October 31, 2007

This is the Seventh Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe
Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961
Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto
Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington
First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108
Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054
Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

THE FAIRMILES

When I realized I was never going to have a book on this history I kept adding to it for my own enjoyment especially this section on the Fairmiles. Joan and I will have been married 46 years on September 7th, 2007. Joan is one of the Kinney girls from Kinney Road, Ashmore, Nova Scotia and her family helped construct these Fairmiles so the 15 Weymouth built copies are like family. Jerry Proc VE3FAB now has his version of this section on his web site under Fairmile Radio Fit.

Our shipyards were to turn out 456 merchant ships and some 300 naval vessels during World War II. These ships were built by a number of shipyards and the size of the yard normally dictated the size of the ships it constructed. The little ships known by the name Fairmile fascinate me most of the naval ships constructed. The British Fairmile Company designed them, so the British and British Commonwealth navies called them Fairmiles. They were designed as a sister ship to the Submarine Chaser of the United States Navy. At the outbreak of World War II steps were taken for the smaller Canadian shipyards to build a fleet of these little ships for the Royal Canadian Navy. Fifty-nine were built in yards on the Great Lakes. Fourteen were built in British Columbia and seven were built at Weymouth, Nova Scotia, for a total of 80. They were not named and were known as HMC ML followed by their number. The ML stood for Motor Launch. Their numbers commenced with 050 and terminated at 129. Their pendant number commenced with the letter Q followed by their assigned number and this was painted on their bows. This was Q050 to Q129 inclusive. Their crews called them "Q Boats" or "Q Fifty" and so on.

Canadian Armed Forces

This is Weymouth built HMC ML120 off the approaches to Halifax, Nova Scotia, under full power.

Actually these Canadian shipyards built eighty-eight of these little ships and eight were turned over to the United States Navy. All eight were of the early program and were absorbed within their Submarine Chaser fleet complete with Submarine Chaser number/names.

Some parts of these little ships were built from a kit and the kits for these Canadian built copies were manufactured here in Canada. My former neighbour, the late Camille Comeau, helped construct the Weymouth built vessels. He spoke of fitting the prefabricated bulkheads in place. These kits were shipped to Weymouth by the railroad. He and I used to talk about these little ships quite often.

Apparently there were nearly seven hundred copies of these little ships built in thirteen different nations from 1940 until 1945. An article written by James Davies titled Fairmile B Type Motor Launch that I managed to find on the Internet with my son's computer is most interesting. He included a beautiful colour painting by Tim Brown of HM ML192 in action shortly before she took a direct hit and was lost. That is if there is such a thing as a beautiful picture of a warship in action with all guns blazing just before she was lost with a loss of life. Apparently there were ten Fairmiles lost in that action that included HM ML192 in the early morning of Saturday March 28th, 1942, on the approach to St. Naziere.

This is the painting by Tim Brown on the Jim Davis site.

All Canadian naval ships were assigned a four letter international call sign, during World War II, which was not listed with the International Telecommunication Union in Switzerland. These four letter call signs commenced with either a CG, CY or CZ prefix. The Canadian Fairmiles used a four character coded call sign during World War II which had a prefix of 4X. The two-letter suffix was changed about every two months. Using any two letters at a time would make for 676 possible combinations. There was less than half this number of ships in Canadian naval service so this left many possibilities. The larger ship, the minesweeper, corvette, frigate, destroyer and so on up the scale used a two letter coded call sign. This was done to confuse the enemy. Which enemy, theirs or ours, became the most confused from this is hard to say.

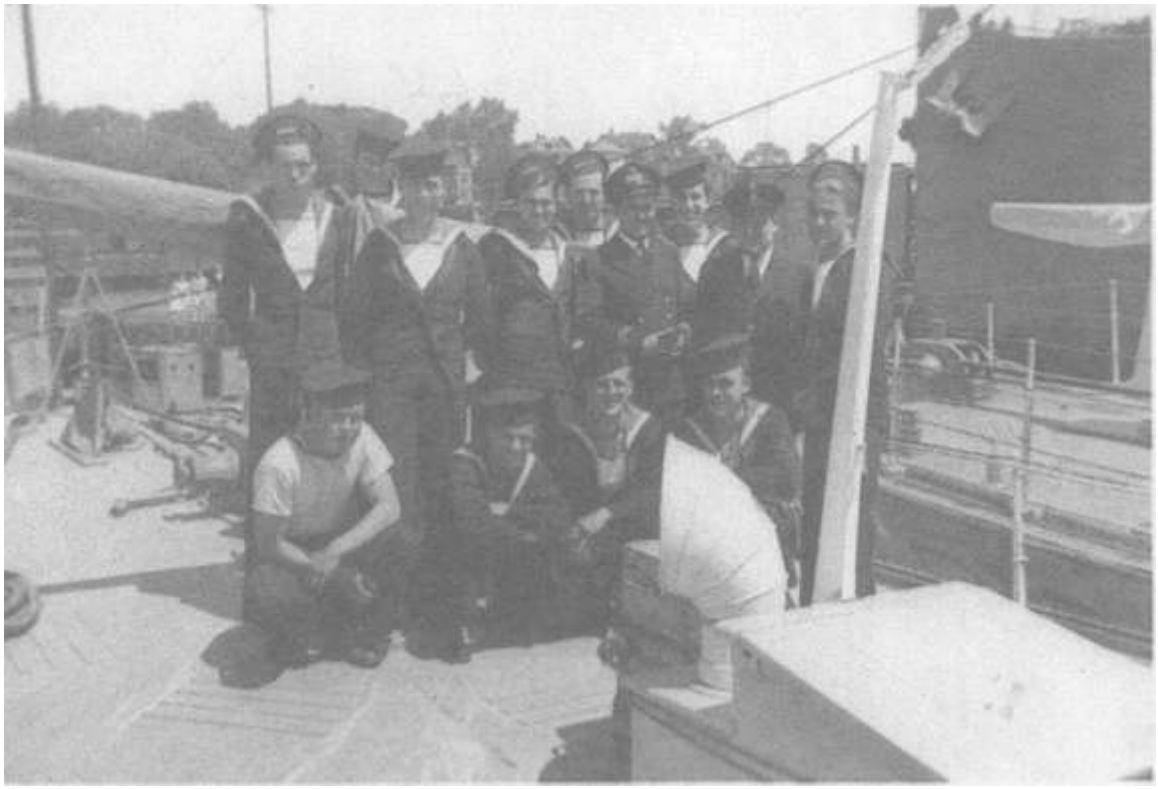
The eighty Canadian Fairmiles and their four letter international call sign were:

ML050 CGYK
ML051 CGYL
ML052 CGYM
ML053 CGYN
ML054 CGYP
ML055 CGYQ
ML056 CGYR
ML057 CGYS
ML058 CGYT
ML059 CGYV
ML060 CGYW
ML061 CGYX
ML062 CGYZ
ML063 CGZB
ML064 CGZD
ML065 CGZF
ML066 CGZJ
ML067 CGZK
ML068 CGZL
ML069 CGZM
ML070 CGZN
ML071 CGZP
ML072 CGZQ
ML073 CGZR
ML074 CYRM
ML075 CYRN
ML076 CYRP

ML077	CYRQ
ML078	CYRS
ML079	CYRT
ML080	CYRV
ML081	CYRW
ML082	CYRX
ML083	CYRZ
ML084	CYTB
ML085	CYTD
ML086	CGXB
ML087	CGXJ
ML088	CZGM
ML089	CGPN
ML090	CGXK
ML091	CZGN
ML092	CGPM
ML093	CGXL
ML094	CGBN
ML095	CZGP
ML096	CGXM
ML097	CGXP
ML098	CGXQ
ML099	CGXR
ML100	CGXV
ML101	CGXS
ML102	CGXT
ML103	CGXW
ML104	CZGQ
ML105	CZGR
ML106	CZGS
ML107	CZGT
ML108	CZGV
ML109	CZGW
ML110	CZGX
ML111	CZGY
ML112	CYQQ
ML113	CGZC
ML114	CGZG
ML115	CYQC
ML116	CYQY
ML117	CYRC
ML118	CYRY
ML119	CYVC
ML120	CYWC
ML121	CYZC
ML122	CZDC
ML123	CZDF
ML124	CZDL
ML125	CZDQ
ML126	CZDR
ML127	CZDS
ML128	CZDT
ML129	CZDV

George Crowell was the Telegraphist in two of these Fairmiles; HMC ML064 and HMC ML095. He went aboard the ’64 right after she was built. The ’64 carried a crew of 15:

2 Officers
1 Chief Stoker
1 Leading Seaman Coxswain
2 Stokers
2 Gunners
2 Ordinary Seamen
1 Telegraphist
1 Signalman
1 Asdic Operator
1 Torpedo Rate
1 Cook



George Crowell VE1LB

This is the crew of HMC ML064 in May 1942.

George went from HMC ML064 to HMC ML095 and she had one extra crewmember making a total of 16 in her crew. By the time George went aboard HMC ML095 the navy had sufficient Radar Operators that one was assigned to HMC ML095. Radar Operator is George's terminology.

Shipsearch Yarmouth Nova Scotia

HMC ML064 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia

George Crowell told me he worked the Gaspe from the Canso Strait on what they called the Port Wave frequency of 425 kcs. All the small naval radio stations around the coast used this frequency with the coast station and ship on the same 425 kcs frequency. He said his calling transmission was CFL CFL CFL V 4XYZ 4XYZ 4XYZ K – or whatever the two-letter suffix in his coded call sign happened to be.

The Lists of World War II stations provide the following possible Port Wave Stations on 425 kcs:

CFH Halifax, Nova Scotia
CFI Quebec City, Quebec
CFL Gaspe, Quebec
CFS St. John's, Newfoundland – this call sign was changed to CZP in November 1942
CGH Rigolet, Labrador (Lake Melville - Goose Bay area)
CKH Toronto, Ontario
CKK Shelburne, Nova Scotia (The transmitter was probably a PV500L and it probably had a leaky condenser in the power supply. They could tell it was Shelburne simply by the hum on his transmission.)
CKR Mulgrave, Nova Scotia (Canso Strait)
CZC Saint John, New Brunswick
CZD Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
CZE Sydney, Nova Scotia
CZI Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia
CZJ Quoddy, Nova Scotia (Eastern Halifax County)
CZP St. John's, Newfoundland
CZR Rimouski, Quebec
CZS Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

The ones we know for certain are **CFH**, **CKK** and **CFL**

West Coast

CFV York Island, British Columbia (Believed in Esquimalt Harbour).
CKE Discovery Island, British Columbia (Discovery and Chatham Islands lie just a mile or so west of Victoria in Haro Strait, off Oak Bay).
CKF Vancouver, British Columbia

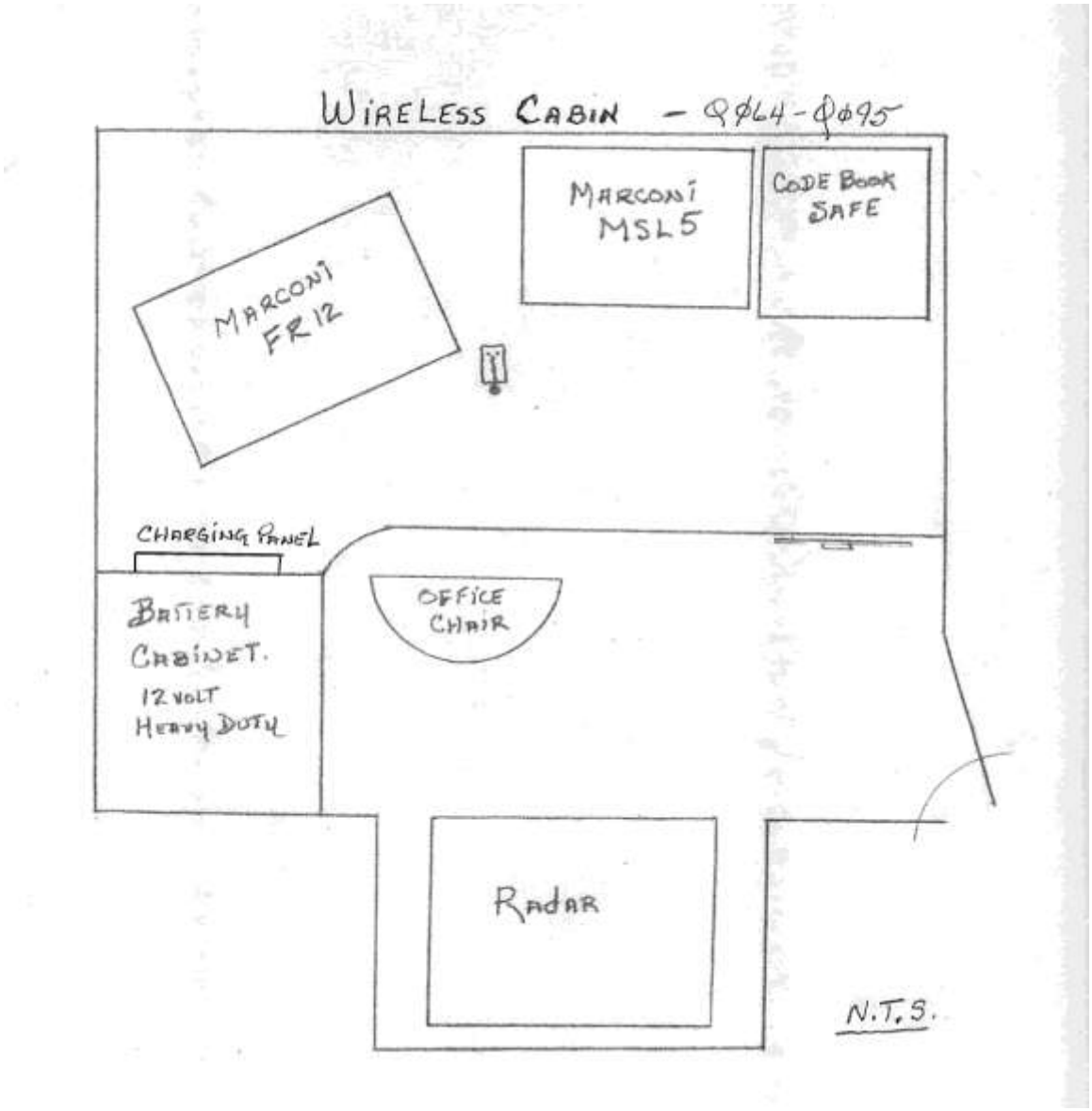
CKG Prince Rupert, British Columbia
CKL Esquimalt, British Columbia
CZM Alliford Bay, British Columbia
CZN Bella Bella, British Columbia – The RCAF had a main station in this area
CZY Ucluelet, British Columbia
CZZ Coal Harbour, British Columbia (Coal Harbour is in Vancouver harbour, right next to Deadman's Island, the site of HMCS DISCOVERY).

