such an event involving all naval reserves had not been held in one place for some time.

Other anniversary events that took place that Fall were the visit of HMCS *Margaree* and a *Star* Reunion. In October, the last occasion was taken for those with blue uniforms to wear them. A photograph was taken to commemorate the last time the traditional blue uniform was worn in *Star*. Unfortunately it was a poor quality picture. That wasn't the only thing that went wrong that month. During a tug cruise to Niagara-on-the-Lake, a whaler in tow was lost in a storm. Fortunately there were no casualties.

On November 15, 1973, the Chief of Defence Staff announced that Captain R. T. Bennett would succeed to the position of Senior Reserve Naval Advisor and assume the rank of Commodore on January 1, 1974. This was a singular honour to *Star* and particularly of the recognition personally of the service of Captain Bennett.

It was during this anniversary year that *Star* acquired the motto "diligence" which was added to the name in association with the ship's badge. COND had directed all reserve divisions to choose a motto as an anniversary event. Cdr Lee selected the word "diligence" which is derived from the Latin word *diligentia* meaning persistent effort and industrious character. It appealed to him because it was spelled the same in both English and French while aptly reflecting the industrious city image of Hamilton. Commander Lee also favoured a one word motto which would be easier to remember and exuded a sense of determination appropriate to our military role. Given all the significant events that occurred at *Star* in 1973, it would appear that the ship's motto of "Diligence", so newly created was a worthy choice.

AWARDS

As a by-product of service, awards can take the form of either personal recognition or a unit citation. During this era, *Star* had much cause to be proud and grateful for the recognition of service given to the ship and to personalities therein. In May 1969, HMCS *Star* was awarded the Malahat Trophy for being the most efficient English speaking division in Canada. This was the first time that *Star* had been recognized for its efforts during its history. This award reflected the hard work of all personnel and particularly those of the regular force support staff.

During this era, individual honours came to certain members of HMCS *Star* as well. The first of such honours was received by Cdr C. D. DiCenzo on his appointment to the Order of

Canada. This award was announced and presented to Cdr DiCenzo after he had left command of HMCS *Star* in 1973. Cdr DiCenzo's honour was awarded to him as a result of the work which he had done for the armed forces in the Electrical Engineering Branch over a period of time.

The first member of *Star* to receive the Order of Military Merit was Chief Petty Officer Malcolm Macaulay in 1973. Chief Macaulay, in addition to his duties as an instructor in communications, was also a diver. His commendation for service over many years since 1941, had attached to it, his selfless daring in attempting to dive upon a downed aircraft at the Canadian National Exhibition Air Show to assist the pilot. Chief Macaulay had always been a stalwart at *Star* and he was a very popular choice for this award.

For his service and particularly his direction as Senior Naval Reserve Advisor, Commodore R. T. Bennett received the appointment to the Order of Military Merit in the grade of Officer in 1977. The time and dedication provided to the naval reserve by Commodore Bennett would only seem to be partially compensated for in this award. He spent tireless hours travelling the country during the time of being Senior Naval Reserve Advisor and provided a new standard for successors in that appointment.

For his service and dedication to the Order of St. John, Surgeon Commander McCoy was appointed to the Order of St. John and subsequently elevated to Officer standing therein.

In 1975, an Admiral's Commendation was received by Cdr David Stock and at the end of this era a Maritime Commander's Commendation was presented to CPO1 M. H. Laird, CD, in recognition of Exceptional Services in Maritime Command especially in the field of diesel mechanic training.

Prior to the commencement of this era, a medal had been struck to commemorate the Centennial of Canada and during this era, a further medal was struck to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Commencement of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Ten members of HMCS *Star* were granted medals at the time of the Canadian Centennial and a number of members of *Star* also received medals for Her Majesty's 25th Anniversary of Accession to the throne in 1977. Regrettably, record keeping of honours has not been a strong point of reserve divisions. If memory serves us correctly, the following personnel received Jubilee medals: Pandzich, Bowman, Todd, Macaulay, Cockrell, McInnis, Swing, M. James, and R. Bennett.

LONDON TENDER

The end of this era saw the beginnings of what was to become, some years later, a recommissioned naval reserve unit in London. With the defence cutbacks which took place in the middle 60's, HMCS *Prevost* in London had been cut within just ten years of having had a new building built for them in that city. Although it was not considered possible to have a new naval reserve unit started again during this era, it became apparent that it might be a good idea to try to recruit for the naval reserve in London. During this time, Cdr Pandzich was Commanding Officer of HMCS *Star*. He and others investigated the possibilities of having a "tender" to *Star* in London. London was well suited for this since there was a large armed forces establishment at CFB London. There was space available in that location to train personnel for the engineering or diesel mechanic trades, which were desperately needed in the naval reserve. With the University of Western Ontario in London as well, there was also the possibility of recruiting some officers. Some of the personnel who had served in *Prevost*

in earlier years, gave some assistance as well as other members of the community. Chief Petty Officer Bill Ross of Hamilton gave a good deal of his time during these years and in the many years to follow as he travelled back and forth to London to assist with the "tender" in that city.

In January 1978, official sanction was given to commence the tender in London and from that point on, diesel mechanics were recruited in London. The London personnel appeared in *Star* on occasion in order to further their training, making the long trip down on those occasions to show their further dedication. Cdr David Stock who lived in Woodstock and had been a member of HMCS *Prevost* also contributed a good deal to the effort of having the "tender" established in London in 1978. The tender was to experience its ups and downs but suffice it to say that when a recommissioning took place years later, it was because of the foresight and determination of naval interests in both Hamilton and London.

NAVAL RESERVE STUDENT SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAM

Recruiting through the "Green Years" was difficult, largely because the military was unpopular in any event. The Vietnam conflict and its daily litany of horror, brought to us compliments of television news, balanced by peace efforts, did not assist in military endeavours. One of the most successful recruiting schemes however, commenced in 1972 with what was then called the Naval Reserve Student Summer Training Program which subsequently became the Student Youth Employment Program.

The Student Summer Training Program in those days had several different facets to it. The Secretary of State's Department in the Government of Canada made it known that they wished to encourage employment for young people in various parts of Canada and under the guise of a program known as Student Summer Youth Employment Programs created job possibilities for youth all over Canada. This programme became the source of recruitment for the Primary Reserve.

The Naval Reserve Student Summer Training Program encouraged the high-school students to join the armed forces by coming to a naval reserve unit in their locale where they would undergo a period of military training for about seven weeks during the months of July and August. This programme was an immediate success and without much difficulty was over-subscribed with applicants providing the naval reserve units and *Star* in particular, with a good choice of personnel. It did not seem to matter in those days of long hair and sloppy dress, that some appearances and comforts of life, would have to be sacrificed to face the rigors of the armed forces. On completion of the N.R.S.S.T.P., some candidates accepted the offer to join the Naval Reserve.

This programme was continued each summer and the competition amongst the students to perform well became even keener as the years went on. The summer experience usually brought to the student the opportunity for drill and small arms familiarization coupled with some sail training which was a novel experience for most of the students. It was interesting to note that the students did not all come from nearby. The high schools in Burlington, Ancaster, Dundas, Stoney Creek and Winona all competed for the positions available under these programmes from year to year. The instructors were found from the ranks of HMCS *Star* so there was no necessity to recruit personnel from outside *Star* to look after these programmes. Although the name of the programme changed from time to time over the years, the type of personnel who came to it and the numbers, did not change. There were always too

programmes. Although the name of the programme changed from time to time over the years, the type of personnel who came to it and the numbers, did not change. There were always too many and there were nearly always too many young women applying for the jobs available. It is interesting to note that the keenest competitors and often the best performers during these years were the young ladies who enjoyed the challenge and the opportunity to experience something very new and different. Most of the students who elected to stay in the naval reserve went on to take whatever trade training they felt was most interesting or suitable for them while a few applied as officer candidates in whatever officer training programme was available during those years after the demise of the University Naval Training Division or UNTD in 1968.

OFFICIAL VISITS

In keeping with naval tradition, *Star* always took pride in assisting the visiting senior officers in paying courtesy calls on civic and municipal leaders. During this era we were fortunate in having two Maritime Commanders visit *Star* in the personages of Admirals, Timbrel and Boyle. When the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth was created, a representation from HMCS *Star* was the first official delegation to make a visit to the new Chairman, Mrs. Anne Jones. The relationship, therefore, between the navy and the City in Hamilton has always been cordial and as will be seen, later in this history, it culminated in "Freedom of the City".

SHIP'S WELFARE

No ship, unit or establishment can survive without having a healthy attitude and that comes from the physical and mental ability of its personnel to be in good shape at all times. A great service was provided by those people who filled the Medical and Chaplaincy departments at *Star* during these years.

In the beginning of this era, *Star* had acquired two medical personnel who not only made their presence felt in *Star*, but both of whom were national figures in the naval medical scene. When the era started Surgeon Lt Cdr Hugh McCoy was assisted by senior Nursing Sister Lt Cdr Mary Greenwood. By the time the era had ended Mary Greenwood had been promoted to Cdr and Hugh McCoy had attained the rank of Surgeon Captain. Mary Greenwood was the first Nursing Sister in the service to attain the rank of Cdr in the reserves and Hugh McCoy with his skill and knowledge became the leader of the national Defense Medical Association. His service had started with the Air Force in World War II and by 1971 he decided that it was time for him to step down and allow someone else to take over. At that time, we secured the services of Dr. Len Hargot for a couple of years. It was difficult to operate the ship, administer the needs of the crew and promote the interests of the medical department without a Medical Officer. After Len Hargot, Gerry Marin, with a distinguished medical career with the British forces was persuaded to assist. Not long after this, his private practice took him to the U.S.A. and Hugh McCoy came back. Mary Greenwood's dedication during these periods of change in medical officers made a lasting impression upon *Star*.

In addition to the medical service, *Star* was well served in the spiritual service as well. For many years we were lucky enough to have both a Protestant and a Roman Catholic

chaplain attached to the ship. In the beginning of the era, the Reverend Arthur Watson known to those at *Star* as "Padre Watson" became Lt Cdr Watson when the Padre Branch assumed the rank designation not previously used in the navy. He gave unstinting support for many years and even after he found it impossible to attend weekly, he continued to take on summer-time appointments in various parts of Canada. The Roman Catholic chaplain first appointed by his Bishop to assist us was Father Day who stayed with *Star* a few years before leaving his Hamilton North End parish. He was followed by Father Bob Kiffman who in 1973 joined the regular force as a chaplain. Although no further Roman Catholic priest was assigned to the ship, both Fathers, Day and Kiffman made their impressions upon *Star*. Throughout the era after Art Watson retired, Lt Cdr Joe Rogers was always present and contributed greatly to many spiritual and temporal endeavours in *Star*. Some considered that chaplains only conducted prayers at Ceremonials or on other important occasions, but it is most important to note that these chaplains in *Star* made their impact on ship's personnel in many ways and were always well known by all the ship's company. The record of their attendance would be considered exemplary for most of the ship's departments. Their dedication to the ship and its affairs definitely played an important part in *Star's* welfare.

SHIPS AND A NAVAL PRESENCE

One of the major roles for a naval reserve unit in a community is to promote a naval presence. *Star* is particularly fortunate in this regard since it is located on a waterfront which is an important inland port on the Great Lakes in Canada. But as the era in question commenced there had been no naval ship visit to Hamilton. The change in the emphasis of the armed forces through unification and the environmental requirement that ships be fitted with self contained sewage systems had had something to do with this. The presence of the navy on the Great Lakes had in fact shrunk immeasurably once Great Lakes Training had been taken from Hamilton along with the small ships associated with it.

However, in 1970 a local lady named Lillian Fraser became aware that Canada had a navy and that one of its ship bore her family name. She inquired of the Staff Officer at *Star* as to when her namesake, HMCS *Fraser*, would visit our port. Finding that there was no visit intended, she started with her own direct approach to invite the ship to Hamilton. At first, she requested that the City of Hamilton invite the ship and then without waiting, used a more personal approach, and on behalf of the city, invited the ship herself. Miss Fraser badgered everyone in sight from the the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Maritime Commander and the Mayor. In August of that year HMCS *Fraser* came to Hamilton and needless to say, Lillian Fraser was the guest of honour. For several years thereafter, she remained a navy booster in Hamilton and took an interest in activities at HMCS *Star*.

When the vessel which had been on loan to the Canadian Coast Guard was returned to the navy as HMCS *Porte Dauphine*, it was at *Star* that the recommissioning took place in 1974. Many of the crew members for HMCS *Porte Dauphine* found themselves right at home having previously been in HMCS *Star*. It was *Star* that contributed largely to the ability of having HMCS *Porte Dauphine* available to the naval reserve for several years thereafter in the Great Lakes.