Gaspe, Quebec, CFL was a naval radio station in a building just outside the main gate at HMCS FORT RAMSEY. The transmitters (probably Canadian Marconi PV500's) and receivers were housed in the same building. If one can find a photograph of HMCS FORT RAMSEY it should show this station and the antenna. It is very hard to get a good electrical connection (a ground connection) to the earth's surface on the Gaspe Peninsula because of the mineral content of the soil. The antenna to this station had a large counterpoise to serve as this electrical connection, the ground of this station.

The Fairmiles operating in the Gulf of St. Lawrence copied the CFL broadcast on a very low frequency probably 125 kcs. The transmission from CFL was hard for the Fairmiles to copy once they went up the river past Cape Chat, Quebec and this counterpoise was installed with hopes of improving this performance. There is no record of improvement.

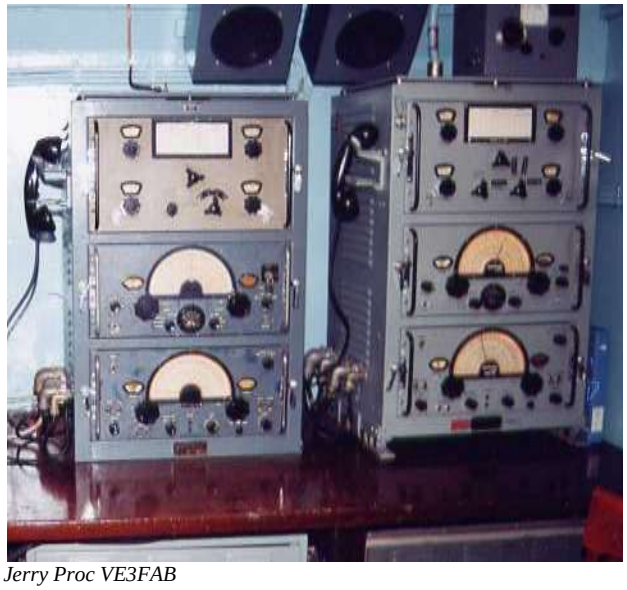
One finds it hard to believe that CFL was able to make these broadcasts and still communicate with the ships. This would involve two transmitters and two receivers. The transmitters were probably Canadian Marconi PV500's as stated. The receivers and transmitters were housed in the same building and the receivers would probably be Canadian Marconi SMR3's or CSR5's and maybe an MSL5 or CSR4.

George was running a Canadian Marconi FR12 fifteen-watt input transceiver with metal 6L6 tubes in the finals. This was a very low power transmitter and with HMC ML064's wooden hull, a very poor hull for electrical connection with the earths surface. Once one had spent some time with a ship's radio station they could tell when the ship passed from salt water into brackish or fresh water, this grounding or electrical connection with the earth's surface is that important. A wooden hull vessel can be a real headache at times. There has to be a sheet of copper attached to a wooden hull to serve as this ground connection. It is very hard to make the electrical connection between this sheet of copper and the electronic equipment. A ¾ inch brass bolt was normally used between the copper sheet and the hull of the vessel. The ground strap had to be fairly large between that bolt and the electronic equipment if it was any great distance from the bolt to the electronic equipment. Working CFL from the Canso Strait was a very good range and George was rather surprised he was able to communicate at that distance with that station.



The bow of the Fairmile was in this direction.

George Crowell made this drawing of the radio room in HMC ML064 and HMC ML095. George sailed in those two but we do not know the change made when these first Fairmiles had their FR12/MSL5 replaced with the Marconi CM11 transmitter/receiver station. The CM11 had not been fitted when George was transferred off in late 1943 on course. The radio room was in the hull on the starboard side below the wheelhouse and bit aft of the wheelhouse.



Jerry Proc VE3FAB

This is two CM11 transmitter/receiver stations fitted in HMCS HAIDA.

There was another station south of Gaspe CFL. This was a radio direction/finding station at Cap D'Espoir. Gaspe CFL transmitted an urgent message to HMC ML064 giving the position of a German U-boat transmitting coded messages from the Gulf of St. Lawrence on 7333 kilohertz. By the time '64 received and decoded the message they realized they had passed through that position just one hour ago. There were several direction/finding stations tied in with each other in order to give a position and not just a bearing. Cap D'Espoir was tied in with Hartlen Point and may have been tied in with several other stations. Hartlen Point is in the eastern approaches to Halifax harbour, Nova Scotia. The more stations taking bearings the more accurate the position. This was nearly two years before the opening of the navy's monitoring and direction/finding station that became HMCS COVERDALE outside Moncton, New Brunswick. Jerry Proc has an excellent history of HMCS COVERDALE that can be found on his website.

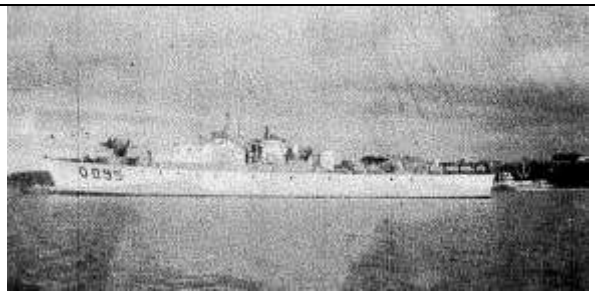
No wonder ones naval career was one course and one exercise after another. Think of the opportunity for error this presented. Getting the D/F stations on the proper frequency to take the bearings and then getting these bearings worked out into the correct position. Then this position had to be coded, transmitted, received and decoded. HMC ML064 did well to learn she had sailed through the position just one hour previous to receiving the message. There had to be a time difference. The time the U-boat made the transmissions and the time '64 passed that position, but there is no question the two vessels were close to each other. It could have been a case that they were close enough that Herr U-boat did not consider a mere Fairmile torpedo material. George was unable to locate the date of this incident and as close as he could get to it was the summer of 1942, probably sometime in September 1942.

George Crowell also told me that one time while traveling alone in HMC ML064 his commanding officer wanted a direction finding bearing from Canso D/F VAX. George explained to him, Lieutenant Norm Williams, that he would be breaking radio silence and Norm told him to go ahead. George called VAX using the CGZD call sign and got his bearing.

The monitoring operators around this coast became so proficient that they could fix a U-boat's position when she transmitted a ten second tuning transmission only. Hindsight is twenty-twenty as they say, but it is a shame some system had not been set up where one of our ships could simply make a short transmission. Each coastal D/F station could have sent their bearing and time of receipt via landline to a central naval office. A navigation officer at this office could have taken all the bearings received and fixed the vessels position and then transmitted this position via a short coded message to the vessel involved. Yes, I know the U-boats could have made use of this information the reason for radio silence, but it still seems feasible for some such scheme in place for emergency use only. A position would have been better

than a simple bearing as in George's case. This may have prevented a few of the many accidents around this coast, but at this late date and time one will never know.

There is no record of one of these Canadian Fairmiles doing any damage to the enemy, but several U-boat commanders must have suddenly altered their itineraries on encountering them. They were wooden diagonally planked mahogany, 112 feet long and 18 feet wide. They had gasoline engines. HMC ML050 to HMC ML111 inclusive, the early program, had two 635 HP Hall Scott engines and were capable of up to twenty knots. HMC ML112 to HMC ML129 inclusive had two 850 HP Sterling Admiral Engines which were capable of up to twenty-four knots. Commander McKee claims 20 or 21 maybe, but not more.



George Crowell VE1LB

HMC ML095

That is the official version. HMC ML095 had V12 Supercharged Rolls Royce engines. The Rolls Royce Merlin engine was a V12 supercharged gasoline aircraft engine that won the battle of Britain. It was fitted in the Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft and was also fitted in the American P51 Mustang aircraft. The Packard Company was given a license to build Rolls Royce Merlin engines in the United States. HMC ML095 was supposed to be able to do twenty-six knots with those engines but it is not known if she managed to go that fast. I do not know why HMC ML095 was fitted with these engines and I do not know if they were Merlin engines. It was probably a case that the engines were available and put to use in that vessel. The Rolls Royce was a popular engine in the smaller Motor Torpedo Boat and its sister the Air Force Crash Boat that gave those boats a speed of over forty knots. The first American made Merlin engine was on test with the 1500 HP Packard marine engine, at the Packard factory in Detroit, May 1941, according to the book The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons, volume two on page 167, by Geoff D. Pilborough. HMC ML095 was launched in May 1943 two years later.

According to the James Davies article, the Fairmile was to be fitted with three marine diesel engines. These engines were impossible to find so they settled on the American Hall Scott gasoline engine. The Hall Scott engines could not be produced to meet this high demand so it was decided to fit these little ships with just two engines. It was found that two engines were sufficient. The World War I American Submarine Chaser had three gasoline engines and this may be the reason these vessels were to have three engines.

According to the book Maverick Navy by Alexander W. Moffat, Captain, USNR (Ret.), page 149 the propulsion of the World War I Submarine Chaser was triple-propellers 39 inches in diameter with a 57 and ½ inch pitch. The three six-cylinder gasoline engines were rated at 220 horsepower at 500 revolutions per minute. These engines had a bore of 10 inches and a stroke of 11 inches and were directly connected to the propeller shafts. Each engine had compressed air starting and reversing. The cylinders were individually cast and mounted on an open based crankcase. The ignition was Bosch waterproof magnetic spark plugs with low-tension wiring. I have more detail on the World War I Submarine Chaser in my section on Rum Running because one became a Canada Customs Patrol Boat.

The World War II Submarine Chaser had two diesel engines. There were two distinct diesel engines used and Theodore R. Treadwell describes them in his book Splinter Fleet on page 17. 243 Submarine Chasers built during World War II were fitted with a new "pancake" type diesel engine capable of driving the vessel at 21 knots. These new engines were fitted with variable pitch propellers making it much easier to manoeuvre. There were 438 Submarine Chasers built in the United States during World War II. The other

195 had to be fitted with a different engine because of the demand. These 195 were fitted with General Motors 8 cylinder 500 horsepower diesels. The vessels fitted with the General Motors diesels could make a top speed of fifteen knots only but all the Submarine Chasers operated together. This would mean four different types, the ones left over from World War I, the eight Canadian built, the ones with the Pancake diesels and the ones with the General Motors diesels. In other words, two types with gasoline engines and two types with diesel engines. It appears as though the gasoline types remained around the East Coast of the United States with some of the diesel types. The rest of the diesel types roamed around the world, especially in the Mediterranean and South Pacific. Theodore R. Treadwell mentions in Splinter Fleet that at least one diesel type managed to get the diesel fuel and the water in the wrong tanks. One can only imagine the problems in operating diesel and gasoline engines together.

The International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations for 1933 lists 27 Submarine Chasers still in the United States Navy. 24 were still serving in the 1935 list. 15 were still serving in the 1940 and 1943 lists. The prefix of the call sign of all United States military ships is the letter N. The four-letter call sign had the prefix NO for 25 of these Submarine Chasers and NI was the prefix of the other two in the 1933 list. Mr. Treadwell states that 53 were transferred to the United States Coast Guard after World War I, but I have not found them. It would be interesting to see if they were assigned call signs with the NO and NI prefix. They probably were because it appears from the gaps in the call signs of the 27 listed above that at one time they were in alphabetical order. Those in service during World War II were no doubt involved in this war one way or another, but in coast guard patrols and not as submarine chasers. The Coast Guard apparently listed them as WPC, gave each an assigned number different than the previous naval number, and they apparently gave each a name. A WPB is a Patrol Boat so a WPC probably meant a Patrol Cutter. Therefore, according to these records it would appear that the U.S. Navy had 23 gasoline Submarine Chasers during World War II, the 15 from World War I and the 8 Canadian Fairmiles.

The website NavSource Online: Submarine Chaser Photo Archives provides some of the four letter call signs of the Submarine Chaser fleet and they do not follow this NO and NI theory. They seem to simply have a four letter call sign with the N prefix. USS SC508 had a nice radiotelegraph call sign, NURR.

George Crowell

It was several years after World War II that the Royal Canadian Navy was assigned a proper ships badge as we see them today. During the war the crews would often deface a gun shield or some such item with graffiti of one thing or another and quite often they would create a ship's badge for their ship. This is the ship's badge of HMC ML064 and it about says it all.

Each Canadian Fairmile cost from eighty to eighty-one thousand 1942 Canadian dollars and a couple of the original bids were less at just over seventy-five thousand, but most were much higher, and some nearly one hundred and twenty nine thousand dollars. Apparently the higher bids were to cover the cost of a shed sufficient to build these vessels under cover. But as near as I can tell from the records I found they leveled off at around eighty thousand each. One wonders if we could get two of them today for the amount paid for all eighty-eight back then.

All eighty-eight Fairmiles were known as the "B Class" Fairmile. The B class or type had the habit of setting their exhaust stack on fire when run at full speed for extended periods. Each Fairmile had a fuel capacity of 2,320 imperial gallons. This gave them a range of between 400 and 1,000 miles depending on speed. Each displaced seventy-one tons. The accommodation was rather cramped, but comfortable, for two or three officers and fourteen men. Each Canadian Fairmile had three twenty millimeter Oerlikon guns, one

nine millimeter sten gun, two .303 machine-guns, two .303 rifles, three .45 revolvers, and twenty depth charges of 300 pounds each. The armament of the Fairmile varied from vessel to vessel. HMC ML064 was not fitted with a Y gun for the depth charges but HMC ML095 was fitted with one. They had to rig a derrick on the '95 in order to lift the depth charges up onto the Y gun. The model of HMC ML121 at the Weymouth museum shows a Y gun, but Commander McKee felt none of the Fairmiles were fitted with a Y gun. He claims he has not seen one fitted on the photographs of the Fairmiles he has seen.

Each vessel was sheathed for operation in ice. Ice is like glass and will cut or gouge the sides of a wooden vessel as it passes through ice. This includes the ice found in salt water as well as the ice in fresh water. Ice is ice. I do not know what material was used to sheath each Fairmile. Most wooden vessels in this area are given an extra half inch of planking in the area ice will rub a vessels hull. This is probably the system used for these vessels.

Each Fairmile was fitted with sonar, radar, and radiotelegraph. Each carried one radio operator known as a Telegraphist. The antenna was a wire strung to the upper part of the mast and down to a support on the bow or foc'sul head and another length of wire from the masthead to an iron frame fitted on the Engine Room Hatch. This made this antenna a T configuration and with the wooden hull they probably loaded everything of metal on the upper deck of each vessel. The antenna was fed via an antenna trunk, a square box from the radio room up to the Bridge. In this trunk was a copper tube that terminated in an insulator on top of the trunk. The antenna was connected at this insulator and went up to the masthead. HMC ML064 and HMC ML095 left their builder's shipyard with a Canadian Marconi FR12 transmitter/receiver and an MSL5 receiver as her main station. They had a Canadian Marconi CM11 station fitted sometime after they had been in service for a year or more. This appears to be common with all the Fairmiles built in the Early Program; Fairmiles HMC ML050 through to HMC ML111 inclusive. Each Fairmile was fitted with radar and the radar antenna looked like a TV antenna mounted at the masthead. The proper name is a Yagi antenna, named for Dr. Yagi the Japanese scientist who invented it. They aimed this antenna like a pair of binoculars and watched the received signal on several indicators. One would give the range of any target and another would indicate the direction. Rather primitive, but one must admit they felt proud of this equipment since it was some of the first radar equipment to be constructed.

The seven Canadian Fairmiles built by the John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia were:

HMC ML064	19APR41	28AUG41	15MAY42	20FEB42
HMC ML065	19APR41	27OCT41	15MAY42	01MAY42
HMC ML083	20AUG41	24MAR42	25MAY42	09MAY42
HMC ML084	20AUG41	16MAY42	18JUN42	04JUN42
HMC ML111	05FEB43	unknown	09SEP43	09SEP43
HMC ML120	20JUN43	08JAN44	27JAN44	10JAN44
HMC ML121	27JUN43	30APR44	17APR44	17APR44

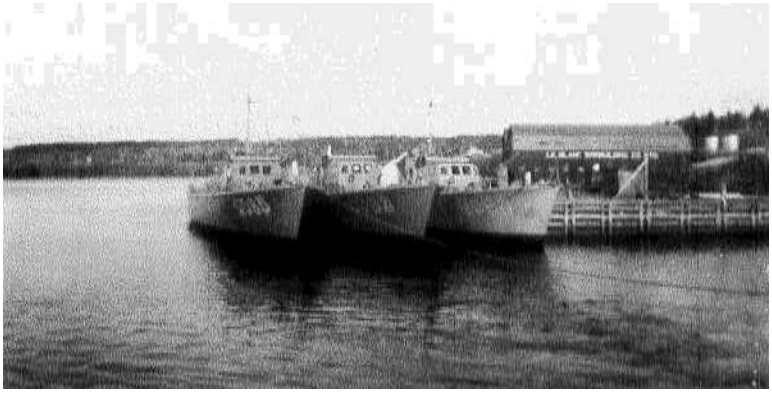
The dates are: the date laid down, the date launched, the date delivered to the navy and the date the first commanding officer joined the vessel. I do not have the date HMC ML111 was launched.

George Crowell VE1LB

This is HMC ML064 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia

George Crowell VE1LB

This is HMC ML083, HMC ML064 and HMC ML065 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia.



George Crowell VE1LB

This is HMC ML083, HMC ML064 and HMC ML065 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia.

All eight American Fairmiles were built in this yard and they were members of the Royal Navy for a few months until commissioned in the United States Navy.

George Crowell VE1LB

This is HM ML398 alongside Weymouth, Nova Scotia, awaiting transfer to the United States Navy

---

The Royal Navy did not use a pendant number for their Fairmiles. They simply painted their name on their bows: ML123 and so on up and down the list. These eight Royal Navy ships constructed at Weymouth were and became:

HM ML392 USS SC1466 ---- 27OCT41 27JUL42 22OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43

HM ML393 USS SC1467 NCPV 31OCT41 03AUG42 22OCT42
31JAN46

HM ML394 USS SC1468 NCQE 28NOV41 10JUL42 22OCT42
21JAN48

HM ML395 USS SC1469 ---- 30NOV41 12AUG42 22OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43

HM ML396 USS SC1470 ---- Commissioned 23OCT42
Renamed USS PANTHER (IX-105) 26JUN43
USS PANTHER was sold on 13FEB47

HM ML397 USS SC1471 ---- 28OCT41 02JUL42 23OCT42
Transferred to Mexico 20NOV43

HM ML398 USS SC1472 NCTN 30JAN42 24NOV42 05DEC42
04MAR48

HM ML399 USS SC1473 NCVH 20MAY42 26NOV42 05DEC42
21MAR48

I have found these four call signs only for these eight ships. The dates are the date the keel was laid, the date launched, the date commissioned into the U.S. Navy and the date disposed of.

One will probably never know what radio station was fitted in these eight American Submarine Chasers when they left this Canadian shipyard. It is possible they sailed with a Canadian Marconi FR12. I cannot see them sailing without radio unless they were towed over to the United States. They would not have American radio stations fitted because they were British ships. All radio equipment was classified during the war and the radio rooms in all merchant ships were under lock and key while in port. Actually one had to have a licence in order to own an ordinary broadcast receiver during the war. They also had to have an additional licence in order to listen to foreign stations on the high frequency bands.

These eight little ships were commissioned as United States Ships here at Weymouth. They may have brought their American radio stations with them and fitted them here at Weymouth. All eight sailed to Boston as soon as they were commissioned and were given a good fitting out. The naval museums in Boston and Washington have no record of the radio station fitted in these eight little ships.

Theodore R. Treadwell mentions hearing radiotelephone transmissions in Splinter Fleet but makes no mention of hearing radiotelegraph. The radiomen in the submarine chasers must have used radiotelegraph and one would assume the rest of the crew would have heard these transmissions.

Claude Hall was a Radioman in the American Submarine Chasers and he told me in April, 2006, that his Sub Chaser had a 500 watt radiotelegraph and radiotelephone transmitter. Two high frequency receivers and he said that towards the end of the war they were fitted with VHF and UHF transmitter/receivers. I find that transmitter rather powerful for the class of ship and the time factor involved but I feel confident it is accurate.

These Fairmiles sat so low in the water that they were mistaken for a surfaced U-boat on occasion. This fact created some confusion around Convoy BX-141 in January 1945 that I recorded on these pages. USS PC1123, a 136-foot steel patrol craft mistook USS SC1470, a Weymouth built Fairmile, for a surfaced U-boat and rammed her one night off Alligator Reef, Florida, and nearly cut her in half. Naval crews were trained to take that action against an enemy submarine. USS SC1470 was repaired and when she went back in service she was renamed USS PANTHER with pennant number IX105. The IX prefix stands for an Unclassified Miscellaneous Unit. I have no idea what use was made of her after that. Theodore R.

Treadwell describes this accident on page 43 of his book Splinter Fleet. He does not state she was built in Canada and does not indicate she was repaired. I learned that she was repaired, renamed and her new pendant number from Paul H. Silverstone's book US Warships of World War II published in 1965. He also states that Weymouth built USS SC1466, USS SC1469, and USS SC1471, were transferred to the Mexican Navy. Bob McQuaid Lt. USN (Ret.) joined USS SC1471 in July 1943 and was with her until she was transferred to the Mexican Navy at Miami in November 1943. The other two transferred at the same time.

According to information I found in the NavSource Photo Archives: Submarine Chaser (SC) website, USS SC1470 was laid down at Weymouth in 1942. She was launched on June 17th, 1942 and commissioned at Weymouth on October 23rd, 1942. She was renamed PANTHER and assigned pendant number IX105 on June 26th, 1943. She was recommissioned on July 7th, 1943, and decommissioned on January 21st, 1946. She was then sold for scrap on February 13th, 1947.

Ship's Data U.S. Naval Vessels Volume II dated April 15th, 1945, gives the detail on USS PC1123 and the Weymouth built Submarine Chasers. USS PC1123 was built at Bay City, Michigan, and was commissioned on February 5th, 1943.

Splinter Fleet states that the American submarine chaser was the smallest vessel commissioned in the United States Navy. The vessels smaller than the submarine chaser were commissioned as a complete unit. It is rather odd that they had the prefix USS and not simply US, as in United States Submarine Chaser rather than United States Ship Submarine Chaser and their assigned number/name.

Ronald Kinney helped build the Weymouth built vessels and the thing he remembers most from their construction was trying to paint the interiors. They became more or less gassed from the paint fumes because of poor ventilation down in the bilge area and had to take turns. Ron and the late Bill Brooks each spent a short time only at this painting, one relieving the other.

When it came time for HMC ML120 to sail out the Sissiboo River to St. Mary's Bay in early 1944, the river was covered in ice. The local authorities decided to dynamite a path through this ice, which is as unfeasible as it is to tow a ship through ice. This dynamite killed most of the fish in the Sissiboo River and accomplished little else. Many in the area helped break this ice after that unfeasible performance.

The late Scott Kinney, Ron's younger brother, told me it has been years since the Sissiboo River froze over. The only ice has been some slush ice up at the head of St. Mary's Bay. Scott could remember standing on the bank at Kinney Shore looking across St. Mary's Bay when he could see nothing but ice. There was no open water and this seemed to happen nearly every winter years ago. Kinney Shore is behind the village of Ashmore. Actually Ashmore was Kinneytown until 1905 and is next to and east of Weymouth North.

HMC ML120 met a fate the majority of our former naval vessels met on termination of the war. She was turned over to the Crown Assets Corporation and sold privately. Her owner in the 1970's turned her upside down and left her to dry out for nine months. Her hull was then fiber glassed and she was fitted out as a beautiful yacht. The state of Maryland bought her in 1986 and renamed her MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE. She became the State's flagship and traveled the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries promoting the unique characteristics of the State. She was powered by twin 260 HP Volvo diesel engines and had a cruising speed of twelve knots. She was operated and maintained by three full-time and one part-time personnel. She had a carrying capacity of 35 passengers and could accommodate 70 passengers while dockside. The vessel also had 3 guest staterooms, main and dining salons, 2 guest heads, galley, crew quarters, sundeck and flybridge. She was the sailing ambassador for the state of Maryland like the sailing vessel BLUENOSE II is for the province of Nova Scotia.

Robert Ehrlich was elected Governor of the State of Maryland in 2003. One of his election promises was to sell MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE. He claimed the vessel was an unnecessary expense for the state. The state put the vessel up for sale on December 11th, 2003. Governor Ehrlich was hoping someone would donate a smaller yacht to serve the state in the same way. One that is not as expensive to operate as MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE.

MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE was sold via the Internet on E-Bay for $275,100.00 on December 21st, 2003, to someone in Rochester, New York. Her international radio call sign at the time of her sale was WCY9690.

Whoever purchased MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE on E-Bay did nothing with her and she was sold again in 2006. Captain Douglas Blakeslee was Captain of MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE in December 2006 and they were trying to get her registered as a tour vessel to carry passengers. They intended to retain the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE name with hopes it would assist in their charter work.

I am deeply indebted to Captain Bill Stewart, Sambro Head, Nova Scotia. Bill was captain of the tug THEODORE TOO and had her down as far as Florida. One can get a good description of THEODORE TOO by bringing him up in Google. When Bill had THEODORE TOO in the area he went in alongside the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE berth and had to move when she returned. He and Captain Joe Scharnus got to talking and Bill learned the history of MARYLAND INDEPENCE and brought me home a brochure

on her and a business card of Captain Scharnus. Captain Scharnus and I had some very good correspondence and he sent the following photographs that I trust will be of some interest. I have also been in contact with Captain Blakeslee and hope to stay in contact with MARYLAND INDEPENCE.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE alongside her berth Baltimore Harbor.

Captain Joe Scharnus

Alongside Baltimore Harbor

Captain Joe Scharnus

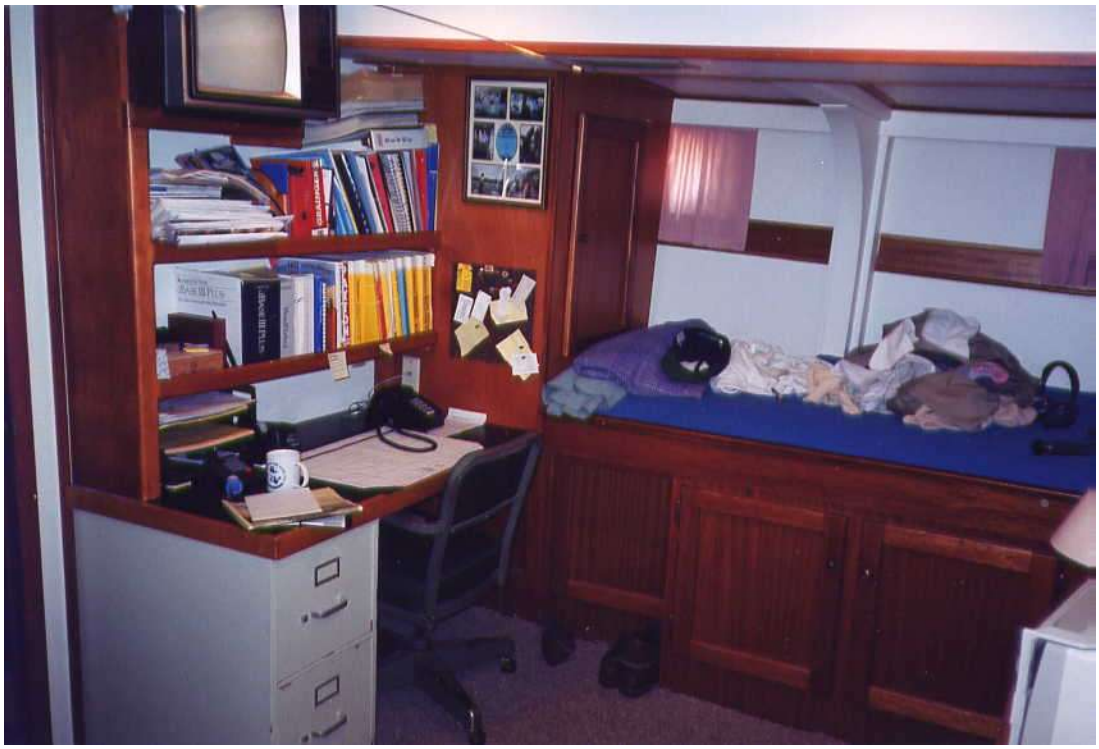
The MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE alongside with the State of Maryland flag flying from her masthead.

Captain Joe Scharnus

Note the wheel and the compass in her wheelhouse.

Captain Joe Scharnus

Note the original engineroom telegraphs.



Captain Joe Scharnus

One of the crew cabins.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the dining salon. Note the photograph of the original vessel on the bulkhead back by the door.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the main salon and the stack area is behind the mirror. Note the working wood fireplace.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the starboard main Volvo engine. Note the original telegraph up in the right hand corner and also note the riveted diagonal mahogany planking.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is the port main Volvo engine.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a good view of her hull out of the water.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is another good view of her hull out of the water.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is her stern with name and port of registry.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is her propellers and rudders.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a close-up of her side. Note the diagonal mahogany planking under the fiber glass.