The ship visits to the City and *Star* through the 70's were somewhat sporadic but at least there were some appearances. In 1971, HMCS *Ottawa* paid a visit while in 1973 it was

Margaree. In 1975, HMCS *Nipigon* followed its predecessors to Hamilton but then there were no visits until *Saguenay* arrived in both 1978 and 1979.

Star also had a responsibility regardless of ship visits to make sure that the populace of Hamilton and the surrounding areas knew that the navy was here. The band's participation in the opening of the Art Gallery in 1977 and annual parades taking place in May, for the Battle of Atlantic celebration, and in November for Remembrance Day or assisting in the Canada Cup Races, were some of the best examples of the opportunity for the navy to show itself. Unfortunately, little recognition was gained during these public events where one green uniform looked just like another. Despite the ship visits, a lack of identity remained at the heart of the navy's problem during the "Green Years". It was a time of weathering the storm, and credit must be given to those who held it together during this period which will be viewed by historians as a most difficult and trying time for all three services.



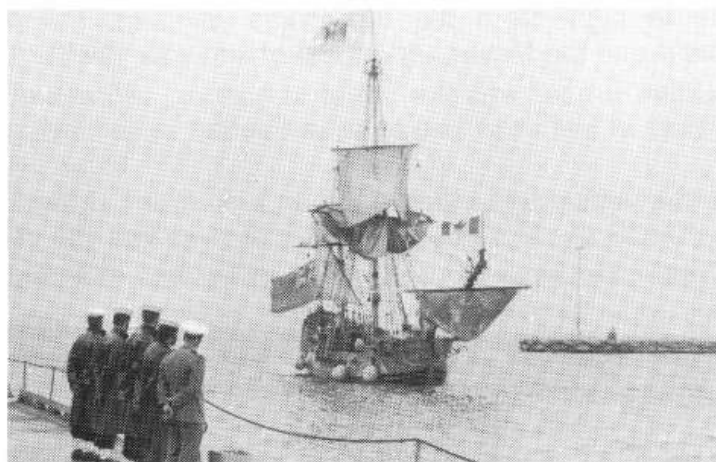
(Above) Ship's Welfare Team: Surg. Capt Hugh McCoy, LCdr Mary Greenwood, Chaplains: Lt Robert Kiffman, LCdr Joe Rogers.



(Above) HMCS *Ottawa*'s headrope secured at *Star*, August 16, 1971. Note the mixed uniform rig. (Special Collections)



(Left) *Star*'s representatives on the Arctic Whaler Excursion on July 14, 1973, AB Law and AB Vivian. (Special Collections)



(Left) Jetty party awaiting line from *Nonsuch*, August 14, 1970. (Special Collections)

CHAPTER SIX

DECADE OF REBIRTH

1980 - 1990

In 1979, Joe Clark, the first Progressive Conservative Prime Minister in almost two decades, began the work of undoing the homogenization of the Canadian Forces created by Paul Hellyer. He formed a task force under George Fyfe to "un-unify" the forces and return to distinctive uniforms. Unfortunately his government was short lived and the real work had to wait until 1984 with the landslide victory of Brian Mulroney. But the "Pandora's Box" of Hellyer's defence policies had been opened and steadily from 1980 onward the tide began to surge in an unrelenting movement to re-establish the traditions, values and customs of the navy. This was certainly reflected in the events at *Star* as the navy's identity was restored after a dozen years of anonymity under Unification. For this reason, this chapter is entitled the Decade of Rebirth.

I. CHANGING ROLE OF THE NAVAL RESERVE

During the decade of the eighties, steps were taken to increase the effectiveness of the naval reserve. The efficient use of scarce merchant ships, their safe and timely arrival by organizing convoys and routes had been a primary responsibility of the naval reserve since 1960. In 1985, this Naval Control of Shipping role was expanded to include the protection of Canada's ports and territorial waters by manning Coastal Surveillance Vessels (CSV) and Harbour Surveillance Vessels (HSV). This role was called the Maritime Coastal Defense Organization (M.C.D.O.), and included diving and mine countermeasure operations. It resulted in the acquisition of two new ships for the naval reserve, the first in almost thirty years. By May 1989, two Mine Countermeasure Auxiliary Vessels (MCAV), HMC Ships *Anticosti* and *Moresby* were commissioned in Halifax.

The second step taken was to place a new emphasis on Naval Presence. As Admiral Hose had recognized in the 1920's, naval reserve units across Canada are an ideal and cost-effective way of engendering that kind of support. This meant putting the navy back in blue uniforms so that they could once again become an identifiable organization, and opening new units in areas where there was a lack of awareness. A study revealed that a Francophone presence in the navy was well below the average in the nation compared to other services. The solution was to move the Naval Reserve Division Headquarters from Halifax to Quebec City and to implant three naval reserve divisions in Chicoutimi, Rimouski and Trois-Rivieres. The second phase of this plan was to re-open Divisions in London, Charlottetown and Sept Isle.

II. TRAINING

The changing role of the Reserves was of course reflected in training. The Decade of Rebirth saw a steady improvement in training, primarily because more money was made available for operations and training. This was helped by the steady growth of morale and motivation with the return of the naval identity. The calibre of recruits was also exceptionally high.

However, one of the curious aspects of naval training in the early 80's was not related to the sea in any way. It was a vestige of armed forces unification requiring all Canadian Forces recruits to undergo a standard program of General Military Training (GMT). This programme included winter survival training.

Winter Survival Training

Winter survival training got started in a big way in 1980 when CPO1 James was in charge of the G.M.T. He was assisted by CPO1 Ross and Lt T. Hince. A combined operation with HMCS *York* was arranged at C.F.B. Borden for a cold weekend in February. The heart of the program entailed issuing all the winter clothing and equipment, learning how to use it and then recovering it all without any shortages. To survive, the trainee had to learn how to set up a tent, operate a coleman stove and lantern, eat from ration packs, wear snow shoes and keep warm in a winter sleeping bag. It all became a great adventure especially when field tactics were added to the program.

These winter survival programs were called Operation "Blue Nose" for obvious reasons, and proved so successful in developing leadership and building esprit de corps that by 1983 they were expanded to include an Autumn program called Operation "Diversity" and "Autumn Breeze".

A report on Operation Diversity was written by the Executive Officer, LCdr R. Williamson in October 1983.

"This exercise was planned by our Weapon's Officer, LCdr N. Bell to teach tactical organization for a landing party and to give leadership training to the rank of Leading Seaman and above. The exercise took place at Camp Borden, under canvas, on October 28 - 30, 1983. Support and tactical advice was provided by the 23 Service Battalion. [Proof that integration had some value]

During the exercise Cpl. Wilson of the 23 Service Battalion took time out to introduce the C.O., Cdr D. Woodliffe and X.O., LCdr R. Williamson to some of the qualities of his army truck. He wanted to drive them around so that they could reconnoitre the camp area. It sounded like a good idea but there was a hidden agenda built into the tour.

Cpl. Wilson was intent on demonstrating his militia bush driving skills to his naval passengers. He crashed along a narrow track in the woods bouncing over ruts and depressions as if they didn't exist while narrowly missing trees as their branches slapped into the cab. Then came his "piece de resistance."

He came to a sudden halt in front of a gully fifty feet wide. The sides dropped away at a sharp forty-five degree angle. It appeared impassable and that any further

progress would have to be on foot. But no, the gears of the four wheel drive ground into low and the truck moved slowly over the edge of the ravine.

The C.O., bracing himself against the dash board, made some reference to the "almighty" as the truck nosed down at an alarmingly sharp angle. The X.O. simply thought that this was a strange place to park, expecting to have to walk out of the ravine.

However, to the surprise of both officers, the hood of the truck rose suddenly as the heavy vehicle climbed steeply out of the gully and proceeded on its way. Both officers laughed in disbelief much to the satisfaction of Cpl. Wilson who must have been well pleased with the effect of his remarkable demonstration of militia equipment.

During the afternoon everybody, including the C.O. and X.O. participated in a search and destroy mission. The object of the exercise was simply to locate a small enemy pocket of resistance in a heavily forested but clearly defined search area.

Part of the exercise requirement was to wear facial camouflage. This was applied by organizing into pairs so that partners could paint each other's faces. There were some who took great satisfaction and perhaps sadistic pleasure in being able to use someone else's face for their creative camouflage designs.

During the exercise, despite the fact that all groups were in radio contact and broadcasting guiding directions, the search failed to locate any pockets of resistance. In fact both friend and foe were reduced to trying to locate each other by firing signal shots. However, since there were other units operating in the area, it was difficult to distinguish signal shots from routine firing on the range.

Finally all participants in the mission were regrouped by homing in on thirty second whistle blasts. Like ships in a fog all elements that were no more than a couple of hundred yards apart in the dense forest were re-assembled. It was clear that our sailors had a lot to learn about map reading and orienteering.

In the evening, a night assault was planned against a small defending force established in a prepared area complete with trip wires and flares. Having gained some valuable lessons from the afternoon, this exercise was kept to a very small area, clearly defined by road boundaries.

The night was so dark under the pine trees that it was difficult to see a hand in front of your face. Naturally, the situation created a great deal of nervous excitement. As might be expected, the exercise did not go quite as planned because by coincidence, a militia group was also exercising in the same area. It was inevitable that the navy would make contact with the militia in the dark.

After a brief fire fight with blank cartridges, the York Rangers of Toronto were overrun and when captured, a cursing militia officer queried, "Who the hell are you?"

A dark menacing figure with a sub-machine gun answered, "Chief Petty Officer Pawlek, HMCS *Star*, Sir!"

The militia officer groaned and muttered, "Oh, for C.... sake!Captured by a ship in a pine forest. The Rangers will never live this down!"

In 1984 Cdr Woodliffe observed that he was pleased with the number of personnel who had passed their personal weapons qualifications. He was also most impressed with the high degree of enthusiasm and skill demonstrated by the officers, chiefs and petty officers, section leaders and each sailor involved in the field exercises at C.F.B. Borden.

Leading Wren Frank gave the woman's point of view of "Blue Nose" and "Diversity" in 1984.

"After setting up our tents in the fog, we spent half the night in foxholes anticipating an attack. The next morning we practiced crawls, rolls and monkey walks. Then we exercised "leap frog" movements down a lane and sweeps through the forest. After lunch we participated in an orienteering exercise and then more attacks after supper.

It fascinates me how everyone is always so invincible in these exercises. By late evening, everyone was running out of ammunition. It was quite amusing listening to everyone yelling "Bang! Bang!" as they attempted to fire their empty rifles. By the way girls, a word of warning for other survival weekends - bring your own toilet paper!"

Sea Training

During this decade the quality of sea training improved dramatically due to the efforts of Cdr Woodliffe, Cdr Cook, Cdr McGuire, LCdr Zeuner, LCdr Jackson and Lt(N) Robertson. *Star* went to sea at every available opportunity, weekends, Christmas holiday, Study Break in February and Winter Break in March. Consequently, unlike most naval reserve divisions, *Star* repeatedly passed their Sea Readiness Inspections. Cdr McGuire, who was not a *Star* officer but on-call whenever a Command Qualified C.O. was needed for a Gate Vessel, reported to C.O. *Star*, Cdr Williamson that *Star* was consistently one of the best crews he had to train with and welcomed the opportunity to assist *Star* whenever needed.

The Commanding Officers during this period dedicated a lot of their time and budget to producing the best trained junior officers in the naval reserve. To do this, the officer cadets were sent on Christmas cruises in YAGs on the West Coast. As a result *Star* cadets consistently stood at the top of their class, were well prepared for their bridge watch keeping boards and in 1986 Cadet Munn was awarded the prize for the top cadet in Canada. In 1988 Lt(N) Prendergast was the first female reservist to be awarded a BWK in Canada.

Lt(N) Robertson made the following report for a Gate Vessel Weekend in February 1985.

"The weekend started out calm enough. When I arrived in Halifax as part of the advanced party checking in at NRCC (Naval Reserve Control Centre), P2 Collins said, 'Your arrangements are all confirmed, it's York that is having problems'. What a wonderful greeting! However, I should have known it was too good to be true. When I went to meet the rest of the crew Friday night, arriving by Hercules from Hamilton, LCdr Murakami announced that 'the C.O. didn't make it to the plane on time!' This was going to be just another typical Gate Vessel Weekend in Halifax.

*Saturday dawned cold and wet, but remember in Halifax every day dawns cold and wet. *Star* 'turned-to' so that we could pass our sea checks and be away to sea. The*

next problem arose when York's crew on HMCS Porte St Louis had a problem changing over from shore power to ship power and their gyro tumbled.