Captain Joe Scharnus

This is a close-up of her bow.

The Fairmiles had two "Mother Ships" which were identical and specially built and fitted out to service these Fairmiles. These two were HMCS PRESERVER, which was based at various Newfoundland ports and HMCS PROVIDER, which was based at Halifax and served as far afield as Bermuda and the West Indies. HMCS PROVIDER was assigned call sign CGLJ. HMCS PRESERVER was assigned call sign CGNR. These mother or base ships were equipped with machine shops, radar shops, radio shops, food supplies, anything these vessels might require, including fresh water, fuel, and, a well-equipped hospital. Each ship was also fitted with a heavy derrick. This resembled a bowsprit but was heavy and powerful enough to lift one of these Fairmiles completely out of the water for repairs if need be. Each ship had accommodation facilities for fifteen officers and ninety-four enlisted men. At least half of the enlisted men were highly skilled tradesmen in the various trades necessary to maintain this fleet of little ships.

Public Archives Canada PA106821

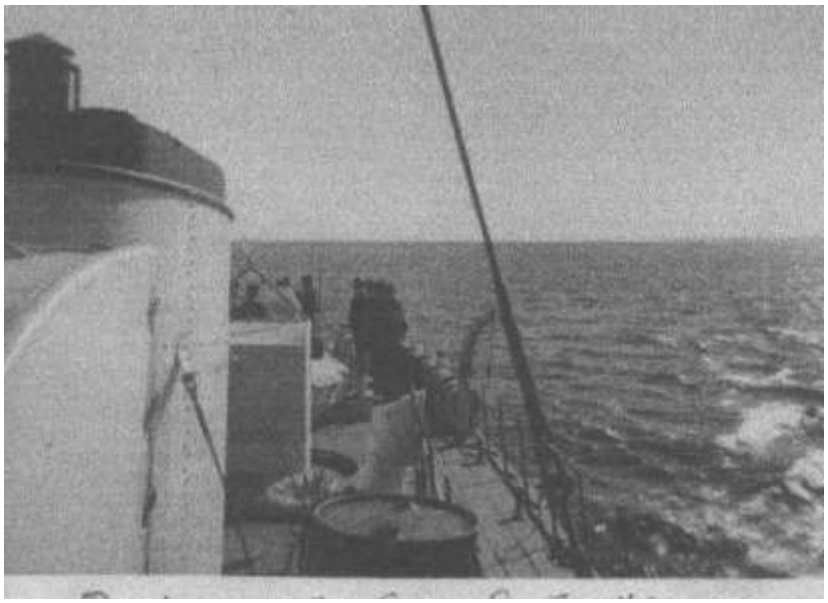
This is HMCS PROVIDER off Halifax, Nova Scotia January 17th, 1943.

These Canadian Fairmiles made quite a name for themselves during the war. They patrolled the whole of the North American East Coast from Labrador to the West Indies. They also patrolled the West Coast but I am not sure of their range on the West Coast. None was lost during the war although three, HMC ML081, HMC ML079, and HMC ML072 were badly shaken up when on March 10th, 1943 they were fairly close to the liberty ship JAMES SPRUNT when it was torpedoed and blew up like a huge bomb. This occurred in position 19.49N 74.38W off Cape Maysi, Cuba, which is on the eastern tip of that country. JAMES SPRUNT was on a voyage from Charleston, South Carolina, to Karachi and needless to say was loaded with explosives. The explosion was nearly twice the size of the one that devastated Halifax on December 6th, 1917. It picked these three Fairmiles out of the water, then slammed them back down and showered them with debris, smashing their wheelhouse windows, tearing doors off hinges, and scattering everything movable in all directions. It is indeed a miracle that the only injuries were minor bruises. These three Fairmiles managed to rendezvous with HMCS PROVIDER shortly after this incident, and kept her busy around the clock for several days getting them back in top shape.

In Commander Fraser M. McKee's book "The Armed Yachts of Canada" he states HMC ML065 was with convoy QS33 from Quebec to Sydney on page 141. I believe that should read HMC ML064. HMCS RACCOON was sunk by submarine U-165 on September 7th, 1942, while a member of that convoy. HMC ML064 was a part of the escort force of QS33. Sub-Lieutenant Norman L. Williams was her commanding officer and George Crowell was her telegraphist. Norm Williams and George Crowell had to identify the body of Lieutenant R. H. McConnell. No other crewmen were found from HMCS RACCOON.

George Crowell VE1LB

The body of Lieutenant R. H. McConnell on the stern of HMC ML064



George Crowell VE1LB

The funeral service for Lieutenant R. H. McConnell

The late Kenneth Weaver from New Edinburgh, Nova Scotia, across the Sissiboo River from Weymouth North, worked on the construction of HMC ML064 and HMC ML065. He worked on the electrical end of building these two vessels, mainly installing the ASDIC equipment. He said all the ASDIC ratings were British and this work was secret. Ken became an able seaman in the tanker POINT PELEE PARK. He visited Trinidad in this vessel and found HMC ML065 there. He went over and asked about the British men he worked with and was told they were still there but he did not get to see them. He felt it was late 1944 or early 1945 that he had seen HMC ML065 in Trinidad but I have no knowledge of her making more than the one trip south in 1943. Captain J. A. Heenan, OBE, RD, CD, RCN R (Retired) stated that while on a run to the Isle of Pines on the South Coast of Cuba HMC ML065 performed an excellent feat of seamanship in saving the lives of a number of seamen in a U.S. vessel in distress. This is recorded in his article Salute to "The Little Ships".

Captain Heenan was the commanding officer of HMCS PROVIDER. His article was my source for some of the information I have recorded here. The late Captain Heenan wanted this history made known so I am sure he would appreciate all I have tried to record here. I first read his article in 1962 and have had an interest in these ships since I read it.

The Canadian Fairmiles operated in flotillas of about six Fairmiles in each flotilla. The 70th and 78th flotillas operated out of Bermuda. The 73rd operated out of Saint John, New Brunswick, after it had been south in the Caribbean. The 82nd operated out of Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The 71st, 72nd, 76th, and the 79th operated out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the 77th out of St. John's, Newfoundland. This was after 1943 when sufficient Fairmiles had entered service to permit this number of flotillas. Actually the 72nd had tried to go south with the 73rd but had received so much weather damage that it had to turn around at Savannah, Georgia, and go back to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

HMCS PROVIDER went south with the 73rd flotilla and was kept busy keeping this flotilla and a number of American vessels in top shape while operating in the Caribbean. She actually serviced at least some of the eight Fairmiles given to the United States Navy under reverse lend-lease, the ones that were operating as submarine chasers, the USS SC1466 through to USS SC1473 inclusive. This fact was included in a signal from the United States Navy thanking HMCS PROVIDER for her assistance as she was leaving the Caribbean for Halifax, Nova Scotia, in April 1943. She spent the next winter in Bermuda as the base supply ship for the 70th and 78th flotillas.

In addition to their normal patrol duties all these Fairmiles acted as fast runners for this, that, and the other thing, a part here, a message there, and so on. On February 22nd, 1944, during a storm, a fully laden unescorted fast tanker had arrived at the approaches to Halifax but could not enter because a U-boat was known to be in the area. The 76th Fairmile Flotilla was sent out to protect this tanker. They did this by continually circling the tanker dropping depth charges until the tanker reached safe waters. It must have been quite a sight watching these little ships circle this tanker dropping depth charges. They all arrived safely back in Halifax, except for broken crockery and some superficial damage from the storm. HMC ML097 had become separated from the others and after her return, on retracing the course she had taken, it was learned she had passed between Sambro Island and the mainland. Quite a navigational feat under excellent conditions, but during a howling blizzard it was a miracle she was not smashed to pieces. I can just picture the radio operators in these Fairmiles huddled up to their equipment and trying to hang on. They had 18 inches of foot room only under their stations. It was February and would have been quite cold so they would have been trying to catch all the heat they could from the power supplies to their equipment. These power supplies were fairly large units and were mounted under the operating positions, normally taking up most of what little foot room was available.

Although I found no record of one of these little ships contacting Camperdown VCS during the war, I wanted to record a feat performed by one of them, of general interest to all living in the area. Especially to those who traveled back and forth to the last Ketch Harbour station.

One of the major tasks performed by these Fairmiles during the war was to assist minesweeping activities. The German Navy at one point tried to block the harbours of Halifax and St. John's by mining them. At one time a U-boat came in to the approaches to Halifax and laid a number of mines. In order to design an effective means for destroying these mines, and to understand them so defensive measures could be taken against them, one had to be caught and examined. On June 8th, 1943, HMC ML053 managed to catch one of these mines and hook it to a ninety-yard towline. She towed it a distance of fifteen and one half-miles to the approaches of Ketch Harbour where eight members of her crew wrestled this mine ashore. Then all but Lieutenant G. H. O. Rundle, RCNR, and Able Seaman John G. Lancien, RCNVR, from Regina, Saskatchewan, hid among the rocks along the shore while these two dismantled the mine and made it safe. Once this had been accomplished the others returned to the scene and assisted in removing the primer and mine mechanism. Quite a feat, which was performed right on the back door of station VCS! Lt. Rundle was awarded the George Medal and AB Lancien the British Empire Medal and the others were mentioned in dispatches. This mine can be seen at the Maritime Command Museum, 2725 Gottingen Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Oh yes, HMC ML053 was one of the naval craft which stood by the wreck of CLARE LILLEY fifteen months previous, and could very well have been the naval vessel which rescued the seaman from the boat with the ship's cat.

Public Archives Canada HN-1165

This is Rear-Admiral L. W. Murray, Commander-in-Chief Canadian Northwest Atlantic, as he pins the British Empire Medal on AB John G. Lancien, RCNVR, "for gallantry and devotion to duty'. Note that Lancien is wearing Canada badges on his uniform and Admiral Murray is not.

HMC ML121 was converted into a minesweeper, for a while, and patrolled the Digby and Weymouth areas as a minesweeper. It was believed by many that the U-boats would mine most of our harbours. This did not happen because the German navy wanted to keep the area free for their U-boats. The only mines they laid were at Halifax and St. John's and just briefly at each port. HMC ML121 was not a minesweeper when she escorted the surrendered U-boat, U889, into Shelburne in May 1945.

Joe Casey, Digby, Nova Scotia, is a former member of the legislative assembly for the provincial government. He was one of the officers in HMC ML121 and a friend of Lieutenant Rundle, who used to visit his home. So many of our war heroes had a drinking problem or something wrong with them, it seems, so I asked him about Rundle. Joe said there was nothing wrong with him. He was one fine guy with a lot of guts. He must have had the guts to pull that mine rescue off and he not only did it the once but twice. He did it again the next day when they managed to catch another mine.

HMC ML121 was assigned the international call sign CYXC at the end of the war. According to the records her call sign was CYZC during the war. The Canadian government kept very few Fairmiles on termination of the war. HMC ML121 was retained for a couple of years only at the end of the war and was not part of those kept as training vessels for cadets and the reserve navy. HMC ML104 was retained and became HMCS COUGAR. She was assigned this CYXC call sign and did not retain her CZGQ call sign. It can be confusing!

These Fairmiles had many uses. They were great "Guinea Pigs" in the experimentation of new equipment and clothing. The experiments were conducted in these small craft for what are now our common Gravol tablets for motion sickness. Because of their small size, conditions in them were as bad as any ship in service during the war. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April 2006 that they feel there may be as

many as five still in service. They must have been pleasant vessels in which to sail. The crews would have been young and a very "close-knit" family, including the commanding officer. The commanding officer was usually a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, although a few were only Sub-Lieutenants at the beginning when these little ships first went in service. Being so small they could "scoot" in and out anywhere around the coast and all things considered, those who had the privilege of operating the radiotelegraph equipment in one must have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The eighty Canadian Fairmiles:

They were built at:
A) Marine Industries, Sorel, Quebec.
B) Midland Boat Works, Midland, Ontario.
C) Greavette Boats Limited, Gravenhurst, Ontario.
D) Hunter Boats, Orillia, Ontario.
E) J. J. Taylor and Sons, Toronto, Ontario.
F) Minett – Shields Limited, Bracebridge, Ontario.
G) John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia.
H) A. C. Benson Shipyard, Vancouver, British Columbia.
I) Star Shipyard (Mercer's) Limited, New Westminster, British Columbia.
J) Vancouver Shipyards Limited, Vancouver, British Columbia.
K) Grew Boats Limited, Penetanguishene, Ontario.
L) Mac – Craft Company Limited, Sarnia, Ontario.

The dates are the date laid down, the date launched and the date delivered to the navy.

HMC ML050 – (B, 01FEB41, 22AUG41, 18NOV41
HMC ML051 – (B, 01FEB41, 15SEP41, 24NOV41
HMC ML052 – (E, 04FEB41, 29AUG41, 31OCT41
HMC ML053 – (E, 04FEB41, 18OCT41, 17OCT41 delivered the day before launched
HMC ML054 – (C, 24MAR41, 30AUG41, 17OCT41
HMC ML055 – (C, 24MAR41, 20OCT41, 06NOV41
HMC ML056 – (C, 24MAR41, 10NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML057 – (F, 03MAR41, 26JUL41, 28OCT41
HMC ML058 – (F, 03MAR41, 27SEP41, 24NOV41
HMC ML059 – (F, 11AUG41, 23APR42, 26MAY42
HMC ML060 – (D, 05APR41, 24JUL41, 01NOV41
HMC ML061 – (D, 05APR41, 24JUL41, 11NOV41
HMC ML062 – (L, 12FEB41, 26NOV41, 18APR42
HMC ML063 – (L, 12FEB41, 03DEC41, 18APR42
HMC ML064 – (G, 19APR41, 28AUG41, 15MAY42
HMC ML065 – (G, 19APR41, 27OCT41, 15MAY42
HMC ML066 – (J, 27JAN41, 12JUL41, 06MAR42
HMC ML067 – (J, 11FEB41, 27NOV41, 27MAR42
HMC ML068 – (H, 29JAN41, 25OCT41, 07AUG42
HMC ML069 – (H, 12FEB41, 04DEC41, 28MAR42
HMC ML070 – (I, 01FEB41, 17SEP41, 14MAR42
HMC ML071 – (I, 01FEB41, 06OCT41, 15APR42
HMC ML072 – (K, ..MAY41, 12NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML073 – (K, ..MAY41, 12NOV41, 24NOV41
HMC ML074 – (F, 18AUG41, 30APR42, 26MAY42
HMC ML075 – (F, 07SEP41, 12MAY42, 22JUN42
HMC ML076 – (F, 17SEP41, 12MAY42, 23JUN42
HMC ML077 – (C, 18AUG41, 12MAY42, 02JUN42
HMC ML078 – (C, 25AUG41, 06MAY42, 02JUN42
HMC ML079 – (E, 12AUG41, 30APR42, 27MAY42
HMC ML080 – (E, 20AUG41, 20MAY42, 17JUN42

HMC ML081 – (B, 20AUG41, 01MAY42, 27MAY42
HMC ML082 – (B, 20AUG41, 01MAY42, 27MAY42
HMC ML083 – (G, 20AUG41, 24MAR42, 25MAY42
HMC ML084 – (G, 20AUG41, 16MAY42, 18JUN42
HMC ML085 – (D, 31AUG41, 16MAY42, 13JUN42
HMC ML086 – (E, 15APR42, 03OCT42, 26OCT42
HMC ML087 – (E, 15APR42, 29OCT42, 09NOV42
HMC ML088 – (E, 15APR42, 10MAY42 – it is hard to believe they did that in less than one month and the delivery date is missing from the records.
HMC ML089 – (C, 16APR42, 01OCT42, 15OCT42
HMC ML090 – (C, 16APR42, 21OCT42, 19NOV42
HMC ML091 – (C, 16APR42, 06MAY43, 17MAY43
HMC ML092 – (D, 10APR42, 23OCT42, 02NOV42
HMC ML093 – (D, 10APR42, 01OCT42, 02NOV42
HMC ML094 – (B, 14APR42, 12NOV42, 19NOV42
HMC ML095 – (B, 14APR42, 03MAY43, 12MAY43
HMC ML096 – (F, 20APR42, 19OCT42, 09NOV42
HMC ML097 – (F, 20APR42, 19OCT42, 16NOV42
HMC ML098 – (K, 02APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML099 – (K, 02APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML100 – (K, 10APR42, 24OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML101 – (L, 05MAY42, 06OCT42, 07NOV42
HMC ML102 – (L, 10MAY42, 07NOV42, 14NOV42
HMC ML103 – (L, 30MAY42, 07NOV42, 18NOV42
HMC ML104 – (L, 15JAN43, 03JUL43, 04AUG43
HMC ML105 – (L, 01FEB43, 07AUG43, 05SEP43
HMC ML106 – (K, launched 15AUG43 only date on record
HMC ML107 – (K, launched 16AUG43 only date on record
HMC ML108 – (B, launched 29JUL43 only date on record
HMC ML109 – (D, launched 02JUL43 only date on record
HMC ML110 – (F, 06FEB43, 29JUN43, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML111 – (G, 05FEB43, launched date is missing, delivered on 09SEP43

I believe this is considered the division between the first or early program and the second or last program of these little ships. These 62 were nearly ready when it was decided to order the last 18.

HMC ML112 – (E, 21APR43, 18SEP43, 25OCT43
HMC ML113 – (E, 21APR43, 11NOV43, 20NOV43
HMC ML114 – (C, 21APR43, 11NOV43, 20NOV43
HMC ML115 – (L, 21APR43, 06NOV43, 16NOV43
HMC ML116 – (D, laid down is missing, 25SEP43, 16NOV43 There is a line through the delivery date so they may have been uncertain of that date. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April 2006 that HMC ML116 caught fire during construction but was finished and this must be the reason the dates are missing.
HMC ML117 – (K, 21APR43, 06NOV43, 16NOV43
HMC ML118 – (B, 21APR43, 30NOV43, 06NOV43 delivered before launched
HMC ML119 – (F, 02JUN43, 30OCT43, 16NOV43
HMC ML120 – (G, 20JUN43, 08JAN44, 27JAN44
HMC ML121 – (G, 27JUN43, 30MAR44, 17APR44
HMC ML122 – (J, 20AUG43, 23FEB44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML123 – (J, 28MAY43, 11MAR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML124 – (J, 08NOV43, 04APR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML125 – (I, 04AUG43, 18APR44, the delivery date is missing
HMC ML126 – (I, 07SEP43, 18APR44, the delivery date is missing

HMC ML127 – (I, 08NOV43 date launched and delivered missing
HMC ML128 – (H, 27SEP43, 22APR44, delivery date missing
HMC ML129 – (H, 04JAN44 date launched and delivered missing

HMCS PRESERVER – (A, 10JUL41, 28DEC41, 12JUL42 (Base Ship)
HMCS PROVIDER – (A, 24DEC41, 12JUN42, 01DEC42 (Base Ship)

Disposal of Fairmiles:
This is some of the records I have found of what became of each Fairmile on termination of the war. Some of this information came from a list with title: Disposal of Ships – Motor Launches – Fairmiles – dated January 14th, 1948. Some of the information came from Marc-Andre Morin, some from Commander McKee and the rest from various sources as mentioned in the text. Commander McKee told me they were selling Fairmiles at a fixed $3,500 per vessel post-war, which annoyed a lot of people. A couple of incensed letters in the press and only about a year old for some of them!

HMC ML050 was turned over to Marine Industries Limited, Montreal and she became RADEL II for survey work with Standard Oil of New Jersey.

HMC ML051 was sold to Commander C. H. Hudson, Vancouver. There is a mix-up between HMC ML050 and HMC ML051 and if HMC ML050 was renamed RADEL II this one may have been renamed STANBA 1.

HMC ML052 was sold to General J. C. Escobar, Montreal. HMC ML052 was renamed CYRIUS and then LA MARIE-JO. HMC ML052 had served with the free French Navy of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML053 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML054 was sold to Captain E. J. Weaver, Sorel, Quebec. This was the second Fairmile to terminate her naval service. The last commanding officer left this one on December 6th, 1944. HMC ML082 was the first and HMC ML108 was the third. The rest of the Fairmile fleet terminated their service in the summer of 1945.

HMC ML055 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML056 was sold to Creole Petroleum Corporation, Venezuela and renamed ESSO AYACUCHO.

HMC ML057 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal.

HMC ML058 was sold to A. E. Griffen (and another), Toronto and renamed KATHERINE G.

HMC ML059 was sold to Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, New York.

HMC ML060 was sold to B. O. Bissette, St. John, Quebec. The crew in HMC ML060 called her "The Mariposa Belle" from a poem by a famous Canadian poet who lived in the area she was built.

HMC ML061 was sold to the Creole Petroleum Corporation, Venezuela and renamed ESSO CONCORDIA.

HMC ML062 was sold to Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, New York. HMC ML062 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS WOLF in 1954, international call sign CGWR, pendant 762 and radiotelephone "Incident I". HMC ML062 served with the free French navy out of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML063 was sold to General J. C. Escobar, Montreal. HMC ML063 served with the free French navy out of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the South Coast of Newfoundland from January 15th, 1943 until the end of the war.

HMC ML064 was sold to Wendell Graham, Montague, Prince Edward Island and renamed SIX FOUR. HMC ML064 had participated in the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. George Crowell told me that at one time HMC ML064 and HMC ML080 were tied alongside each other at Rimouski, Quebec when a good breeze of wind came up causing them to rub against each other. The bit of overhang on the upper deck of HMC ML080 caught in the same overhang on HMC ML064 ripping her upper deck off from the bow back to the wheelhouse. This put HMC ML064 out of service and she limped down to the shipyard at Pictou, Nova Scotia where they put a tight canvas patch on her. She then proceeded back to Weymouth, Nova Scotia for repairs.

HMC ML065 was sold to Eric W. Phillips, Toronto and renamed the AUDREY A and then NADINE II.

HMC ML066 to HMC ML071, are six of the fourteen West Coast Fairmiles. This would make one Flotilla but I do not know the number of this flotilla or if the West Coast Fairmiles were divided into florillas.

HMC ML066 was sold to Finning Tractor and Equipment Company, Vancouver and renamed the EARLMAR.

HMC ML067 was sold to Coal Island Limited, Vancouver and renamed STRANGER II.

HMC ML068 was sold to Straits Towing and Salvage Company, Vancouver. The HMC ML068 was renamed many times as MARINE FREIGHT NO 1, MISS LINDA, SALVOR, SECHELT NARROWS and ST&S.

HMC ML069 was sold to Willard G. Weston, Vancouver and renamed CASA MLA and then HARWOOD.

HMC ML070 was sold to Marine Manufacturing Limited, Vancouver. The disposal list had M.V. MACHIGONNE in brackets after this entry and this is one of the names she had at one time. HMC ML070 was renamed many times as COAST RANGER, GULF RANGER, GULF TRADER, LACHAINA LADY MACHIGONNE and SARACEN III.

HMC ML071 sold to Gulf Lines Limited, Vancouver and was renamed GULF-WING, KONA WINDS, NIMPKISH PRINCESS, NORTHLAND PRINCESS and TROUBADOUR III.

HMC ML072 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A. HMC ML072 had received an explosion in her engine room. See notes below.

HMC ML073 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML074 was sold to George B. Burchell, Sydney, Nova Scotia and renamed ALOMA III.

HMC ML075 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML076 was sold to Acme Boat and Salvage Company, New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML077 was sold to Consolidated Shipping Corporation, Sorel, Quebec.

HMC ML078 was sold to George Elie Transport Tanker Company, Montreal and renamed ESSO CARDINAL.

HMC ML079 was sold to Herbert E. Corbett, Oakville, Ontario and renamed LADY ENIT and NANCY GRACE but one would expect this took place after the navy had terminated their service with her. HMC

ML079 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS RACCOON in 1954, international call sign CYQT, pendant 779 and radiotelephone "Incident M".

HMC ML080 was sold to United Boat Service Corporation, New York. U.S.A., and was renamed ALMETA QUEEN, COSA GRANDE and QUARTERDECK. According to the coxswain, Leading Torpedoman C. Muloine, HMC ML080 spent the summer and fall of 1942 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. She struck Prince Edward Island in the area where the present Wood Island ferry docks in a storm in mid January, 1943, and the crew was rescued by a farmer with a horse and sleigh. She was towed to Pictou, Nova Scotia and repaired but was a training vessel after that. He recorded this on page 23 in the book Fading Memories. HMC ML080 was also involved in the incident that ripped the upper deck off of HMC ML064 as noted above. The Air Force recorded Fairmile # 008 as visiting RCAF DARTMOUTH on May 3rd, 1945, on page 145 in the book The Royal Canadian Air Force Marine Squadrons, volume two, 1945 – 1985 by Geoff D. Pilborough. If this was HMC ML080 she probably served around Halifax as a training vessel.

HMC ML081 was sold to Louis Levin, Montreal, Quebec and was renamed ESSO TAPARITA.

HMC ML082 was sold to Stanley C. Alexander, Gaspe, Quebec. There is a photograph of HMCS MILLTOWN assisting HMC ML082 into a cradle at the Pictou, Nova Scotia Shipyard on page 76 of Minesweepers of the Royal Canadian Navy 1938-1945 by Ken Macpherson. HMC ML082 is flooded and about all that can be seen is her Monkey Island, the top of her wheelhouse. This is dated December 11th, 1942, and the source of this flooding would be interesting. HMC ML082 went on to serve another two years. She was the first Fairmile to terminate her naval career. Her last commanding officer was the first to leave on September 25th, 1944. Commander Fraser McKee told me in April, 2006, that HMC ML082 caught fire at Gaspe in 1944 and was sold as just a hull a couple of times after the war.

HMC ML083 was sold to Lorne Johnson, Montague, Prince Edward Island and renamed LAZY MARINER.

HMC ML084 was sold to R. E. Gamble, Toronto and was renamed NELVANA.

HMC ML085 was sold to United Boat Service Corp., New York. U.S.A.

HMC ML086 was sold to K. U. Gamble, Toronto and was renamed MONTERY.

HMC ML087 was sold to J. R. Trembly, Toronto and was renamed TZIGANE and CHEF TEK8ERIMAT.

HMC ML088 was sold to W. F. Christie, Toronto and was renamed EIGHTY-EIGHT, PENETANG EIGHTY-EIGHT, MIDLAND PENETANG EIGHTY-EIGHT and OLYMPIA III. The first commanding officer joined this one on May 10th, 1943, and the last one left on June 25th, 1945. Not only that, but the first commanding officer was a Lieutenant Commander and he was in command for most of her first six months in service. He is the highest rank, and the only one of that rank, to serve as commanding officer in these little ships, so she must have been a flotilla leader of some description or a senior training vessel.

HMC ML089 was sold to Northern Engineering and Supply Company, Fort William, Ontario and was renamed COASTAL QUEEN, CORNICHE and GRANDE COMMANDER.

HMC ML090 was sold to Brian Newkirk in Toronto and renamed LOUVICOURT and ROSAL.

HMC ML091 was sold to Wendel Graham, P.E.I., and renamed NINE-ONE.

HMC ML092 possibly sold to Radium Chemicals of Vancouver and renamed SUZETTE NO 1.

HMC ML093

HMC ML094 was sold to G. A. Griffen, P.E.I., and renamed ERNEST G.

HMC ML095 this one had Rolls Royce engines – see text above. HMC ML095 was sold to Rudolphe Corbeil and was renamed RODCO. As the RODCO she was owned at West Pubnico, Nova Scotia and was used to haul lobsters from Western Nova Scotia to Rockland, Maine.

HMC ML096 was turned over to Marine Industries, Montreal and then sold to M's Severin and Langlois.

HMC ML097 this one went to Gen Escobar, but as a re-sale when the boat returned to Marine Industries Limited, Montreal.

HMC ML098 was sold to Irenee Sicard of Montreal and was renamed CORITA, BIC and LE ST-BARNABE.

HMC ML099 was sold to Joe Dunkleman, Tip-Top Tailors of Toronto and was renamed DIPEDON and DONARVIE.

HMC ML100 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and see note with HMC ML118.

HMC ML101 was sold to Great Lakes Lumber and Shipping Company, Fort William, Ontario and was renamed EDMAR and NELLIE D.

HMC ML102 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and was renamed QUETZAL, CURLEW, SALISSA M, MOONDANCE and ENTERPRISE II. See note with HMC ML118.

Marc-Andre Morin

MOONDANCE ex HMC ML102

HMC ML103 was sold to C. M. Weegar, Penetang, Ontario and renamed ONE-O-THREE and LADY SIMONE.

HMC ML104 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government. HMC ML104 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS COUGAR in 1954, international call sign CYXC, pendant 704 and radiotelephone "Disband Z".

HMC ML105 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government and renamed DUC d'ORLEANS.

HMC ML106 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML106 call sign CZGS. She became HMCS BEAVER in 1954, international call sign CZGS, pendant 706 and radiotelephone "Irium E".

HMC ML107 was loaned to Quebec Provincial Government.