While waiting for the gyro to come back up, an historic moment in naval history was accomplished. It was the very first stern-to-stern Jackstay ever to be successfully completed in the navy. The fact that both ships were tied up alongside at the time doesn't detract from the fact that no one else had ever done it.

In the afternoon, we gave up on York and set sail for Bedford Basin. When we got there, LS Lewis and Kraemer learned a new definition for cold as they cruised around the basin in a Zodiac. We were also witness to an incredible feat of female strength as AW Lyla Wilkins and LCdr Donna Murakami held a hawser with their bare hands while the ship and one hundred and eighty feet of cable tried to tear it from their grip.

The next day everybody set sail for Chebucto Head. We got to see more of the ocean. We got to see just how strong everyone's stomach was. There was a sudden interest in engineering as groups huddled around the stern, leaning over to watch the propeller go around.

The Deck Department learned how to rig a derrick on the upper deck while the upper deck was trying to throw them into the sea. York decided not to try out the derrick routine.

The rest of the weekend went as they all do, with the hurry to get the ship clean, the rush onto the bus to Shearwater and then the wait for the plane. The last leg of the flight from Toronto to Hamilton is about as short as a flight can be and have the plane take off. Having the bus come out to the plane at Mount Hope was an added treat after a long weekend for the tired and cold people from Star."

It seemed that every Gate Vessel Weekend training plan was interrupted by technical difficulties with the gyro, radar, generators, fuel system, sanitary system or fresh water system. However, one has to realize that the Gate Vessels are nearly forty years old.

As an example of the Christmas Week YAG Cruise, a Junior Officer made this report in January 1989.

"The primary training goal for the Christmas YAG Training Week Dec. 17 to Jan. 8 in Victoria was JOUT (Junior Officers Under Training) Navigation and OOW (Officer of the Watch) Training. Everyday, all of the JOUTs were required to plan two passages, various anchorages and two hours of OOW manoeuvres. Each JOUT was debriefed about their performance and were given constructive criticism in order to improve their skills.

The secondary goal for the week involved trades training for the junior ranks. The signalmen participated in OOW manoeuvres, the engineers in emergency drills, the bos'ns as helmsman and the cooks practiced their skills on the rest of the crew."

Radar Plotters

Another example of both the ingenuity and the high degree of training achieved at *Star* can be taken from a report in 1982. Lt(N) Zeuner in conjunction with CPO2 Wolf came up with an interesting and practical idea to build a Plotting Table to use in training Radar Plotters. It was an accurate simulator of a plotting table in the Operations Room of a ship. The table and computer were designed and constructed by Lt(N) Zeuner in his basement. He was completing his Masters of Engineering degree at McMaster University at the time.

A graticule was projected and driven around the screen as per ship's course and speed controlled by the computer. Nine simulated targets could be tracked at one time giving range and bearing. The communication system and state boards used in conjunction with the computer and projection system of the plotting table were constructed by CPO2 Wolf who was a computer system analyst for Stelco.

The system completely amazed several senior officers from Ottawa and Halifax who came to study it.

Blind Pilotage

The next year, the X.O. LCdr R. Williamson was the O.I.C. of a Blind Pilotage Exercise that took our Junior Officers Under Training (JOUTs) and Radar Plotters to Halifax. A great deal of valuable training time was lost due to frequent break downs of the equipment, but the concept was a good one. In the following year, the JOUTs went to the Coast Guard Blind Pilotage trainer in Cornwall where superior training was provided. As a result, this has become an annual winter training exercise for JOUTs.

Diver Training

In 1984 as a result of poor planning, *Star's* Diving Program had been allowed to lapse and an unfortunate decision was made to send all of *Star's* diving stores back to Halifax. In light of the new Maritime Coastal Defense Organization which was forming up, it would have been better to retain the gear and try to restart the diving program.

When Cdr Williamson took over as C.O., he initiated a plan to allow *Star* personnel to train with *York's* divers. With the help of young enthusiasts such as LS Hillhouse and LS Bennett, *Star's* diving program was reactivated and the ship was able to complete its requirements for diver clearance in the MCDO plan.

Thus in March 1989, *Star's* divers were able to participate in "DIVEX BERMUDA". Amidst suntanning and mo-ped rides to view some of the Bermuda sights on the beach, our divers managed to make time for some practical training in a picturebook setting. The week provided a refreshing change from the cold water of Lake Ontario.

By September 1989, *Star's* Diving team had grown to 1 Diving Officer, 1 Diving Supervisor, 2 Clearance Divers, and 3 Ship's Divers. Our divers supported the CNE Air Show as Rescue Divers and it has become an annual task.

Women At Sea

When women were allowed to train as Diesel Mechanics and Cooks at the beginning of this decade, it was only a matter of time before they would go to sea. Initially it was only for day cruises, but by 1984 women were being accommodated on board Reserve training ships. The space known as the "dog house" under the bridge on the well deck of the Gate Vessel was converted to a six-bed space for females.

In 1984, the Harbour Training Ship *St. Croix* permanently moored at Jetty 5 in Halifax became the Destroyer with a difference. Thirty-six Shipping Control Operators, Finance Clerks, Administrative Clerks, Cooks and Diesel mechanics took up residence for the summer. Women had previously worked on board but this was the first time that Wrens had been accommodated on board.

In 1987 COND announced a great break-through for women. For the first time, they would have equal opportunities with men in all naval reserve trades. It was then that young women such as SLt Hrycenko and Crossgrove appeared on the bridge to train as watch keepers.

Coastal Defence and Shipping Control

In 1980, a new trade, the Naval Control of Shipping Operator, unique to the naval reserve was introduced to give support to the Naval Control of Shipping Organization which was becoming top heavy with officers.

The 1987 White Paper on Defence made it clear that Reserves were to play a significant role in the defence of Canada's coastline and the safe and timely arrival of merchant ships. Thus a new emphasis was placed on training with this specific role in mind. Computers were provided to all NCS departments in Reserve ships and Exercise Summer Express in 1987 used computers for the first time and attempted to integrate the MCDO into the exercise.

In 1988 *Star* exercised their MCDO and NCS personnel in conjunction with the annual October Gate Vessel Weekend. MARS and NCS officers assisted by NCI Ops plotted the movements of *Porte St. Louis* and other vessels in Hamilton Harbour, kept track of all local traffic and practiced ship to shore communications. A NCS team participated in a boarding exercise of a German freighter alongside in the harbour. Later in the year *Star* put their October experience to good use by manning a Reporting Office in Sydney, Nova Scotia during Wintex '89, and again in Operation Trade Dagger '90.

In addition to this, a new emphasis was put on fire fighting and damage control for crews of the Harbour Surveillance and Coastal Surveillance Vessels. The school in Halifax provides a very life-like simulation as reported by Lt(N) D. Martin.

"For once the 'ship' wasn't rolling as sailors stood about the simulated ship's compartment, nervously anticipating the start of the exercise. Then it happened. A collision! Pipes burst and hatches buckled. Then in came the water. It poured into the compartment from holes and seams. The roar of the water matched the yelling of the damage control party."

Down the hatch came a variety of tools and equipment, all vital if the flood was to be stemmed. Sweating sailors cut measured lengths of four by fours into braces and supports. Two men struggled to patch a leaking pipe, the cold water drenching them as they worked. With six inches of water already covering the deck, shoring timbers were wedged into place and cloth wrapped wooden plugs were hammered into holes. Just as everything began to appear to be under control another door would begin to leak or a seam open up.

Soon the freezing water was 12 inches deep and flowing over the tops of the sailor's boots. The danger now was the sheer weight of water affecting the ship's stability. A portable pump was lowered and the tide began to turn. Just as victory seemed within their grasp, the angry face of a petty officer instructor poked through a scuttle and shouted, 'That's not how you bloody well do it!....Don't you people pay attention?'

The next day the crew was down on the fire field where the cold November winds off the Atlantic made hose handling an icy challenge. The sailors were taught how to fight different types of fires, how to enter a blazing compartment wearing chemox breathing apparatus, and how to beat down an out-of-control fire.

*The weekend at the Damage Control School was a first for the naval reserve. Never before, during the winter period had regular force instructors been called in to train Reservists. It was all part of the new Operational Directive to prepare Reserves to man the new Mine Countermeasure vessels. The training was a success. *Star* passed their Sea Readiness Inspection again two months later."*

The success of *Star's* training program can be seen by the number of her ship's company who attained "top of the class" standing in their summer training taken with Naval Reservists from all across Canada.

CPO1 H. Wolf	First in CPO1 Qualifying Course	1985
NCdt J. Munn	First in Rad Sea TQ3	1985
LW S. Dean	First in Cook TQ3	1985
PO1 P. Martin	First in Senior Leadership	1985
LS M. Gould	First in Bos'n TQ3	1985
LW C. Williamson	First in Admin Clerk TQ3	1985
LS H. Frank	First in Junior Leadership	1986
AB C. Mathieson	First in Bos'n TQ3	1986
AB J. Midgley	First in Sh. Con Ops TQ3	1986
NCdt Judy Hrycenko	First in Basic Officers Course	1986
NCdt J. Munn	Best first year Male Cadet in Canada	1986
LS Davy	Second in Junior Leadership	1986
MS E. Devlas	Second in Senior Leadership	1986
MS R. Fuller	Third in Senior Leadership	1986
NCdt S. Teed	Outstanding Report for NCS Exercise	1986
AB Sutton	Letter of Recommendation for her work on <i>Rapid</i>	1986
LS M. Gould	Outstanding Report of OJT <i>Porte St.Louis</i>	1986
LS J. Easterbrook	First in Fin Clk QL3A	1987
LS Onufer	First in D Mech QL3A	1987
NCdt P. Fox	First in GMT III	1987
LS C. Mathieson	First in Bos'n QL4A	1987
LS J. Midgley	First in SH CON OP QL4A	1987
CPO2 D. McInnis	First in C & PO's Refresher Course	1987

LS M. Gooderham	Bos'n - Outstanding Training Report	1987
PO2 P. Martin	D Mech - Outstanding Training Report	1987
CPO2 L. Pawlek	Instr Cks-Outstanding Training Report	1987
LCdr D. Mark	Certificate of Merit	1987
LS A. Wolff	First in SH CON OP QL4A	1988
MS S. Williamson	First in JLC	1988
LS S. Thomson	First in D Mech QL3A	1988
Lt(N) D. Prendergast	First Female Reservist granted BWK in Canada	1988
LS S. Larabie	First in JLC	1989
LS R. Zietsma	First in JLC	1989
AB G. Hennessey	First in Nav Sig QL1	1989

When Commander Williamson assumed Command in 1985 he immediately established that the goal of *Star* was to become the most improved Naval Division in Canada. He streamlined the ship's organization, improved the working and supervisory environment, and encouraged team work. By rebuilding the training department and its programs, the best possible training was provided to prepare the crew for summer courses. The effectiveness of this plan can be seen in the success of *Star* personnel in the list above. It was personal commitment such as this from each and every member of the ship that resulted in winning the Mainguy Trophy in 1987.

III. RECRUITING

Recruiting in the 80's was helped by the excellent government assisted youth employment program introduced in the 70's, and the conservative social trend which returned the fashion of short hair styling.

Combining the available training facilities and instructors in the Reserves with government funds for youth summer employment produced the S.Y.E.P. Summer Youth Employment Program. Vice-Admiral J. A. Fulton, CMM, CD, Commander Maritime Command made the following report in 1981 to the annual meeting of the Conference of Defence Associations in Ottawa.

"I would like to give you an update on the activities of Canada's naval reserves. Aspiring young seamen continue to join the summer student training programme. The 1980 programme graduated 1,600 Reserve Ordinary Seamen and was our biggest and best summer programme to date. As usual, most of these young Canadians commenced their training with some considerable trepidation about discipline and getting their hair cut short. However, once over this initial hurdle, they developed a terrific esprit de corps and enthusiasm for the training. This result was universal right across the country, and over 50% joined the Naval Reserve or the Regular Force on completion of their summer training.

Parents and friends turned out in great numbers for the graduation parades and spoke very highly of what the programme had achieved, particularly mentioning the sense of pride and responsibility developed in such a short time in sons and daughters. I am sure that the impact of this programme influences many more Canadians than just parents, and reflects well on the Canadian Forces and particularly the naval reserve."

Recruiting for the S.Y.E.P. relied primarily on word of mouth for advertising. It became so successful that it was difficult to process the flood of applicants. As many as 120 students applied for 50 billets. As a result, Cdr Williamson eagerly accepted an offer from the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre on Main Street to get involved with the processing. With their resources and full time staff, it made a great deal of sense that they relieve the Reserves of much of the processing. This became so successful that the CFRC expanded this service to the militia and the process became known as Exercise Twinned Tigers. It is now the standard recruiting practice for this region.