HMC ML108 was sold to the Radium Chemical Company Limited, Vancouver and was renamed MACHIGONNE II. This was the third Fairmile to terminate her war service. The last commanding officer left this one on December 19th, 1944. HMC ML082 was first. HMC ML054 was second and the rest terminated in the summer of 1945.

HMC ML109 was sold to Francis Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and was renamed QUETZAL II, ARARA and ARUBA. See note with HMC ML118.

HMC ML110 was sold to Louis Levin, Montreal and renamed ROSELINE, MISS KINGSTON, SAINT-LOUIS IVand LA SANTA MARIA IV.

HMC ML111 was sold to Gibson Mills Limited, Vancouver but HMC ML111 was taken back by the navy and became HMCS MOOSE in 1954, international call sign CYQF, pendant 711 and radiotelephone "Incident Q".

HMC ML112 transferred to and became RCMP FORT WALSH with international call sign CGMR and pendant MP33 until 1959. HMC ML112 is believed to have rescued some of the survivors from the British tanker ATHEL VIKING that was a part of Convoy BX-141 January 1945 and was sunk by a submarine in the approaches to Halifax Harbour. I have the full story recorded in detail in Section 7 of Radio Stations Common.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP FORT WALSH

HMC ML113 sold to La Co-operative Transport, Isle de la Madeleine Quebec and renamed LAVERNIERE.

HMC ML114 transferred to and became RCMP FORT SELKIRK but was never commissioned and was sold to H. P. Leask and Roy Pyke, Halifax, Nova Scotia and was renamed AMY MAE. George Drew in Clark's Harbour, Nova Scotia bought the AMY MAE and used her to haul lobsters out of Western Nova Scotia over to Rockland, Maine. On one trip she hit a bad storm crossing the mouth of the Bay of Fundy and managed to get oil and debris in among the lobster cargo. She limped back into Abbot's Harbour and they managed to save the lobster cargo by soaking it in clean salt water. HMC ML114 had served with the Bermuda flotillas.

HMC ML115 was sold to Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company, Toronto.

HMC ML116 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML116 call sign CYQY. She became HMCS REINDEER in 1954, international call sign CYQY, pendant 716 and radiotelephone "Flashlight D". When sold she was renamed SUPERTRADE and POLAR CLIPPER.

HMC ML117 was transferred to and became RCMP FORT STEELE but was never commissioned and was sold to L. A. Shackleton, Mount Royal, Quebec.

HMC ML118 was sold to Frances Farwell, Hamilton, Ontario and renamed FRANLISS III. Paul Southall contacted us and said that the four HMC ML100, HMC ML102, HMC ML109 and HMC ML118 that were sold to Mr. Farwell were disposed of as follows. One was to be his personal yacht, one was sent to St. John's, Newfoundland to be fitted with freezers to carry fish to Toronto and the other two were laid up and simply rotted away. Apparently the financial assistance on the one to carry fish did not materialize and he did not know the disposition of this one.

HMC ML119 was transferred and became RCMP FORT PITT with international call sign CGMM until 1959. I have not found her MP pendant number and I do not believe she was assigned one. When sold she was renamed SONDRA II. Jim Dowell said he joined HMC ML119 in September 1943 after graduating from signal school. He, with her first crew joined her at Collingwood or Penetanguishene and had always felt she had been built in that area. Their first job was to get HMC ML119 to Halifax before Lake St. Clair

and parts of the St. Lawrence River were blocked with ice. They were caught in a very bad storm and the little ship took a beating and everyone experienced their first taste of sea sickness on this first voyage. They managed to get to Halifax and took up their patrol assignment patrolling the East Coast. While alongside at Shelburne in late December 1943 a fire broke out on the jetty. The fire began to spread very quickly along the jetty and their flotilla was docked three deep with most of the crews on leave. They managed to release the lines from the inside ship and move all three ships to safety, where they remained the rest of the night. In the meantime the fire was brought under control.

Jim Dowell VE3PZP

This is the crew in HMC ML119.

HMC ML120 was sold to Upper Lakes and St. Lawrence Transportation Company, Toronto and was renamed NELVANA II and OSCEOLA. Then THE LADY GALADRIEL and eventually became MV MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE – see text above.

HMC ML121 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML121 with call sign CYXC. HMC ML121 became the INSHORE FISHERMAN and then DENIS D and was broken up in March 1972 – see note and photograph below. The Museum in Weymouth, Nova Scotia now has a nice model of HMC ML121 and this model is fitted with a Y gun for depth charges.

HMC ML122 to HMC ML129, are the other eight of the fourteen West Coast vessels. This would make for another Flotilla with the other six noted above. I do not know the flotilla numbers or if the West Coast Fairmiles were divided into flotillas.

HMC ML122 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed MALIBOU TYEE, NANCY M SEYMOUR and SOGNO d'ORO.

HMC ML123 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed MALIBOU MARLIN and TOLUCA.

HMC ML124 was listed in a naval call sign document dated June 8th, 1948 as HMC ML124 call sign CZDL. She became HMCS ELK in 1954, based on the West Coast with international call sign CZDL, pendant 724 and radiotelephone "Catapult A". HMCS ELK was discarded in 1956. She was the only post

World War II Fairmile to serve on the West Coast. When sold she was renamed PACIFIC GOLD and TEIRRAH.

HMC ML125 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and was renamed CAMPANA, GULF STREAM II, JORMHOLM, MALIBOU TILIKUM and YOKEEN.

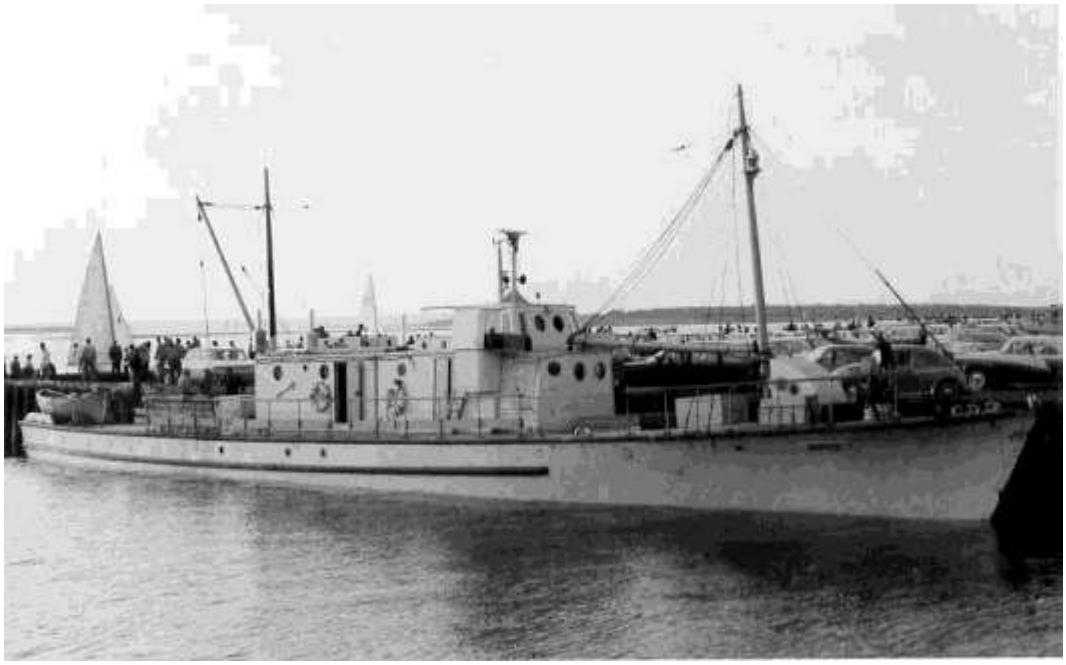
HMC ML126 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed PRINCESS MALIBOU.

HMC ML127 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and was renamed CHIEF MALIBU.

HMC ML128 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed PRINCESS LOUISA INLET.

HMC ML129 was sold to Hamiltair Limited, Vancouver and renamed HUNTRESS, ISLAND ADVENTURERS, MALIBOU INEZ and VIKING.

Looking over these lists makes one wonder if at least some of those knew something when they were sold.



Captain Hubert Hall

The DENIS D ex INSHORE FISHERMAN shown at Shediac, New Brunswick

One of the Weymouth Fairmiles built in 1943 was named the INSHORE FISHERMAN and then DENIS D. This vessel was registered at Hamilton, Ontario, on November 17th, 1950, and was transferred to Saint John, New Brunswick, on January 30th, 1953. On October 19th, 1955, this vessel was transferred again to Grindstone, Magdalen Islands, and her registration was closed on April 11th, 1972. She became DENIS D on February 29th, 1956, but her records do not identify her Fairmile name/number. We believe HMC ML120 is MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE, HMC ML111 was HMCS MOOSE when the DENIS D was in service, and the only other Fairmile built at Weymouth in 1943 was HMC ML121, therefore this is likely HMC ML121. When she was first registered on November 17th, 1950, she was fitted with two new Cummins Diesel Engines built in 1950. Each engine had six 5-1/8 inch cylinders with a stroke of 6 inches. These engines were rated at 350 brake horsepower. The records claim this vessel was capable of making 12 miles per hour with these engines. I have no idea why they read miles per hour instead of knots but it is probably because she was registered in Ontario. They operate in miles per hour rather than knots on the Great Lakes. The records of this vessel as INSHORE FISHERMAN and DENIS D (I have three different sets) do not list any signal letters where it states Signal Letters if any. Therefore one has to assume she was fitted with a small radiotelephone with a two-letter prefix and four digit suffix call sign and would not

appear on these records. Note the wire antenna between the masts in the above photo. This was the most popular small boat antenna at that time and it was known as a Marconi or Inverted L antenna. She was not listed with the International Telecommunication Union. This vessel was broken up in March 1972.

Leading Seaman Sid Rimbault, RCNVR, stated they had a good war in the Fairmiles. He spent four years of the war serving in them. He stated one blew up at Gaspe from someone walking into the engine room with a lit cigarette and I believe this one was repaired at Weymouth, Nova Scotia. According to page 26 of the 70-page report, Report No. 10, Directorate of History, CFHQ, 30 Jun 66, this was HMC ML072 in October 1944. There was one death, two badly injured and this put almost half the crew in the hospital. Sid stated another ran ashore at Sydney, Nova Scotia, but I found no further detail on this incident. He recorded these statements in the book Fading Memories on page 21.

I found it rather interesting that two of the seven Weymouth, Nova Scotia, built Fairmiles were involved in the surrender of the German U-boats on termination of the war. HMC ML120 assisted in escorting U-889 into Shelburne, Nova Scotia, in May 1945. HMC ML111 assisted in escorting U-190 into St. John's, Newfoundland, on June 3rd, 1945.

Canadian built Fairmiles served in the navy of five nations during World War II. HMC ML052, HMC ML062 and HMC ML063 were turned over to the Free French Navy on January 15th, 1943 and were based at the French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon on the south coast of Newfoundland during the war. All three were returned to the Canadian Navy on termination of the war. The St. Pierre Wireless Station was assigned call sign FQN2 and I feel confident these three little ships made good use of their service.

The John H. LeBlanc Shipyard, Weymouth, Nova Scotia built 15 Fairmiles. Seven; HMC ML064, HMC ML065, HMC ML083, HMC ML084, HMC ML111, HMC ML120 and HMC ML121 served with the Royal Canadian Navy with the majority of their sisters. Eight were built for the Royal Navy; HM ML392, HM ML393, HM ML394, HM ML395, HM ML396, HM ML397, HM ML398 and HM ML399. These eight were transferred to the United States Navy under reverse lend lease and were commissioned into the United States Navy in October and December of 1942.

These eight became; USS SC1466, USS SC1467, USS SC1468, USS SC1469, USS SC1470, USS SC1471, USS SC1472 and USS SC1473.

USS SC1466, USS SC1469 and USS SC1471 were transferred to the Mexican Navy on November 20th, 1943. Therefore, Canadian built Fairmiles served in the navy of five nations during World War II.

A list of call signs for 1946 lists a total of 71 ships in the Royal Canadian Navy. There are three Fairmiles listed and for some unknown reason they are listed with British call signs, and they are the only ships on this list with British call signs. They are listed by pendant number and not by name. The three are listed as:

Q116 GGVT
Q121 GGVZ
Q124 GGWD

HMCS PRESERVER was sold to the Peruvian Navy in 1946 and renamed MARISCAL CASTILLA and renamed again, CABO BLANCO. She was scrapped in 1961. **HMCS PROVIDER** was also sold to Peruvian owners and renamed MARUBA in 1946. She was taken over by the Peruvian Navy and renamed ORGENOS until scrapped in 1961. The International Telecommunication Union and Lloyds can probably provide the international call sign to all four names, but my records could produce the one record only. CABO BLANCO had call sign OBPC. Any call sign with an OA, OB or OC prefix was a Peruvian radio station and Peru was granted the additional 4T prefix maybe as late as 1960. To my knowledge Peru did not assign the 4T prefix to a ship.

THE RAN FAIRMILES

The Royal Australian Navy was created on July 10th, 1911, over a year after the creation of the Royal Canadian Navy in May 1910. The Royal Australian Navy had 35 Class B Fairmiles in World War II. All 35 were built in Australia from kits manufactured in the United Kingdom or kits manufactured in Australia. All 35 were assigned pendant numbers and names identical to the Royal Navy Fairmiles. The pendant number was ML followed by each vessels assigned name/number. The 35 were:

HMA ML424
HMA ML425
HMA ML426
HMA ML427
HMA ML428
HMA ML429
HMA ML430
HMA ML431
HMA ML801
HMA ML802
HMA ML803
HMA ML804
HMA ML805
HMA ML806
HMA ML807 08APR43
HMA ML808
HMA ML809
HMA ML810
HMA ML811
HMA ML812
HMA ML813
HMA ML814
HMA ML815
HMA ML816
HMA ML817
HMA ML818
HMA ML819
HMA ML820
HMA ML821
HMA ML822
HMA ML823
HMA ML824
HMA ML825
HMA ML826
HMA ML827

HMA ML807 was the first one commissioned and was commissioned on April 8th, 1943. Eight of the Australian Fairmiles formed a command under the United States Group U.S. CTG 70.1 at Mois Woendi.

The eight were:

HMA ML426
HMA ML428
HMA ML430
HMA ML801
HMA ML816
HMA ML817

HMA ML818
HMA ML819

HMA and HMNZ Fairmiles formed the 80th and 81st Fairmile flotillas in the South West Pacific in January 1945. This would have involved 12 Fairmiles if there were six in each flotilla as in Canada.

The last of the Australian Fairmiles were passed out of service in August 1945.

THE RNZN FAIRMILES

The Royal New Zealand Navy was created on October 1st, 1943. From 1921 until 1943 the New Zealand Navy was a Division of the Royal Navy.