The popularity of the S.Y.E.P. was due primarily to the wide variety of activities and skills that were taught as well as the high quality of the instructional staff. Training consisted of parade drill, military dress and deportment, military law and history, naval customs and traditions, basic seamanship, fire fighting, first aid, sailing and sports. Visiting ships provided interesting tours and trips. Weekend camps at Winona or Niagara-on-the-lake ranges provided an opportunity to practise marksmanship, field craft, and night orienteering. The program also included public service activities with underprivileged children and blood donor clinics. Sports regattas at *York* or *Cataraqui* heightened the competitive spirit. The graduation parade, usually with the Lieutenant Governor as the reviewing officer was a great source of pride for all who witnessed the amazing transformation of the students in seven weeks. Much of this was to the credit of instructors such as PO Swing, PO R. Seager, MS D. Noonan, MS M. Spencer, MS Kraemer, MS S. Williamson and LS C. Mathieson.

In 1989 the program changed to the Primary Reserve Summer Training Program (PRSTP) when funding for summer employment was withdrawn. The PRSTP recruited personnel directly into the naval reserve. To publicize this, Cdr Mark held the swearing-in ceremony on board HMCS *Cormorant*, a fleet diving ship visiting *Star* as part of a Great Lakes Tour.

IV. SPECIAL EVENTS

The many and varied special events of this period were all designed to focus attention on the navy and give it the kind of public exposure that would rectify the loss of identity caused by unification of the Canadian Forces. Anniversary celebrations, ship visits, and social events are among the activities best designed to appeal to public interest and get the attention of the news media.

ANNIVERSARIES

At noon on Saturday, April 26, 1980, Mayor Jack MacDonald read a proclamation on the steps of City Hall, declaring the week of April 28 to May 4 as Navy Week in Hamilton. Taking part in the ceremonies celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Navy were representatives of HMCS *Star*, local naval veterans and sea cadet corps. Music was provided by the band of HMCS *Star* on the front court of City Hall. A full band concert was presented at 7:30 p.m., May 1 at Gore Park.

The festivities were brought to a close on Sunday May 4 with the annual Battle of Atlantic Parade which marched off from the railway station at James and Murray streets at 10 a.m.

There was a memorial service at Christ Church Cathedral, a salute at the Court House and wreath laying at the Cenotaph.

Media coverage was very good for Navy Week and left us with one memorable photograph, that had such human appeal that it filled half a page of the Spectator. It showed two young boys standing beside Cdr Bowman as he shouted parade orders in front of Christ Church Cathedral. The youngsters, eyes riveted on the six foot five inch giant of an officer in front of them, were so mesmerized by his awesome performance, that the photograph caught them, mouths ajar, in an involuntary mimic of barking a parade command.

One hundred and seventy five Naval Reservists took part in the 70th Anniversary celebrations of the Canadian Navy in Halifax during the summer of 1980. Some reservists swung cutlasses, some stood guard, others played musical instruments while others created an uproar at the Halifax Metro Centre by competing in the Naval Gun Run as part of the Nova Scotia Tattoo. Others were not performers at all, but carried out many important off-stage duties. The musicians from HMCS *Star* who made up some of the 54 members of the Naval Reserve Band will remember their scene in the Tattoo. It was entitled "Music of the Forties". Their Second World War medley was met by waves of applause as band members formed up as a giant anchor while playing, "You'll Get Used To It". The Gun Run competition was composed of a Reserve and Regular Force team. The history of the routine dates back several centuries when field guns were carried aboard ships in the event that they were required ashore to support land operations. The difficulties that the sailors encountered in getting this ponderous weapon ashore and putting it into action are accurately reflected in the traditional Gun Run competition. In the Halifax competition, the Reserves won three of the four Gun Run heats.

It was at anniversary celebrations such as this that the navy blue square rig uniforms were resurrected. Each summer the Composite Reserve Band was issued with the old blue uniforms for the tattoo. As a result, LCdr R. Williamson proposed that the *Star* band be kitted with a blue ceremonial costume for traditional parades such as Remembrance Day and Battle of Atlantic. CPO Wolf was given the task of putting the band in blue before the 75th Anniversary in 1985. This was not an easy task for a couple of reasons. There was, of course, a natural scarcity of uniforms that had been declared redundant over a decade earlier. The greatest difficulties were: fitting females into the rather tight fitting sailor's square rig, learning how to wear this unique costume with lanyards and strange collars and finding cap sizes to fit. There was a good supply of caps from sea cadets, but mostly all too small. But with his usual persistence, CPO Wolf succeeded and we all thrilled to the great applause when the band led their first parade in navy blue.

Blue uniforms were showing up in growing numbers at New Years' Levees which became an unofficial Navy Blue Reunion. In 1983, the Hamilton Spectator reported that 35 servicemen and women attended the reunion dressed in their outdated navy blue uniforms. Mel Doll, one of the organizers of the reunion admitted that the old uniform is really only a costume symbolizing an era when there was pride and tradition in the armed forces. That the uniforms are a part of the past was underscored by Lieutenant Nursing Sister "Teddy" Harvey who had to retrieve her navy blues from the Military Museum at Dundurn Castle in order to participate in the levee dress up.

For the 75th Anniversary of the Navy, Vice-Admiral J. C. Wood, Commander of Maritime Command issued this statement. *"Our Anniversary celebration in 1985 must serve to display to Canadians that the naval service is alive and well and heading with confidence into the final quarter of our first century of existence. My challenge to every member of the naval service is to get involved. Show your Pride and Commitment. Enhance your professionalism and let your sense of teamwork and self respect grow at your unit level."*

A distinctive logo was created for the anniversary year. The stylized circle of red maple leaves surmounted by a crown illustrated a distinctive Canadian identity under the emblem of the Queen of Canada. In the centre the number 75 was superimposed on a blue anchor, traditional symbol of the Navy's operations.

The following activities were presented by HMCS *Star* as part of our Pride and Commitment for the 75th Anniversary.

January 12, 1985 - JUNIOR OFFICERS MESS DINNER

HMCS *Star* hosted one hundred Junior Officers from Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba in a giant mess dinner celebrating the 75th Anniversary. The dinner was organized by Lt(N) Zeuner and SLt Tolton. This tradition was started by Lt(N) Robertson in 1982 and has been a great success ever since except for the year of the infamous caesar salad when junior officers had more than hangovers to contend with.

February 17, 1985 - HAMILTON HERITAGE DISPLAY

March 22, 1985 - HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY CONCERT

Both these events included a public concert of march music, an audio-visual program representing the activities of the naval reserve and static displays provided by the local recruiting office.

March 26, 1985 - HISTORY OF *Star*

A display of uniforms, memorabilia, models, and photos representing the history of *Star* and the RCN was prepared by PO2 Burke in the Boardroom for Annual Inspection.

April 19, 1985 - COSTUME BALL

The Welfare Committee under the direction of LCdr Mark, sponsored a 75th Anniversary Costume Ball featuring music and costumes from 1910 to 1985. The *Star* Stage Band provided entertainment at intermission for over two hundred guests.

April 27, 1985 - UNTD REUNION

Two hundred former UNTD Cadets and serving officers attended a reunion and 75th Anniversary Mess Dinner on the drill deck in conjunction with the Battle of Atlantic celebrations. A Naval Tattoo preceded dinner and the *Star* Stage Band performed during dinner. Home movies and slides of UNTD training were presented after dinner. The reunion was under the direction of the Executive Officer Cdr Williamson, assisted by Cdr Lee and Mrs. Gail Bell.

May 4, 1985 - NAVY 75 TATTOO

A Naval Tattoo entitled Navy 75 was presented to the public on the waterfront of *Star*. A program of marching bands, drill teams, ship manoeuvres, boarding and landing exercises was unlike anything ever attempted before and displayed all the talents of the Naval Reserve and Sea Cadets. The operation was under the direction of Lt Woodrow. The Executive Officer, Cdr Williamson prepared the script and was the Master of Ceremonies.

May 5, 1985 - BATTLE OF ATLANTIC PARADE

HMCS *Star*, Naval Veterans and Sea Cadets participated in a giant church service and parade. Following the parade, members of HMCS *Star* were granted the freedom of the city at a special tree planting ceremony at City Hall. Mayor R. Morrow, Cdr Woodliffe, CO *Star*, George Heddon, President of the Veterans' Association, and Cdr V. Turansky, Area Sea Cadet OIC, handled the shovels while Padre Watson read the dedication. A plaque commemorating the Anniversary was placed on a rock at the base of the oak tree. Planning was done by LCdr Mark and Lt(N) Woodrow.

May 11, 1985 - GARRISON OFFICER'S BALL

At the intermission, the band of HMCS *Star* entertained the guests and introduced the new Naval March, "Ready Aye Ready".

October 26, 1985 - TRAFALGAR MESS DINNER

The theme of the guest speaker, Professor Fred Drake, was our Naval Heritage on Lake Ontario.

November 8, 1985 - CANADA POST CEREMONY

In conjunction with the issuing of a stamp commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the RCN, officials from Canada Post Corporation held a ceremony in the Chiefs and Petty Officers Mess. An enlargement of the stamp was unveiled by LCdr Mark, Mayor Morrow and a Canada Post Official. Stamps and other related philatelic items were made available.

November 10, 1985 - 75TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPH

On completion of the Remembrance Day Parade, the new Commanding Officer, Cdr Williamson, arranged for a photograph to be taken of the entire ship's company on the south patio beside the Hamilton Art Gallery. This photograph was formatted so as to match a ship's company photo taken in 1943.

November 16, 1985 - 39TH ANNUAL PRINCESS BALL

The theme for this year's ball was naturally the 75th Anniversary of the Navy. The drill deck was decorated with anniversary banners of blue and gold, prepared by the art students of Glendale Secondary School through the auspices of Vice Principal Cdr Williamson. During the intermission, HMCS *Star* and RCSCC *Lion* were invited by the sponsors, the Royal Hamilton Military Institute to present a modified Sunset Ceremony. The following report was made by Cdr Williamson.

"The ceremony, which consisted of three parts; the Tattoo, Beating Retreat and Evening Quarters, was performed by the band of HMCS Star under the direction of P1 Dharmaratnam while the drummers, guns crew and drill team of RCSCC Lion were under the command of LCdr De Wolfe. The order of events were described by Cdr Williamson who acted as master of ceremonies and related the historic origins of the ceremonial traditions dating back to the fortified towns of Europe in the 16th century.

As the flourish of the fanfare died away, the guard and band marched across the dance floor to the strains of 'Heart of Oak' and 'Ready, Aye, Ready'. The guns crew took up

their position to fire the evening gun at the entrance door, as drummers beat the tattoo around the edge of the dance floor until the bugler sounded the 'First Post'.

In the 'Retreat' ceremony, the drill team of RCSCC Lion performed a number of movements smartly, but the 'Feu de joie' salute was omitted because of the close quarters.

After the 'Evening Hymn', the Orchestrated Sunset brought the ceremony to a stirring close as the guard and band retired to the music of the familiar march, 'The Standard of St. George'.

The program ran smoothly despite the close confines of the dance floor. It was an excellent example of the team work and co-operation achieved between the Cadets and Reserves.

Many of the guests commented on how thrilling they found the ceremony to be. A few veterans, revelling in their memories, and proud of the efforts of the young performers, had tears in their eyes."

November 30, 1985 - HONOUR GUARD AT COPPS COLISEUM

This event was described as follows in the "Naval Reserve Link".

"The curtain rose on a new era of sports and entertainment for Hamilton and region on Saturday November 30, 1985, when federal, provincial and local dignitaries along with thousands of enthusiastic spectators, officially opened Copps Coliseum, one of the finest arena/trade centres in Canada.

The opening ceremonies placed a strong emphasis on the youth of the region because of the future prospects that the coliseum opens up for them. For that reason, young people of the region were invited to play a major role in the day's events.

Part of the pomp and pageantry for the opening was provided by members of the Naval Reserve of HMCS Star.

The Star band played a concert prior to the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor, Lincoln Alexander. The one hundred man Honour Guard was provided jointly by Star and the 23 Service Battalion. The Honour Guard, under the command of LCdr N. Bell, CD, was drawn up on a special red carpet that stretched from centre ice to the end of the ice surface, providing just enough room for the impressive one hundred man guard.

When the Lt Governor arrived, the band of Star played the Vice-Regal Salute and for the first time in many years, the citizens of Hamilton witnessed a naval officer present a one hundred man guard to the Lt Governor."