The Royal New Zealand Navy had 12 Class B Fairmiles during World War II. I do not know where they were built. All twelve were commissioned on December 20th, 1943. The twelve were:

HMNZ ML400
HMNZ ML401
HMNZ ML402
HMNZ ML403
HMNZ ML404
HMNZ ML405
HMNZ ML406
HMNZ ML407
HMNZ ML408
HMNZ ML409
HMNZ ML410
HMNZ ML411

This would provide two flotillas of six vessels each. The interesting thing I found about the New Zealand Fairmiles is that they used the same Q prefix in the pendant number as the Canadian Fairmiles.

HMNZ ML409 was brought back in service from 1953 until 1963. She was named HMNZS MAORI and assigned pendant number P3570 during this commission.

HMNZ ML411 was brought back in service from 1947 until 1965. She was named HMNZS KAHU and assigned pendant number P3571. In 1953 she was renamed HMNZS KAHU I.

The other New Zealand Fairmiles were disposed of on termination of the war in 1945.

THE MINESWEEPERS

In addition to the four minesweepers with which the Royal Canadian Navy entered World War II, many more were constructed as soon as possible. On termination of the war we had a large fleet of this class of vessel. These first four, which I have already recorded, were known as a Basset Class Minesweeper. They were the only ones of this class. I believe their radio rooms were fitted with the popular Marconi station of the day, the one containing the LTT4 as the main transmitter. These new minesweepers were larger than the Fairmile and therefore were constructed by larger shipyards. They were built anywhere and everywhere in the country that had a shipyard big enough. Many yards of various sizes were specially built in the country just to handle one particular type of ship or another.

On termination of the war, our largest fleet of minesweepers was the Bangor Class. There were fifty-four of these ships in service. They spent most of their career as coastal escort vessels rather than actual minesweepers and were a very practical addition to our fleet, and all maintained a continuous listening

watch on radiotelegraphy. This meant they carried several radio operators. All were named after small towns and bays in the country. The fifty-four with their international call sign and years of service were:

----	1942-1945	HMS BAYFIELD
CGRZ	1941-1945	BELLECHASE
CYZT	1942-1945	BLAIRMORE
CYQP	1942-1945	BROCKVILLE
CGTB	1940-1945	BURLINGTON
----	1942-1945	HMS CANSO
----	1942-1945	HMS CARAQUET
CGRX	1942-1943	CHEDABUCTO
CGRQ	1941-1945	CHIGNECTO
CGRK	1941-1944	CLAYOQUOT
CYQB	1942-1945	COURTENAY
CGRD	1941-1945	COWICHAN
CYQL	1942-1945	DIGBY
CGDT	1941-1945	DRUMMONDVILLE
CYQS	1942-1945	ESQUIMALT
CYZK	1942-1945	FORT WILLIAM
CGBX	1941-1945	GANANOQUE
CGRB	1941-1945	GEORGIAN
CGBY	1941-1945	GODERICH
CYQF	1941-1945	GRANBY
CGDZ	1941-1945	GRANDMERE
----	1942-1945	HMS GUYSBOROUGH
----	1942-1945	HMS INGONISH
CGBZ	1942-1945	KELOWNA
CYZP	1942-1945	KENORA
CYZR	1942-1945	KENTVILLE
CYQK	1942-1945	LACHINE
----	1942-1945	HMS LOCKEPORT
CGRP	1941-1945	MAHONE
CGRF	1941-1945	MALPEQUE
CGDX	1941-1945	MEDICINE HAT
CYQD	1941-1944	MELVILLE
CYZQ	1942-1945	MILLTOWN
CGRV	1941-1945	MINAS
CGRY	1941-1945	MIRAMICHI
CYZS	1942-1944	MULGRAVE
CGRM	1940-1945	NIPIGON
CYQJ	1942-1945	NORANDA
CGRS	1941-1945	OUTARDE
CYZJ	1942-1945	PORT HOPE
CGRL	1941-1945	QUATSINO
CGRW	1941-1945	QUINTE
CGDW	1941-1945	RED DEER
CYZL	1942-1945	SARNIA
CYZM	1942-1945	STRATFORD
CGDV	1941-1945	SWIFT CURRENT
CGRN	1941-1945	THUNDER
CYQR	1942-1945	TRANSCONA
CYQN	1942-1945	TROIS RIVIERES
CYQM	1942-1945	TRURO
CGRJ	1941-1945	UNGAVA
CGDY	1941-1945	VEGREVILLE
CGRT	1941-1945	WASAGA

CYZN	1942-1945	WESTMOUNT

Some of the Canadian ships were never commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy. They were British ships with Canadian crews. Some of them had been built for the British or Royal Navy and simply remained Canadian with Canadian crews. Others had been British ships transferred to the Canadian navy and were never commissioned into the Canadian navy. At least it would appear that way and I have not found a Canadian call sign for them. Therefore I simply list them as HMS although LCdr. David J. Freeman, CF (Ret'd) states they were commissioned in the Canadian Navy in his excellent book Canadian Warship Names.

Another type of vessel used during the war that I had always heard called the Algerine Minesweeper was also called an Algerine Class Escort Vessel. The minesweepers became Escort Vessels because the mining of this coast did not take place as forecasted. We had an even dozen of these Algerine Class and all were named for one town or another so those back home had a bit in common with the Navy and the war. These were:

CGBG	1944-1945	BORDER CITIES
CYZF	1944-1946	MIDDLESEX
CYVX	1943-1945	PORTAGE
CYVS	1943-1945	SAULT STE MARIE
CZJQ	1944-1945	FORT FRANCIS
CZJR	1944-1945	NEW LISKEARD
CGBC	1944-1945	ROCKCLIFFE
CYVZ	1943-1945	WALLACEBURG
CYZV	1944-1945	KAPUSKASING
CYZG	1944-1945	OSHAWA
CYVW	1943-1946	ST. BONIFACE
CYVT	1943-1946	WINNIPEG

Each of these maintained a continuous radiotelegraph watch and was mainly a coastal escort vessel. A favourite run for these was escorting convoys of merchant ships between Halifax and the eastern United States. Very important convoy routes were set up between the two areas, with Halifax the major centre for forming the large convoys to the United Kingdom.

Possibly you are wondering why I am using so much space describing these naval vessels. Each of these ships had a very interesting career but the first of these had only the mainstay Department of Transport Coast Stations for communications. Not only that, a number of these vessels regularly communicated through Camperdown VCS and the other coast stations after the war.

The Navy had so many ships during this war that it makes one wonder where they found the manpower to operate them. Canada had a population of six to twelve million only at the time depending on whose record you quote. In addition to these minesweepers the Navy rounded up an assortment of vessels that they called minesweepers. These were former rumrunners, fishing vessels, ferries, lightships, anything that floated and looked to the politicians like something the navy could use.

THE ARMED YACHTS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

In addition to these ships the politicians sent a crew on a buying spree to the United States to purchase any yachts they felt would be of some use as patrol boats. A yacht, a large steel yacht included, is a poor excuse for a warship. The politicians are the ones that supply the ships. We often said the only good ships were mistakes in the coast guard fleet and I feel the navy felt the same at times. The Royal Canadian Navy had twenty-one yachts that they refitted as Armed Patrol Vessels during World War I and World War II. There were five during World War I and sixteen during World War II. These sixteen were the ships early in the war that had to use the Department of Transport Coast Stations.

The five World War I Armed Yachts:

HMCS FLORENCE
HMCS GRILSE
HMCS TUNA
HMCS STADACONA
HMCS HOCHELAGA

The sixteen World War II Armed Yachts:

HMCS SANS PEUR	CZCJ
HMCS BEAVER	CGLF
HMCS GRIZZLEY	CGJY
HMCS COUGAR	CGJZ
HMCS RENARD	CGLP
HMCS WOLF	CGKJ
HMCS VISON	CGLD
HMCS MOOSE	CGLQ
HMCS CARIBOU	CGLK
HMCS ELK	CGLB
HMCS HUSKY	CGLN
HMCS LYNX	CGLM
HMCS OTTER	----
HMCS REINDEER	CGLR
HMCS RACCOON	CGLS
HMCS AMBLER	CGDQ

At the first part of World War II twelve yachts were based on the East Coast and four on the West Coast. HMCS GRIZZLEY, HMCS WOLF and HMCS COUGAR were on the West Coast all through the war. HMCS SANS PEUR was on the West Coast until transferred to the East Coast on January 24th, 1944.

THE PARK SHIPS

We produced 456 Merchant Ships, as stated, during this war. The first of these were sold to the United States who turned them over to the United Kingdom under a lend-lease agreement. These were all named with a Fort prefix and mainly a Canadian name for the suffix. FORT AKLAVIK and FORT LOUISBOURG were but two of the many. By 1942 Canada decided to step in and supply a fleet of her own to help in the war effort, maintaining a steady supply of material needed for this war and to feed the population of the United Kingdom.

The company formed in 1942 was a crown owned company and was given the name the Park Steamship Company. This company supplied ships to the various Canadian shipping companies to operate and all the ships were named after the numerous federal Canadian parks throughout the country. They contained the word Park as the suffix of their name. There were a total of 176 ships that came under this company. All, except for one, were produced in our shipyards during the war. RIDING MOUNTAIN PARK was built in 1905 and was named the W. S. FIELDING. She was taken over in 1945, converted into a tanker, and renamed.

There were three distinct types of these ships and some of these were altered slightly from one shipyard to the other in order to assist in their construction. An expert on these can tell by slight alterations, the type and the reason for any alterations. These alterations did not involve communications. Each ship carried three radio operators during the war and maintained a continuous radio watch. Each operator had at least a second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio from one of many schools teaching this subject throughout the country.

The Park Ships were known by their deadweight tonnage. The majority was ten thousand ton and therefore quite common for someone to refer to one as a ten thousand ton Park. They were all assigned four letter international call signs but used coded calls during the war. The following are the 180 ships with their call signs and their deadweight tonnage. The letter T following this tonnage signifies that this ship was a tanker and the remainder dry cargo ships. Three of these ships were British and one Australian, leaving 176 for Park Steamship Company of Canada.

VDZY	AINSLIE PARK	4700
VCNG	ALBERT PARK	10000
VGGS	ALDER PARK	10000
VCJL	ALEXANDRA PARK	10000
VDQB	ALGONQUIN PARK	10000
VCQJ	ARGYLE PARK	4700
VDZP	ARLINGTON BEACH PARK	10000T
VCKC	ASHBY PARK	4700
VGGF	ASPEN PARK	10000
VGGM	ATWATER PARK	10000
VDDN	AVONDALE PARK	4700
VCKB	BALDWIN PARK	4700
VDJS	BANFF PARK	10000
VDZX	BEATON PARK	10000
VGGT	BELWOODS PARK	10000
VCNV	BELL PARK	4700
VDDP	BERESFORD PARK	4700
VGVL	BLOOMFIELD PARK	4700
VGGB	BOWNESS PARK	10000
VDYB	BRENTWOOD BAY PARK	10000T
VGVW	BRIDGELAND PARK	10000
VDYZ	BUFFALO PARK	10000
VCNX	CARTIER PARK	4700
GFRT	CATARAQUI PARK (British)	4700
VCJJ	CHAMPLAIN PARK	10000
GFCD	CHIGNECTO PARK (British)	4700
VDTC	CHIPPEWA PARK	10000
VDYC	CLEARWATER PARK	10000T
VDDR	CONFEDERATION PARK	4700
VDDF	CONNAUGHT PARK	10000
VCJC	CORNISH PARK	10000
VGVY	CORONATION PARK	10000
VDSB	CRESCENT PARK	4700
VCPC	CROMWELL PARK	10000
VGGC	CRYSTAL PARK	10000
VDZR	CYPRESS HILLS PARK	10000T
VDRQ	DARTMOUTH PARK	4700
VDDK	DENTONIA PARK	10000
VGVS	DOMINION PARK	10000
VGCD	DORVAL PARK	10000
VDZB	DUFFERIN PARK	4700
VDYQ	DUNDURN PARK	10000
VGVD	DUNLOP PARK	10000
VGGG	EARLSCOURT PARK	10000
VGVP	EASTWOOD PARK	10000
VDDT	EGLINTON PARK	3600T
VCMC	ELGIN PARK	10000
VDTF	ELK ISLAND PARK	10000
VDSG	ELM PARK	10000

VCKD	EVANGELINE PARK	4700
VCMM	FAIRMOUNT PARK	10000
VMSG	FAWKNER PARK (Australia)	4700
VCLC	FRONTENAC PARK	10000
VCQG	GARDEN PARK	10000
VCLV	GASPESIAN PARK	10000
VDGQ	GATINEAU PARK	10000
VDRG	GLACIER PARK	10000
VCJD	GOLDSTREAM PARK	10000
VGVQ	GRAFTON PARK	10000
VDTG	GREEN GABLES PARK	10000
VGGQ	GREEN HILL PARK	10000
VCKX	HAMILTON PARK	4700
VCJK	HAMPSTEAD PARK	10000
VGVT	HASTINGS PARK	10000
----	HECTOR PARK	4700
VDTB	HIGH PARK	10000
VCNN	HIGHLAND PARK	10000
VGGZ	HILLCREST PARK	10000
----	JASPER PARK	10000
VDDX	KAWARTHA PARK	10000
VGVM	KELOWNA PARK	4700
VDZC	KENSINGTON PARK	4700
VDTK	KILDONAN PARK	10000
VGGR	KITSILANO PARK	10000
VDGX	KOOTENAY PARK	10000
VGGV	LA SALLE PARK	10000
VDTL	LAFONTAINE PARK	10000
VCMV	LAKESIDE PARK	10000
VGVR	LAKEVIEW PARK	10000
VDQC	LANSDOWNE PARK	4700
VDQF	LAURENTIDE PARK	10000
VGGP	LEASIDE PARK	10000
VGVZ	LISCOMB PARK	4700
VCQC	LORNE PARK	4700
VDYK	LOUISBOURG PARK	10000
VCPP	MAISSONEUVE PARK	4700
VDZK	MANITOU PARK	4700
VDSN	MAYFAIR PARK	4700
VDYF	MEWATA PARK	10000
VDDM	MILLICAN PARK	3600T
VCJM	MISSION PARK	10000
VDTM	MOHAWK PARK	10000
VCKM	MONTEBELLO PARK	10000
VDWF	MONTMORENCY PARK	4700
VDYM	MOOSE MOUNTAIN PARK	10000T
VDYL	MOUNT BRUCE PARK	10000T
VDWB	MOUNT DOUGLAS PARK	10000
VDYG	MOUNT MAXWELL PARK	10000T
VDDD	MOUNT ORFORD PARK	10000
VDWC	MOUNT REVELSTOKE PARK	10000
VDJB	MOUNT ROBSON PARK	10000
VDZJ	MOUNT ROYAL PARK	10000T
VCPQ	MULGRAVE PARK	4700
VDTN	NEMISKAN PARK	10000
VDZN	NIPIWAN PARK	3600T