Unfortunately, for this event, the guard was all in "green" and the significance of the naval contribution was lost, even to the news media who gave credit to the militia. One more round for Hellyer, but it would be his last.

December 14, 1985 - 75TH ANNIVERSARY FOLLIES

As a finale to the anniversary celebrations, the Lord Nelson Society hosted a Wardroom Party that was one of a kind. A brave cadre of senior officers and their

wives impersonated great performers from 1910 to 1985 in a lip-sync musical variety. Scenes included; LCdr Bell as Julie Andrews, Mrs. Bell as Boy George, LCdr Hodge as George Formby, Mrs. Hodge as Carrol Channing, LCdr Taylor as Willie Nelson, Mrs. Taylor as Julio Iglesias, Cdr Williamson as Elvis Presley and Mrs. Williamson as Barbara Streisand. This performance had to be seen to be believed.

To round out the theme of pride and commitment for the 75th Anniversary, the CO was the dinner speaker for; the Brantford Naval Veterans, Burlington Naval Veterans, and the St. George's Society.

To commemorate the 80th Anniversary in 1990, Cdr Mark resurrected the concept of the Admiralty Ball of the Flagship years. The Admiral in attendance at the Sheraton Hotel was Rear Admiral H. T. Porter, the Chief of Personnel Services at NDHQ, in Ottawa. His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln Alexander was the guest of honour. *Star* officers, NCO's and their wives were entertained by the Band of HMCS *Star*, and a local jazz band. It was a most gala affair, reminiscent of the 1950's.

SOCIAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

With combined messes it might have been expected that the resources were there in membership to hold social activities that could have rivaled the flagship years. While there were many attempts, there just was not enough in common to maintain a tradition of social events.

For example, some efforts were made to operate combined mess dinners but it was difficult for the militia to accept the dinner traditions of the navy. Furthermore, militia officers, accustomed to more formal conduct, were uncomfortable with what Joe Chapman described as, *"a good deal of laughter and light-hearted sallies from the younger and bolder officers who at such functions, take daring liberties with protocol and their superiors."* One such attempt took place in the Spring of 1986 when a combined dinner was held under the title "Victory in Europe". The guest speaker was the Chief of Reserves, Admiral Fox-Decent. The dinner was well attended but did not become an annual affair.

In order to run "naval" mess functions, the Lord Nelson Society operated quite outside the mess constitution as a private entity. To escape Canadian Forces regulations, it was managed by non-mess members such as Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Bell. In this way navy personnel were able to celebrate such events as the Battle of Trafalgar, Battle of the Atlantic and Dine Your Sweethearts. With the changing attitudes in Ottawa and the return of distinctive elements in the armed forces in 1985, the navy no longer had to operate its social activities by nefarious means and the Lord Nelson Society could come out of the closet.

The social aspects of the navy were expanded to include retired and former naval officers through the efforts of LCdr Gill Hutton. In 1987, with the support of the commanding officer, he re-established an area NOAC affiliate of the Toronto Branch in *Star*. The concept was to appeal to the many potential members in the Hamilton area that want to participate but need a focus and are unwilling to make the long drive to Toronto for social activities. The NOAC augmented the Lord Nelson Society and soon expanded to include support for Maritime Defence Association (MDAC) and a re-activated UNTD association.

Some commanding officers recognized that to run a successful and happy Reserve unit, it was essential to give the sailors more than good training. Reserves must look upon their ship

as a social centre where they can make friends and have fun. Apart from all the year-end and welcome back parties, Christmas dinners and mess activities, there were a few social highlights that require special note.

In 1985, LCdr Woodrow recommended to the new Commanding Officer, a singing group known as Jeffrey and the Juniors. The CO made an out-of-town trip to watch this group perform and was convinced that they would be ideal for a Ship's Company Dance. He wanted someone who could draw 500 people to *Star's* drill deck. Jeffrey and the Juniors did just that with their renditions of songs and singing styles from the 50 and 60's. Their humour, high jinxes and audience participation proved so popular that they entertained at the Ship's Company Dance for three consecutive years. One of the highlights of the evening was waiting to see who in the audience would be chosen to participate as "Leader of the Pack" complete with helmet, scarf and leather jacket.

For three years in a row from 1986 - 1988, HMCS *Star* won a plaque for greatest unit participation at the annual Princess Ball sponsored by the Royal Hamilton Military Institute. In 1987, *Star* made a most unique contribution to this event. With absolute confidence in the ability and talent of the ship's band, the CO challenged them to prepare a musical program entitled "Tattoo in Review" to be presented as a navy feature at the intermission.

The program was to be a collection of musical and visual highlights of several tattoos in which members of the *Star* band had appeared. These included; the Centennial Tattoo of 1967, the Nova Scotia Tattoo, and the 75th Anniversary of the Navy Tattoo in 1985. This was a daunting exercise in musical arranging that could have been achieved in very few other Reserve Divisions. PO2 Shingles and CPO1 Wolf met the challenge and put together the necessary musical arrangements and slides for a War Years Medley (Bless em All, Hey Look Me Over, Its a Long Way, and White Cliffs of Dover), Navy Medley (Life on the Ocean Waves, All the Nice Girls, Up Spirits, Wavy Navy, Sailing, We are the Navy), and a Finale Medley (Sunset Hymn, A Musical Synthesis of Olde Lange Syne - Last Post, and Amazing Grace).

This program was so effective that it was again presented to guests at annual inspection in 1988. Its purpose was to give Hamiltonians a little bit of the flavour of a Naval Tattoo. In this it succeeded very well, and illustrated the impressive range of talent in our own band.

During this "Decade of Rebirth", team sports and regattas played an important part in building morale and esprit de corps.

In 1982, MS DeVlas brought forward a plan to introduce ball hockey on the drill deck. Base Toronto was unsure of the concept at first but since it was to be a co-curricular, non-contact sport they finally agreed, provided slap shots were illegal and headgear with eye protection was worn. The Executive Officer, LCdr R. Williamson became advisor for the activity and held regular meetings to organize finances, schedules, regulations and referees. The concept was extremely successful and brought members of the ship's company together as a team with a new focus of belonging. In fact it became so popular that other units wanted to form teams to enter a league. Both the Medical Company and the Service Battalion joined and for the first time since unification, a regular base activity brought units together as never before.

Unfortunately, its popularity was the cause of its demise. As more players were attracted, the supposedly non-contact game became rougher and rougher. Players became more difficult to control and it became more and more difficult to get referees. With increasing damage to the drill hall and personnel injuries the league was cancelled in 1985. With the termination of ball hockey, the inter-unit competition found an outlet in the annual army-navy grey cup game. Despite a lot of army hoopla the navy always won by a one-sided score.

At the beginning of the decade, *Star* would attend any regatta to which it was invited with the attitude that all they had to do was show up. Their lack of success soon demonstrated the need to take competitions more seriously. MS Steve James was assigned as physical training instructor. Planning and conditioning became important but the real secret to success was either to have a very large team or host the regatta yourself so you could pick an agenda that suited your strength. Their success in the *Star* Regatta of 1986 proved the wisdom of this theory. After that there was no looking back. In 1989, the following report was submitted after an invitational regatta at *York*.

*"Over thirty officers and non-commissioned members made the trip to the realm of our nearest naval adversaries. Our nefarious neighbours of the north shore proved to be more worthy opponents than we anticipated. The day began on a down note when we lost the whaler pull. (We got the whaler with the garbage pail tied to the keel). This early blow to the troupe from Steeltown certainly took its toll. The adverse effects were most evident during the subsequent soccer match, where we narrowly escaped the jaws of defeat with a nail-biting, down-to-the-wire victory of 12-0. This set the pattern for the rest of the day as *Star* snatched ribbon after ribbon from the home team in Badminton, Volleyball, Sports Tabloid and Tug-of-war.*

*The contest ended up a bit one-sided but the crew from *York* were gracious hosts and the spirit of sportsmanship and friendship was heartily embraced, particularly in the bar afterwards."*

It should be noted that soccer was first inserted in the regatta agenda in 1986 at *Star* because it just became too difficult to rely on weather conditions for winter sports such as hockey and skiing. For some reason Hamilton seems to have superior calibre of soccer players compared to other Naval Divisions.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITY

Because our naval personnel must go away to the coast to do their training in the summer, *Star* has been unable to participate fully in a lot of public relations activities from May to September. This particularly affects the band which is our greatest public show piece. During the summer when we have the heaviest demand for a marching band, our musicians are away at the School of Music or participating in the Composite Reserve Band in Halifax. Thus in 1984, *Star* was limited in their participation in the "Tall Ships" visit, other than providing berthing space.

On the weekend closest to August 8, each year there has been a growing opportunity and need for a naval presence at the Memorial Service held on the anniversary of the sinking of the US Ships, *Hamilton* and *Scourge*. In 1982, a wreath laying ceremony was held on Lake Ontario over the site of the sinkings near Port Dalhousie. Vessels from *Star*, *York* and the United States took part in the ceremony.

Since the completion of the Memorial Garden and Interpretative Centre at Confederation Park, there has been an even greater need for the support of the local naval associations such as *Star*, Sea Cadets and Naval Veterans. Because of the international nature of the ceremony, it is essential that the Canadian naval reserve help put on a good show for the U. S. Navy.

Unfortunately in the summer, the best that *Star* can offer has been the students of her Summer Youth Employment Program.

In 1987, Canada Post issued a new stamp series commemorating "Famous Maritime Ship Wrecks". Lt(N) Robertson was assigned to assist Alderman William McCulloch, Chairman of the Hamilton-Scourge Foundation and representatives of Canada Post in launching a stamp honouring the Hamilton-Scourge project. The ceremony took place at the Interpretative Centre at Confederation Park on August 7. It was preceded by a memorial service for the sailors who died when the armed merchant ships sank in Lake Ontario in 1813. Most of the students in the SYEP participated in the day's events and the delegation from the USN were entertained in the Wardroom after visiting the Mary Rose exhibit at the Hamilton Art Gallery.

The Hamilton Spectator reported on August 9, 1988 that:

"A military ceremony commemorating the sinking of the Hamilton and the Scourge, two armed merchant schooners from the War of 1812, was held yesterday in Confederation Park.

Officials from the Canadian and American navies, naval veterans, sea cadets and politicians were on hand for the solemn ceremony commemorating the loss of 53 American sailors.

A replica of the Hamilton's ship's boat, was blessed and taken for a maiden voyage on the lake front by sailors wearing period costumes.

Plans for the boat's reconstruction were made from slides taken of the original boat at the bottom of the lake and researched boat designs from the War of 1812 at the Greenwich Marine Museum in England."

The significance should not be lost in all this, that on August 8, 1913, HMS *Melville* (*Star*) was present on the lake opposite the American force when the *Hamilton* and *Scourge* went down. Each year since the opening of the Memorial Gardens at Confederation Park, representatives of HMCS *Star* have been present at the memorial services. It is hoped that *Star* as part of its public relations will continue to lend support to this annual event which is so closely connected to our region and our ship's naval heritage.

When the crew of HMCS *Star* is available, its musicians and sailors do an immeasurable service to both the Navy and this region. The following examples illustrate the scope of their contribution to our Naval Presence in Southern Ontario.

On March 14, 1987, the Star band played for a charity fund raising programme at Copps Coliseum.

*Representatives of the crew of HMS *Brave* visited Brantford, Ontario on May 3, 1987 for special ceremonies involving the blessing and presentation of a war bonnet to HMS *Brave* by the RCNA and Mohawk Indians. The band of HMCS *Star* provided the marching and ceremonial music for the occasion.*

Star again provided the ceremonial music, including the Russian National Anthem at City Hall on January 8, 1988 for the presentation of Murmansk Medals to local Naval Veterans. The concert provided at the reception after the ceremony was greatly appreciated by the veterans and their families.

The opening ceremonies of the Shaw Festival Season at Niagara-on-the-lake, May 25, 1988 was highlighted by the music of the band from HMCS Star. There were several hundred guests in attendance including many V.I.P.s with the Honourable Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications as the guest of honour.

Star London Detachment supported by the Star band and ten leading seamen, participated in the Warriors Day Parade at the Western Fair on Saturday, September 10, 1988. The band was awarded a plaque for the best band on parade, a remarkable achievement considering that they'd had only two practices together since they got back from summer training. The marching contingent received an award for the best Reserve Unit on parade.

In 1989, HMCS Star along with HMCS York were tasked with providing a 100 man guard for the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario when he officially opened the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. The Executive Officer LCdr Woodrow was the left guard officer. Petty Officer Fuller, with the help of Master Seamen Gould, Noonan and Kraemer ensured, as usual, that Star's contingent was above the standard. Not only did the guard look sharp, but the band provided the music for the march past and left no doubt that the naval reserve in this part of Canada is second to none.

Each September the Grape and Wine Festival Parade is held in St. Catharines. It attracts bands from all over including the United States. In 1989 and 1990, Star's band was selected as the best marching band in the festival - no mean feat by any standard.

When it comes to showing the flag, no one does it better than the Sea Cadet Corps of the Hamilton-Niagara region. *Star* has a history of providing the best sea cadet support in the province. With this support Cdr V. Turansky, Area Commander for the Navy League, brought together a dozen area corps for a tremendous co-operative effort in 1987 to produce a "Ceremony of the Flags".

The operation included the training of a massed band of 80 cadets, a 100 man guard, a 20 man colour party and two guns crews. In total, over 300 cadets trained in HMCS *Star* for performances in front of the Provincial Legislature and City Hall in Toronto. *Star* provided weapons, field guns, training and eating facilities as well as a few supervisory staff. The bulk of the training and administration was handled by the sea cadets and their officers, in particular, Lt(N) John Haywood of RCSCC *Valiant* in Port Colborne and Lt(N) Roy Morley of RCSCC *Lion*.

It was a most impressive training operation and an outstanding contribution to Naval Presence. For this reason the exercise had the full support and encouragement of the CO of *Star*. The program was so successful that it was repeated for two more years, until it became a victim of its own success. The Ceremony of the Flags attracted too much attention to the navy at the expense of the rest of the cadet movement and so transportation support was withdrawn by provincial cadet headquarters.

However, it was a great source of raising cadet morale. Two new sea cadet corps opened in the region during this time and more than anything it polarized the energies of the sea cadet organization in the Hamilton-Niagara Region.

Each year from 1982 to 1991, Maritime Command made their contribution to promoting a Naval Presence on the Great Lakes by sending a ship on a summer publicity tour. These

ships included HMCS *Ottawa* 1983, 1985, 1988 and 1990, HMCS *Saguenay* 1984 and 1987, HMCS *Nipigon* 1986 and 1988, HMCS *Cormorant* 1989, HMCS *Annapolis* 1982, HMCS *Okanagan* 1989, and HMCS *Terra Nova* 1991.

Star can benefit more from the publicity generated by a ship's visit than any other naval reserve division, because *Star* is the only naval division in Canada that can accommodate a large vessel alongside. There are, however, some disadvantages as observed in the Quarterly Reports and Returns of 1988. The Commanding Officer reported that "*Annual ship visits are extremely taxing on the summer staff, especially the Regular Support Staff. This affects Star more than any other Naval Division because the Welland Canal falls within our area of operations, including Port Colbourne, Port Weller and St. Catharines. Consequently there is a tremendous amount of public relations work required along with the logistics of arranging cruises and receptions for different interest groups.*"

In 1988, the Ottawa's Sea King helicopter participated in the Hamilton Air Show sponsored by the Canadian Warplane Heritage. This early publicity led to 10,000 people visiting the ship during its stay in Hamilton. This was reported to be the largest crowd of visitors of any port visit made that year.

The Hamilton Spectator reported how the visit of HMCS *Annapolis* in 1982 was combined with the HMCS *Athabaskan* Reunion. "*Among the events crowded into the weekend was a reception aboard the Annapolis, an old-fashioned smoker at HNVA, a dance at Star, cocktails and dinner at the Holiday Inn. The climax, however, was a parade up James Street, August 8, with the ship's companies from Annapolis and Star, sea cadets, HNVA, and the survivors of the Athabaskan.*"

In addition to the Canadian ships, there have been foreign ship visits as well. The USS *Oliver Hazard Perry*, a frigate, visited Port Colborne in 1987 where she was met by a small group of protesters, contesting the ship's presence in a nuclear free zone. The commanding Officer was not concerned. He said, "*We exist to defend the right of free people to express their opinions.*"

HMS *Juno* was the first British warship to ever visit Hamilton. *Juno's* Commanding Officer later wrote that Hamilton was the best port on the Great Lakes. They had the most visitors while in Hamilton and the crew enjoyed having access to the recreational facilities of *Star*. Their visit to Niagara Falls, canoe trips and hikes along the Niagara Escarpment were the highlights of their trip.

The most unique visitor to *Star* was HMCS *Okanagan*, the first Canadian submarine to sail the Great Lakes. Some have argued that it was the first submarine of any country to visit the Great Lakes, but Cdr Williamson recalls that in 1962 as officer of the day at Patriot, he had to ensure that a special radio watch was maintained because an American submarine was operating in Lake Ontario. The *Okanagan* conducted a four hour sail/dive on Lake Ontario with Constable George Roach at the helm. On Sunday, November 11, the crew and special guests marked Remembrance Day on the lake. Tom Sawyer of Hamilton and John Drake of Burlington, both submariners during the Second World War, helped drop commemorative wreaths overboard.

The most historic moment for Naval Presence in this decade came on February 7, 1985, when Defence Minister, Robert Coates, unveiled plans for the introduction of three distinctive environmental uniforms, D.E.U. The "green" CF uniform had been a subject of controversy ever since the inception of the unified Canadian Forces in 1968. Even Paul

Hellyer admitted that the "green" uniforms: *"weren't very classy and I wished that I had insisted on something more glamorous."*

The new DEU uniforms had to meet certain criteria. They had to be distinctively Canadian, distinctively naval, but retain certain vestiges of the Canadian Forces structure such as rank symbology. It was essential that the old concept of class distinction not be re-introduced because the government felt strongly that in a Canadian democracy, all ranks were to wear the same uniforms. Winter and summer uniforms were re-introduced, which in our climate, made consummate good sense.

On the weekend of November 28, 1987, DEU's were issued for *Star*. A shuttle bus service was arranged to transport personnel to CFB Toronto for kit issue. There were shortages of most essential kit items and it would take several months to fill the short falls, but everyone was pleased and proud to be, once more, wearing a naval uniform. Never again would a member of Canada's Armed Forces be humiliated by the question "what are you?" from a confused citizenry.

Next to the issue of DEU, the second most exciting event of this decade in public relations was an announcement in April 1988, by the minister of National Defence, the Honourable Perrin Beatty, that the naval presence would be expanded in Southern Ontario by opening a Reserve Division in London by 1990.

Star had maintained a London Detachment since 1977 and therefore greeted this announcement with great satisfaction. However, the road to success for London Detachment was not easy. In 1984, an impetuous administrative decision to close London Detachment was met by serious resistance from the London NOAC and RCNA. At the last moment, in response to political pressure, a stay of execution was ordered. A change of command at *Star* brought a change in philosophy and with the help of LCdr Senechal as O.I.C. London Detachment, every effort was made to re-build a healthy tender and re-establish a home in the *Prevost* building.

On April 25, 1988, Commander Williamson wrote the following letter to personnel of London Detachment.

"With the announcement of the re-opening of a naval reserve division in London, the Minister of National Defence has affirmed the government's commitment to the White Paper policy of expanding the naval reserve. For those of us who have been closely involved, it is a day which we will remember with a sense of great pride of accomplishment. Despite the periods of frustration and uncertainty over the last decade, our faith in maintaining a naval presence in London has now been vindicated. Well done, prepare to slip and proceed independently."



'That's my dad' Tues Apr 22/80

LS Ken Strange and other members of the London Detachment, 1980. (Spectator)

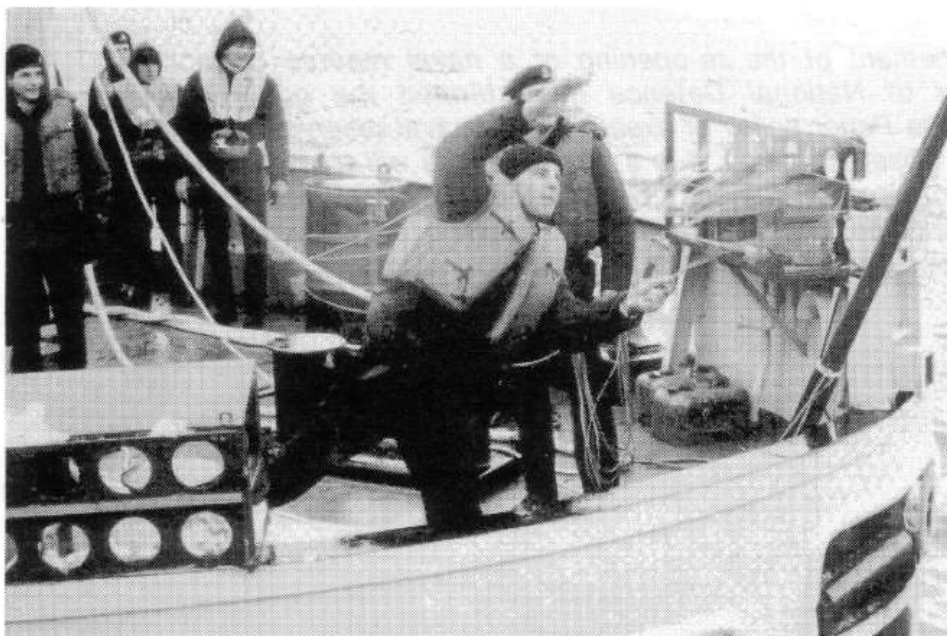


Switched roles

Youngest member of the ship's company traditionally switches roles with the Commanding Officer. M. Warren and Cdr Bowman, December 1980. (Spectator)



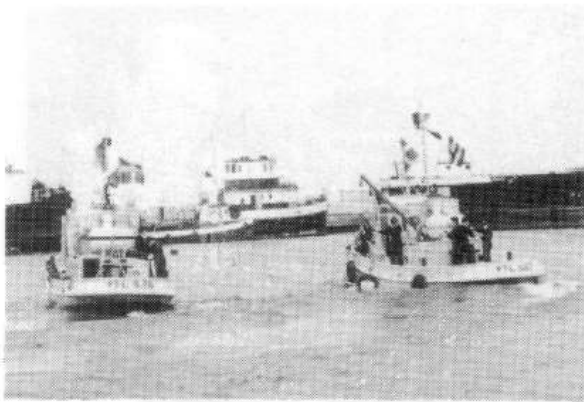
Feu de Joie for Adm Fulton at Annual Inspection 1982. (Spectator)



Gate Vessel Weekend, Halifax, January 1985. Star sends a heaving line for the commencement of the 'stern-to-stern' jackstay. (Murakami)



Navy Week 1980. Cdr Bowman and mesmerized spectators at Battle of Atlantic Church Parade. (Spectator)



R.A.S. exercise between tugs in front of Star, May 1985.
(U.I.O.)



Although issued in November 1987, D.E.U. uniforms were still mixed with green in May 1988.
(J. Williamson)



Wardroom characters - Bunji Taylor and Archie Hodge, 1987.
(A. Taylor)



British Frigate HMS Juno open to visitors, May 18, 1987.
(Spectator)



Navy Blue Reunion 1980.
Rear: Wilson, James, Harvey, Thomason, Seager, Macaulay, Dixon, Dunfield, B. McInnis, D. McInnis, Laird.
Front: Maycock, Smedley, Taylor, Doll, Hodge, Allan.
(Doll)

(Right)
Keeping Traditions Alive. Navy Blue Reunion, New Year's Day, 1983.
Lt Jennifer Bennett admires PO2 Ron Seager's Traditional Navy blue unifrom.
(Spectaor)





S.Y.E.P. 1983, Susan Eden at the tiller.
(Spectator)



Hamilton Fire Department instructs S.Y.E.P. students Samantha Adamson and Andrew Collins in fire fighting skills.
(Spectator)



Battle of Atlantic Parade, May 5, 1985. As part of the 75th Anniversary of the Navy, an oak tree was planted in front of city hall. Handling the ceremonial shovels are George Heddon, President of the Naval Veterans Association, Cdr Woodliffe, C.O. Star, Padre Watson, Cdr Turansky, Area Sea Cadet O.i.C. and Mayor Morrow.
(DCIEM)



Remembrance Day 1985, the band led the city parade in traditional navy blue uniform. The navy had recovered its identity. The spectators lining the streets cheered.
(U.I.O.)



Star band provided naval music at city hall in January 1988 when the Russian Ambassador Alexei Rodinov presented Murmansk medals to Hamilton naval veterans.
(Spectator)



1986 Sports Regatta Champions are the team from HMCS Star.
(U.I.O.)



(Above) Navy ball hockey champions circa 1984. Rules required that one female had to be in the game at all times.
(Williamson)



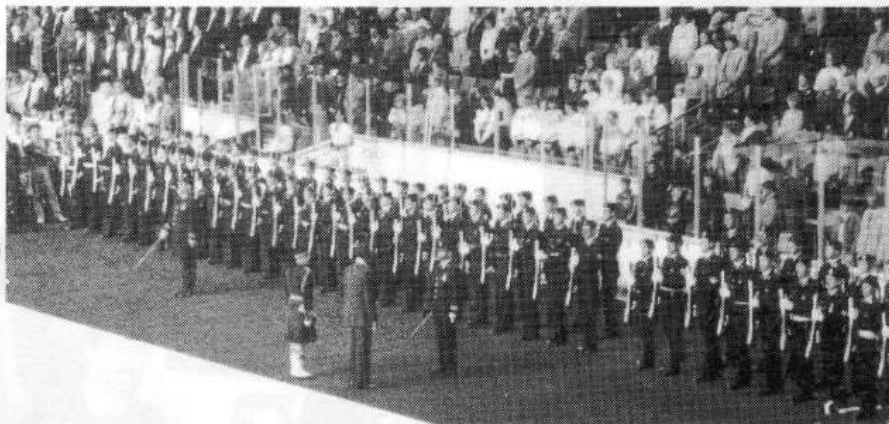
(Left) The Naval Jack became the Maritime Command flag in 1985 to be flown at all Naval Reserve Divisions. LCdr Bell, CPO1 Roossien, PO1 Swing and LCdr Mark attend the unveiling.
(U.I.O.)

(Right) In 1986-87, Star was blessed with an exceptional Regular Support Staff : PO2 Carroll, Lt Cooper, CPO2 Redden, Cpl Douglas, and MS Dickens.
(DCIEM)





(Left) In 1987, Star's 64 year old ceremonial field gun was completely restored. Shown here with the bos'n's gun's crew just prior to annual inspection. The Gun Captain is PO2 Fuller, second from left. (DCIEM)



(Right) The pagentry for the opening of Copp's Coliseum was provided by by HMCS Star. The Band played a concert and the one hundred man Honour Guard, under the command of LCdr Bell, was jointly provided by Star and 23 Service Battalion. November 30, 1987. (U.I.O.)



(Left) Cmdre G.L. Peer, SNRA, presents the Mainguy Trophy to HMCS Star, the Most Improved Naval Division in Canada, 1987. Cdr Williamson, CPO1 Roossien, Signalman J. Williamson, Cmdre Bennett, and Cdr Bethune look on. (DCIEM)

(Right) Cmdre P.W. Cairns chats with veteran Dave McAlpine, Cdr F. Lee, Cdr D. Bethune (N.O.A.C.), LCdr G. Hutton (N.O.A.C.), and Col J. Forsyth, Militia Advisor to Chief of Reserves. (DCIEM)



WOW! Man of the Year 1986 is a woman, PO1 G. Swing. (DCIEM)



(Right)
Helping maintain tradi-
tions, LCol Peck and his
wife present Royal Por-
traits and a ceremonial
barrel to Star, 1984 -85.
(Peck)



(Below)
In 1986, CPO1 Roossien
was awarded a trophy for
his outstanding contribu-
tion to the welfare of the
crew.
(DCIEM)



Top of the Class. These members of Star were the best in Canada's naval reserve training and operations in 1987.



PO2 Fuller is famous for his
drill with guard and gun's crew
at Star during this decade.
(U.I.O.)



Lt Oland and his tent group enjoy ration packs during Execise Autumn Breeze, 1985.
(U.I.O.)



LS Noonan and LS Wilkinson discuss "housekeeping" in the camp area at Winter Survival, February 1986.
(Williamson)



(Above)
Captain(N) Steele, COND, presides at the assumption of command by Cdr Williamson, September 1985.
(DCIEM)



(Left)
Cdr Williamson passes sword of command to Cdr Mark as Capt(N) Foldersi, COND, looks on. September 1988.
(DCIEM)

(Below)
The tradition of rowing the retiring commanding officer ashore by ship's senior officers is carried out, September 1988.
(DCIEM)



HMCS Ottawa visits Star August 24, 1983.
(Spectator)



CHANGES OF COMMAND

Among the many special events during this decade were the occasions where the command of HMCS *Star* was passed to a successor. Appointments were generally for three years and the secret to running a successful ship has proven to be the maintenance of continuity in plans, programs and good leadership.

Cdr Martin Pandzich turned over the "ship" to Cdr Robert Bowman, his former executive officer on September 18, 1979. Cdr Bowman was attached to *Star* in 1962 and served with the unit in various capacities from that time until he reached C.R.A. in 1990. He initially entered the Reserve through the U.N.T.D. in 1954.

Because of his civilian career as a teacher and Principal with the Wentworth County Board of education, Cdr Bowman had a special interest in training and public information, as well as a vested interest in the ship's recruits and public image. With his hobby of gun collecting, it was only natural that Cdr Bowman served as Weapons Officer and was range qualified, operating many exercises at Winona.

He was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Support Trades Training Centre and fulfilled his Command duties of *Star* and Support Trades Training simultaneously. He was instrumental in establishing the London Detachment of *Star* and was an active participant in local Sea Cadet and Navy League activities.

Cdr Bowman has an affable personality and enjoys telling humorous stories. He resides in Waterdown with his wife, the former Susan Jane Campbell. Of his three children, two daughters saw short service with the naval reserve, Andrea reaching a commissioned rank.

On Tuesday, November 30, 1982, Cdr Bowman passed command of *Star* to Cdr D. Woodliffe. No biography was prepared when Cdr Woodliffe took command, but it is believed that he joined the U.N.T.D. in Prevost and later transferred to *Star* when he took a period of continuous duty with the navy and became command qualified. He was very active as commanding officer of gate vessels in the 1960's at G.L.T.C. and responsible for writing their sea training syllabus.

He was recalled from the retired list to serve as executive officer in 1980 and initially introduced good man-management programs. He was dedicated to high standards of seamanship and leadership training. Cdr Woodliffe has a married daughter Elizabeth, who is still serving as an officer in the naval reserve.

Cdr R. J. Williamson assumed command of *Star* on October 15, 1985 with Captain J. K. Steele, Commander, Naval Reserve Divisions presiding. Cdr Williamson was born and educated in Hamilton and consequently has a vested interest in the naval presence in this community. He joined the naval reserve in 1957 as a member of the University Naval training Division at McMaster. He was commissioned in the R.C.N.R. upon graduating with an Honours BA degree in Geography.

Cdr Williamson served with the Great Lakes Training Centre and with training ships on the Great Lakes, the Atlantic and on the Pacific. A unique experience involved serving on HMCS *Jonquiere* in 1960 when the ship was sent to Hollywood, California to participate in the making of the film, "The Great Imposter", starring Tony Curtis. Qualified as a Naval Control of Shipping Officer in 1967, Cdr Williamson also completed the staff programs for senior officers at the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto. He was promoted to his present rank on January 1, 1985 and is a member of the Canadian Forces Speakers' Bureau.

Cdr Williamson was and continues to be very active in his support of the NOAC, the Naval Veterans, Sea Cadets and Navy League Organizations of Southern Ontario. He has accepted many invitations to speak publicly on behalf of the navy and HMCS *Star*. As a member of the local historical society, Cdr Williamson worked hard to re-establish and preserve naval traditions. He was instrumental in the preparation and writing of the 50th Anniversary History of *Star*.

As Commanding Officer, Cdr Williamson put up a vigorous fight to ensure that *Star* received its fair share of promotions in a national system that had become very lopsided. He reinstated the London Detachment after it had been closed and laid down plans that would enable it to become an independent naval division once more. He did all the staff work necessary to qualify the Junior Ranks Mess for funds for expansion and badgered Base Toronto until they rebuilt the walls of the drill deck and made several other necessary improvements to the ship.

During Cdr Williamson's tenure, a concerted team effort between the Regular Support Staff, Officers and NCOs, resulted in the award of the Mainguy Trophy in 1987 as the Most Improved Naval Division in Canada.

Cdr Williamson started his civilian career with the Hamilton Board of Education in 1962 and has been a Secondary School Administrator since 1971. He is married to the former Eileen Spragg, a retired member of the 2424 Air Reserve Squadron and past president of the Ladies' Auxiliary of HMCS *Star*. Of their three children, MS Paul Williamson and LS Jon Williamson are serving members of *Star*, and a daughter-in-law MS Suzanne Williamson is a member of the Supplementary Ready Reserve.

It was a beautiful sunny day and the parade square was overflowing with spectators and friends as Cdr R. J. Williamson passed the traditional sword of command to Cdr D. Y. S. Mark on Sunday, September 11, 1988.

Cdr Mark was born in China and became a Canadian citizen in 1956. His military career started in the Princess of Wales Own Regiment in 1957. He saw the light and joined the U.N.T.D. at *Cataraque* in 1959. Upon graduating from Queen's University in 1962, Cdr Mark was employed as research assistant at the Pacific Naval Laboratory and Deck Officer of HMCS *St. Therese* and later *Sussexvale*. He completed his Naval Control of Shipping Course in 1965.

Since his enrollment in *Star*, he has been Training, Operations, Senior Divisional Officer and Executive Officer. His summer training has resulted in qualifications for Harbour Watchkeeping Certificate in an Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment Ship, and Staff Training Reserve Level II at the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College. He has also held the position of Vice-Commandant of the Naval Reserve Training Centre at *Esquimalt*, Special Project Officer for the Captain Cook Bi-Centennial Celebration in 1978 and Course Training Development Officer in the Engineering and Combat Divisions at Canadian Forces Fleet School.

Cdr Mark is a thorough and meticulous officer who has worked very hard to maintain and improve the image of *Star*. He is at his best when hosting visiting ships and VIPs. A mathematics teacher and published text book author, he, his wife Rhoda and three children live in Dundas. His son Gawah served briefly in the naval reserve. After directing all the planning for the 50th Anniversary of *Star*, Cdr Mark, CD, officially turned over command to Cdr A. Woodrow on July 1, 1991.

V. RESTORATION OF TRADITIONS

During this Decade of Recovery there were many events and activities that were designed to restore traditional naval values.

Chief amongst these were the return to blue uniforms, the increased use of the *Star* waterfront for visiting naval ships, and ceremonial parades that placed emphasis on naval customs. Much of this centered around the celebration of the 75th Anniversary. There were, however, other projects that should be noted.

With the change of command in 1982, the newly appointed Executive Officer moved into his cabin and discovered a large ship's bell, about two feet in diameter, sitting on a mop-bucket trolley in his closet. Believing this to be a strange place for a valuable artifact, the XO took steps to do something about it. Thus unfolded the saga of the *Ramillies* Bell.

In 1980, the bell of HMS *Ramillies*, a Royal Sovereign Class British Dreadnought armed with 8 15-inch guns, was presented to HMCS *Star* by Cdr J. P. Connors, Sea Cadet Liaison Officer for the Toronto area. He felt that *Star* with its active support of the sea cadet organization, and Cdr Bowman's interest in naval fittings, was an ideal place to display this very fine and unique naval artifact.

The bell sat ignominiously through a series of administrative changes, awaiting an active patron until the new XO, LCdr R. Williamson, undertook the challenge of suitably installing the bell. Considering its 180 pound weight, it took a significant amount of planning and engineering. This was accomplished with the help of Lt(N) Zeuner.

Keeping in mind naval traditions, the bell was suspended from an attractive cedar cradle on the lawn outside the quarterdeck entrance overlooking the harbour, where it served both a practical and decorative function. At that time there was a pervading presence of army vehicles around the buildings and the rationale was to provide a needed nautical flavour to the main entrance.

In May 1984, the bell was dedicated by Father Blackwood at a special ceremony held in conjunction with the annual sea cadet inspection. The ceremony was attended by many civilian guests, veterans, sea cadet officials and officers, some of whom were involved in recovering the bell from a British naval salvage yard in 1947. Present also was the daughter of LCdr Moffat, in whose memory the bell was presented to *Star* on permanent loan provided that it could be suitably displayed.

The bell is a valuable museum piece and makes an ideal memorial to the Battle of the Atlantic where HMS *Ramillies* served an important role in protecting Halifax Convoys from German surface raiders in 1941. These raiders consisted of the German capital ships; *Admiral Hipper*, *Scheer*, *Gneisenau*, *Scharnhorst* and *Bismark*. The battle honours of *Ramillies* are listed on the plaque attached to the memorial.

The installation and display of the *Ramillies* bell was a significant step forward in recognizing the importance of researching and restoring our naval heritage. With the advent of the 75th Anniversary of our navy, projects restoring and recalling our navy's history, were finding places of honour all across the country. The *Ramillies* bell was a most fitting contribution to this observance.

For many years, HMCS *Star*, like most ships, had carried a ceremonial rum barrel for use on special occasions such as splice the main brace, weddings and baptisms. To celebrate these extraordinary events a traditional issue of rum, called a tot, was distributed from the ceremonial barrel with a toast to, "The Queen, God Bless Her." This toast was usually carved or painted on the side of the barrel.

Several years ago, *Star's* ceremonial barrel disappeared and with it, one of the ship's traditions. Fortunately, an old friend of *Star*, Lt. Col. C. Peck (ret'd) became aware of our loss and began a nine month project of restoring an old barrel into a beautiful ceremonial one. Since barrels of any kind are hard to come by these days, Lt. Col. Peck had to settle for a whisky barrel rather than a rum barrel. Many hours and hard work went into refurbishing the old barrel and making a cover for it, not to mention the patient hours of recovering the alcohol from the saturated wood inside the barrel. By adding a few gallons of water to the barrel, letting it stand around for a few weeks, rotating the barrel and swishing the contents at regular intervals, an innocuous brew can be produced called "swish".

The highly polished barrel was presented to the Commanding Officer on October 2, 1984. After the ceremony, the ship's company were invited to sample the inner contents of the barrel. Suffice it to say that both the gleaming exterior and the liquid interior of the barrel would take your breath away, but a tradition was restored.

Padre D. Lee was tasked by the Commanding Officer in 1987 to recover all the names of the children baptized at *Star*. The naval tradition requires that the names of these children be inscribed on the ship's bell, but this had never been done. It was a daunting task to go back almost fifty years. The research was successful only as far back at 1956. In 1991, Commanding Officer designate, Cdr Woodrow, used his own resources to get the engraving done. If you look closely you will find 50 names inscribed on the bell. Hopefully, the earlier records prior to 1956 will be discovered. In the meantime the ship's bell of HMCS *Star* remains one of the few engraved baptismal bells in Canada.

In 1987, a portrait gallery of V.I.P. photographs was completed at the entrance to the Quarterdeck. This enhanced the presentation of the Commanding Officers' photographs established in 1963. It also served to heighten the awareness of ship's personnel and visitors to the long heritage of *Star* and the identity of senior personnel in the naval chain of command.

Many renovations were also made at this time to drill deck, quarterdeck and wardroom. All the paperwork was done for a Junior Rank's Mess expansion. A new sign was placed in front of the main building announcing HMCS *Star*, while the 1968 sign for C.F.R.B. Hamilton was allowed to fade and become overgrown by bushes beside the main gate.

As the decade came to a close, Cdr Mark with the assistance of Chief Clerk, MWO Vezina, planned to build a museum in the boardroom and publish a book on *Star's* history for the 50th Anniversary of the ship, ensuring the preservation of her heritage and naval traditions.

In summary, it can be said that the changing role of the Navy Reserve has given *Star* a significant role in the defence of this country. It is a role for which *Star* is well prepared and can take a special pride. With the help of Distinctive Environmental Uniforms, our naval presence has been restored in this region and is greater now than at any time since the onset of unification in 1968. Our history which is such an important part of our naval heritage will be preserved as part of the activities planned for the 50th Anniversary of *Star*. The natural conclusion is that these last ten years, with the renewal of our naval identity and traditions, have truly been a Decade of Rebirth.

HMCS STAR AND THE NINETIES

It gives me a great deal of pleasure and a real sense of accomplishment to see the History of *Star* permanently recorded in print. I authorized this project during my last year of command, and am pleased to see it completed in 1991, the 50th Anniversary of HMCS *Star*. The expected success of this book must be credited to the main driving force, MWO Andre Vezina, Chief Clerk on the Regular Force Support Staff of HMCS *Star*, and to former Commanding Officer Cdr Robert J. Williamson, who as the principal author, volunteered countless hours of his time to all aspects of this production.

It was in the Spring of 1990, during one of our many informal meetings, that I expressed to MWO Vezina that it was my aspiration to publish the History of *Star*, and to establish the *Star* Naval Museum. Shortly afterwards, MWO Vezina, on his own initiative and by his personal determination, started to solicit public sponsorship, to form up committees and to secure support from patrons and friends of *Star*. His contribution in making the final publication has been immeasurable. Consequently, the History of HMCS *Star* will be published at no cost to the tax-payers, and any revenue which might be generated through the sales of the book will be put into the HMCS *Star* Museum Fund.

I am proud of the high calibre of this book. The research team, under the leadership of Cdr Williamson, in his own right a published author of text books, has done a tremendous job in assembling the vast amount of information from the public archives and from private collections. I am pleased to acknowledge the contributions of Cdr Robert Bowman, Cdr Fred Lee, Cdr Gary Ostofi, SLt Rita Lee-Irvine, Mrs. Nadine Burke and Mrs. Barbara McInnis for their efforts and assistance. A great deal of research has gone into this production. The final copy represents HMCS *Star* accurately, from the past of its namesake, through the turmoil years of the Second World War to its present state. This publication is a testimony to those past and present serving members of *Star*. It is also a milestone for future generations to follow.

Over the decades, HMCS *Star* has been fortunate to be able to rely on its most important asset - well qualified personnel. The dedication, loyalty and professional knowledge of the ship's company in serving the naval reserve has been more than any of its commanding officers could have asked for. Such personnel are exemplified by Master Electrician and long serving CPO1 Hank Roossien, who was awarded in 1990, the Maritime Commander's Commendation in recognition of his outstanding contribution in serving his country through *Star* and through his community. CPO1 Roossien's experience has often been called upon to effect repairs or installations that would not normally be readily available to the Unit through normal Armed Forces facilities. He has been unstinting in his efforts to maintain *Star's* two training tenders, *Cavalier* and *Plainsville*.

HMCS *Star* has always served Canada well in times of needs or crisis, especially during World War II. Because of its roots in the community, *Star* has also been a major social force. In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of HMCS *Star*, Mr. Reg Whynott, Chairman of the

Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth and the Regional Council made the following tribute at the Council Meeting on February 19, 1991.

"The Greater Hamilton community is renowned for its rich maritime history. The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth's Coat of Arms reflects this with a ship emblazoned on the Shield. One great part of our tradition has been the contribution and support of the Canadian Navy and this is best symbolized in our own local naval unit, HMCS Star. The sailors of HMCS Star, men and women, exemplify the best citizens Greater Hamilton has to offer. This has been true for fifty years and 1991 represents the fiftieth Anniversary of HMCS Star in Greater Hamilton and we are pleased to be asked to honour this event".

HMCS *Star* has had a very colourful history. Training and Naval Operations at *Star* have contributed significantly to the development of leadership, and have nurtured a sense of citizenship and patriotism. *Star's* record has proven that the tradition of voluntary service always runs strongly in Canada. One of its most important contributions was the enrollment and partial training of 7,000 sailors and officers in preparation for further training and assignments on ships or at shore establishments as required during the Second World War. This number approximates ten percent of all Canadian Naval personnel who served during the period 1939 - 1945.

In the recent Persian Gulf conflict, when the Maritime Command offered the Reservists an opportunity to serve with the Regular Force, six members of *Star* voluntarily signed up and finally MS Ken McNally was selected to serve as a signalman onboard HMCS *Preserver*.

Over the years, the naval reserve has gone through many changes and has suffered in the process. The introduction of the re-vitalization plan for the Reserves outlined in the Government's Defence White Paper of 1987 was welcome news. The Total Force concept for Naval Reserve to be integrated into the Maritime Command with distinct roles is a major step forward. As a result, since 1988, HMCS *Star* has been in a period of profound flux. Its effort has been directed to training for operational readiness. Accordingly, personnel has been assigned to a Coastal Surveillance team to a Harbour Defence team and to a Diving Team. Significant results have been achieved in the past three years. Despite limited resources and financial constraints due to government austerity programmes, *Star* is on track with its operational commitments and is successfully fulfilling all its tasks. These include the completion of the Sea Readiness Inspection, the operation of the Minor War Vessels out of Halifax, the assumption of a leading role in diving operations and training in the local region, and the augmentation of the exercises in NATO Naval Control of Shipping organization. In 1990 - 1991, *Star's* recruiting drive exceeded its quotas for both non-commissioned members and for officer candidates by 50% and 25% respectively. As well, it has trained and qualified 45 of the ship's company in Standard First Aid and CPR.

Hamilton has been a major port of visit for the Great Lakes Deployment of War Ships. In 1990, HMCS *Star* was particularly busy in rendering support for visits of HMCS *Saguenay*, HMCS *Ottawa*, HMCS *Okanagan* and for the British frigate HMS *Brave*. *Star* was proud to play an important role in making each one of these operations a success; and in generating a great deal of public interest in the Maritime Command. *Star*, in addition, continues to provide instructors and facilities to the training and operations of 14 Sea Cadet Corps in Southern Ontario. The effort in this endeavour was well recognized and highly praised by the Navy League of Canada, Ontario Branch. HMCS *Star* has justifiably a very significant naval presence in Hamilton.

Among the other memorable events were the Inspection of the 1989 and 1990 New Entry Graduation Classes by His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln M. Alexander in August of these years. HMCS *Star* was also the first organization in Canada to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Canadian Naval Service on March 17, 1990, with a Gala Admiralty Ball at the Hamilton Sheraton Hotel. It was a major social event attended by 200 invited guests. The dignitaries presented were His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln M. Alexander; Rear Admiral H. T. Porter, Chief of Personnel Services and Senior Appointments from the National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa; Commodore (Retired) R. T. Bennett, former Senior Naval Advisor; Colonel B. Abbott, Commander, Canadian Forces Base Toronto; Captain (N) S. Foldesi, Commander, Naval Reserve Divisions; Colonel J. Forsyth, Senior Staff Officer (Land) with the Chief of Reserves and Cadets, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa; and Deputy Chief of Police of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police, Colonel George Frid.

In the years ahead, the new era of "Challenge and Commitment", under the government's "Total Force" policy, requires the naval reserve to integrate with the permanent force of the Maritime Command and to fulfil its missions and tasks. HMCS *Star* along with the 23 other Naval Reserve Divisions will be tasked in:

- a. the Maritime Coastal Defence for surveillance and protection of coastal territories, including the responsibilities of mine counter measure operations;
- b. the Naval Control of Shipping responsibilities for the organization of convoys, in case of crisis and control of shipping regulations.

In carrying out these tasks, HMCS *Star* is expected to be fully complemented with a unit strength of 248 personnel on Primary Naval Reserve by the year 2002. Specifically, its goal in meeting this challenge will be:

- a. to train every member of *Star* towards operational readiness standards;
- b. to increase the number of diesel mechanics qualified for 'A' tickets, 'B' ticket and engine room charge tickets;
- c. to increase the number of officers qualified for the "upper-deck watch-keeping certificate";
- d. to actively recruit personnel through the "lateral entry scheme", with civilian skills and qualifications, applicable to military occupation;
- e. to maintain and improve the high operational readiness status of our diving team which has been recognized for its excellent standard.

Ultimately, *Star's* aim is to train its operational teams with 100% capabilities from within its own resources. As Commander, I am confident that this is an obtainable objective with an innovative training organization firmly in place, with greater individual commitment from every member and with greater accountability and with improvement in efficiency in all levels of administration, training and operations. HMCS *Star* with "diligence", will continue to serve our country with pride and commitment.

D. Y. S. Mark
Commander
Commanding Officer
1988 - 1991

COMMANDING OFFICERS HMCS STAR



LCdr R.H. Yeates
1923 - 1929



Lt W.G. Beaver
1929-1934



LCdr H.L.G. Westland
1934-1937



Lt J.C. Hart
1937-1940



Lt W.R. Morrison
1940



Lt F.E. Waterman
1940-1941



Lt W.H.B. Thomson
1941



Cdr J. McFetrick
1941-1944



Cdr R. Jackson, OBE, VRD
1944-1945



Cdr C.S. Glassco
1945-1946



Lt R.G. Baker
1946



Lt W.H. Adamson
1946



Cdr S.F. Ross
1946-1950



Cdr G.H. Parke, CD
1950-1953



Cdr J.H. Curtis, CD
1953-1958



Capn W.T. Houghton, CD
1958-1963



Cdr R.G. Wilson, CD
1963-1964



Cdr H.C. Tilbury, CD
1964-1966



Cdr R.T. Bennett, CD
1966-1969



Cdr C.D. DiCenzo, CD
1969-1971



Cdr F.J. Lee, CD
1971-1975



Cdr M.J. Pandzich, CD
1975-1979



Cdr R.H. Bowman, CD
1979-1982



Cdr D. Woodliffe, CD
1982-1985

Cdr R.J. Williamson, CD
1985-1988



Cdr D.Y.S. Mark, CD
1988-1991