VGVB	NORANDA PARK	10000
VDDW	NORWOOD PARK	3600T
VCJW	OAKMOUNT PARK	4700
VDDV	OTTERBURN PARK	3600T
VDDZ	OUTREMONT PARK	10000
VGGJ	PARKDALE PARK	10000
VDGZ	POINT PELEE PARK	10000T
VDTP	POINT PLEASANT PARK	10000
VCJP	PORTLAND PARK	10000
VDMG	PORT ROYAL PARK	10000
VDGF	PRINCE ALBERT PARK	10000
VCNC	PRINCETON PARK	10000
VGGL	QUEENS PARK	10000
VCJX	QUEENSBOROUGH PARK	10000
VDZQ	QUETICO PARK	10000T
VGVJ	RICHMOND PARK	10000
VDTQ	RIDEAU PARK	10000
VDZM	RIDING MOUNTAINS PARK	1854(GRT) T
VDTR	RIVERDALE PARK	10000
VDSC	RIVERVIEW PARK	10000
VDTZ	ROCKLIFFE PARK	4700
VCKV	ROCKLAND PARK	4700
VDPG	ROCKWOOD PARK	4700
VDTJ	ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK	10000
VGGY	RONDEAU PARK	10000
VDDB	ROSEDALE PARK	10000
VDDC	RUNNYMEDE PARK	10000
VCNR	RUPERT PARK	10000
VGGK	SALT LAKE PARK	10000
VGGN	SAPPERTON PARK	10000
VGVK	SEACLIFF PARK	10000
VCNB	SELKIRK PARK	10000
VCJS	SEVEN OAKS PARK	10000
VCQQ	SHAKESPEARE PARK	4700
VDDJ	SIBLEY PARK	10000
VDZS	SILVER STAR PARK	10000T
VCLL	SIMCOE PARK	10000
VDDS	SPRINGBANK PARK	3600T
VDTS	STANLEY PARK	10000
VDZG	STRATHCONA PARK	10000
VGVC	SUNALTA PARK	10000
VDYS	SUNNYSIDE PARK	10000
VCJV	SUNSET PARK	4700
VCPV	SUTHERLAND PARK	4700
----	TABER PARK	4700
GFCJ	TARONGA PARK (British)	4700
VDYP	TECUMSEH PARK	10000
VDYR	TEMAGAMI PARK	10000
VDYT	TIPPERARY PARK	10000
VGVC	TOBIATIC PARK	10000
VGVF	TUXEDO PARK	10000
VDTX	TWEEDSMUIR PARK	10000
VDQG	VICTORIA PARK	4700
VDZF	WASCANA PARK	10000
VCLK	WAVERLEY PARK	10000
VCKZ	WELLINGTON PARK	10000

VCJY	WENTWORTH PARK	4700
VDYX	WESTBANK PARK	10000
VCMW	WESTDALE PARK	4700
VDDG	WESTEND PARK	10000
VDTW	WESTMOUNT PARK	10000
VGVX	WESTON PARK	10000
VCKJ	WESTVIEW PARK	10000
VCJB	WHITEROCK PARK	10000
VGGX	WHITESHELL PARK	10000
VDYJ	WILDWOOD PARK	10000T
VDZL	WINDERMERE PARK	10000
VDYW	WINNEPEGOSIS PARK	10000
VCKK	WINONA PARK	10000
VGGW	WITHROW PARK	10000
VDZT	WOODLAND PARK	4700
VDDY	YAMASKA PARK	10000
VDTY	YOHO PARK	10000

Public Archives Canada C39760

This is the SS YOHO PARK with international call sign VDTY

S. L. Cairns, the former Senior Operations Supervisor at station VCS, served in ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK during the war. This particular park is now Banff National Park in Alberta. Stan Cairns graduated from the Saint John Vocational School, Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1944 and joined the ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK as second radio operator, remaining in her at that position until 1946. Don McKenzie, from Toronto, Ontario, was Chief operator in this vessel. Don was Chief because he had a voyage previous to Stan. Crews for these ships were very hard to find and anyone with any experience was not long in finding himself in charge of his department in one vessel or another. Junior or third operator in this vessel was Alex Petrochuk from Western Canada. They were to make three trips in this ship which took two years on a run from Saint John to Cape Town, South Africa, leaving Saint John and stopping at New York, Barbados, then on to Cape Town, returning each time via the same route and stops.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PARK's Radio Room contained all Marconi equipment, at least as far as Stan can remember. She had a three tube Short Wave (high frequency) regenerative receiver believed to be a 3V-SW-8, a Marconi MSL-5 Main Receiver, a Marconi Automatic Alarm and Automatic Keying unit for sending and receiving the distress alarm and call automatically. Her transmitters were the STT-4 Short Wave transmitter and the LTT-4 Medium Frequency transmitter. The LTT4 was capable of transmitting as high as about three megahertz in today's terminology. The STT4 was capable of transmitting from about three megahertz to about thirty megahertz, the high frequency portion of the radio spectrum in today's

terminology. Although the LTT4 was crystal tuned and fixed to each frequency assigned to the station, the STT4 was most interesting as it was equipped with a Variable Frequency Oscillator and could move around the marine frequencies in this spectrum similar to a receiver. Although ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK was assigned call sign VDTJ from our international allotment of call signs, she operated under coded calls during the war. She had call sign GP5TU for some time until this was changed to MB4CA. This ship was on the same run as the POINT PLEASANT PARK that had been named for a park in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. One of the few, if not the only message addressed to ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK during these voyages was to advise her of the loss of POINT PLEASANT PARK which was torpedoed at 1:55 PM on February 23rd, 1945, off Africa (2942S 0958E). This message also advised her to divert along the East Coast of South America and to string out her submarine nets. These nets were carried by the majority of the Park ships and could be slung over the side of the ship by long booms. If this were done, a torpedo might get caught and discharge in the net doing little if any damage to the ship. These nets had the disadvantage of creating so much drag that they slowed the ship considerably. For this reason the Captain of ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK like so many others refused to use them. ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK continued to Cape Town without incident. Actually U-510, the U-boat that sank POINT PLEASANT PARK, did so only by chance. By this time the war was nearing an end. Germany and her forces had been so weakened that U-510 was taking a cargo of raw materials home for their manufacturing plants. U-510 had two torpedoes only. The first missed POINT PLEASANT PARK and the second nearly missed. Nine men were killed when the torpedo struck and exploded, but the other fifty were rescued after spending ten days in three of the ship's boats.

A monument commemorating the loss of this ship and nine men stands inside the gate of Point Pleasant Park, Halifax. The late Captain Paul W. Tooke, who was third officer in S.S. POINT PLEASANT PARK at the time of this incident, was instrumental in having the monument erected.

On ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK return trip to Canada she carried five naval ratings and radio operator Hugh Stone from the crew of POINT PLEASANT PARK. The radio operators in ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK were very impressed with Hughie. He had been an operator before the war and this was the first experienced operator they had met.

Alex Petrochuk took sick and one of the other operators went up on a high frequency with the STT4 and called Halifax direct stating Alex's condition and requesting instructions. This was the only time the ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK used her STT4 high frequency transmitter. The Captain was told to leave Alex at Barbados, as they were not far from there at the time. Hugh Stone filled in and stood watches with Don and Stan for the remainder of the voyage home.

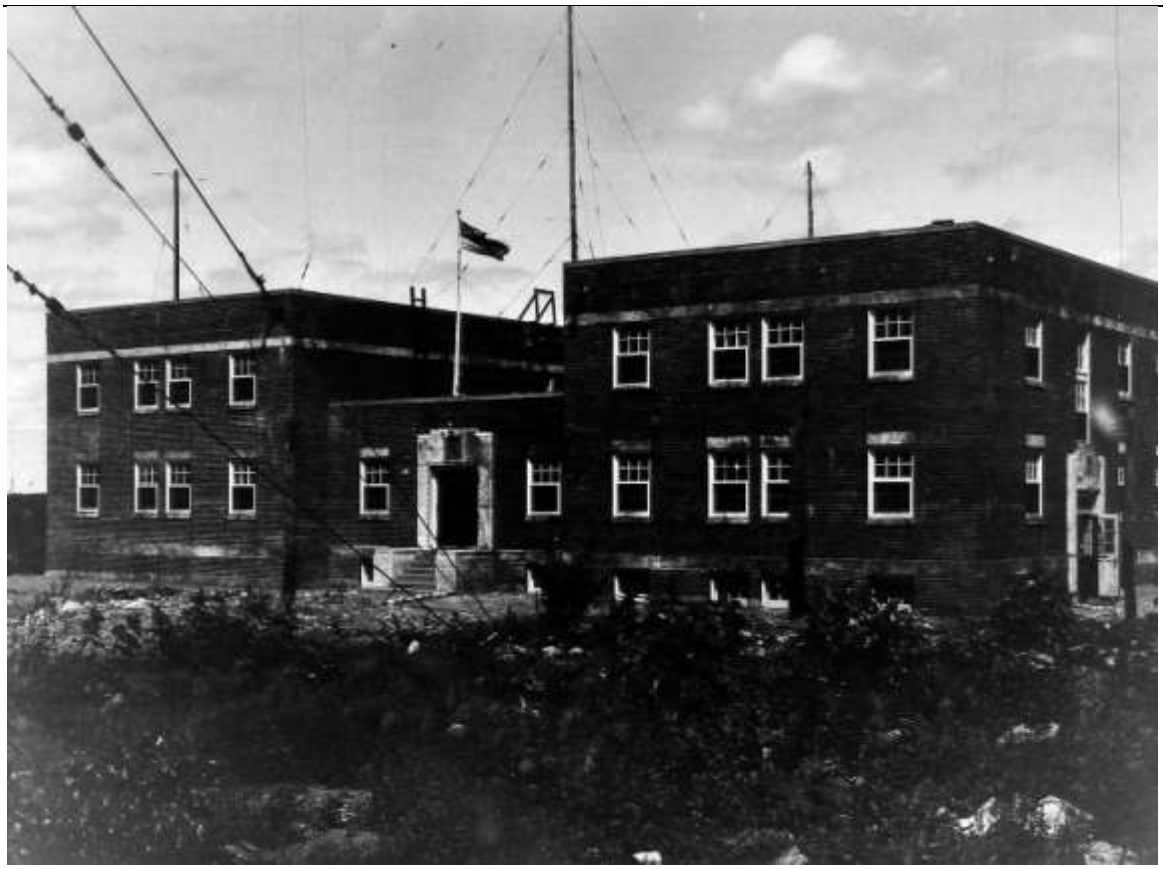
Carrying three operators aboard each vessel was the British procedure. Canada, being a British Commonwealth Country, favoured this procedure over and above that of the United States. With three operators the ship had a much better chance of obtaining favourable communications. If the junior operator was unable to handle a watch until sufficiently trained, there were two others to maintain a twenty-four hour watch in the radio room. The American equivalent of these Park ships was their famous Liberty Ship. To my knowledge these American ships carried only two operators. The chief operator must have had his hands full trying to maintain a twenty-four hour watch until he could unload an incompetent junior operator assigned to him. I did learn, through a former shipmate, of one British operator who had his certificate cancelled and was refused to have it reinstated after he failed to recognize his call sign during the war. Apparently he had copied and logged a call to his ship but failed to recognize the call sign. This was a rather severe penalty, but one which would have cleaned up the act of many. Since they were not allowed to transmit unless in an emergency, trying to explain why you had not received a course change sent many hours ago would have been something else. There had to be many fascinating experiences from the many radio rooms sailing around the world during the war. In addition to the famous Park fleet Canada had the remainder of her fleet at sea during the war. The "Lake Boats" were sent on deep-sea voyages, which must have been rather unusual and all of these ships would have carried the normal three radio operators.

The late Leo Irwin, a former radio operator on the staff of station VCS, sailed in the HILLCREST PARK during the war making a number of voyages back and forth between this area and the United Kingdom. Her radio room was another Marconi installation identical to ROCKY MOUNTAINS PARK. The late Gus

Crewe retired as Technical Station Manager of station VCS and sailed in three ships of the Park fleet during the war. He made a number of voyages to the United Kingdom, Mediterranean, and Australia in MOUNT ORFORD PARK, FAIRMOUNT PARK, and DUFFERIN PARK. Gus had graduated from the Eastern Radio School, Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1943, and after a short while as radio operator ground crew at Dorval Airport, Quebec, he joined the merchant Navy manning pool. Gus was one of the few Canadians to obtain a first class Certificate and did so during the early period of his career.

HALIFAX RADIO CFH AND THE NAVAL RADIO STATIONS

The Marconi station acquired by the Royal Canadian Navy at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia was soon found to be rather overloaded with the addition of all the ships assigned to the Navy. Glace Bay was the most powerful station in eastern Canada at the time and continued to serve the Navy throughout the war. With the expanding naval activities, steps had to be taken to have better communications. Therefore the Royal Canadian Navy was to expand its own station, to be four times as powerful as the Glace Bay Station, and designed to control the North Atlantic convoy routes. Not only was it to be more powerful, it was the first Canadian coastal station to use the high frequency portion of the radio spectrum. This station was to communicate with all ships, both naval and merchant, and therefore had both naval and civilian operators on the staff, one Department of Transport operator on each shift with the naval radio telegraph operators. The first person sent there in charge of the D.O.T. staff was Charles Williams. Charlie at the time of this promotion was senior operator at Camperdown VCS. The call sign of this new station was CFH but during the war it used a continually changing coded call sign. CFH opened a few years prior to World War II in the brick building at the foot of North Street in the city of Halifax. This was near the centre gate of HMCS STADACONA. The new station, the expansion of CFH, did not use 500 kilohertz and any vessel wanting to communicate with it had to use one of the high frequency bands.



Public Archives Canada PA114455

This is the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.

Public Archives Canada PA114456

This is another view of the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.

Public Archives Canada PA114457

This is the Albro Lake Operations Building on August 16th, 1943.

The transmitters of this new station were located at the village of Newport Corner, Nova Scotia near the town of Windsor. Shortly after the transmitters of this new station were in service, the receiving site and operating positions were moved from HMCS STADACONA and were located outside Dartmouth, Nova Scotia in the Village of Albro Lake. The transmitters were controlled via normal telephone lines. This new station became the most powerful broadcasting unit in Canada, and was believed at the time of construction to be the most modern naval radio station in the world. At that time it had twenty transmitters and the main transmitter had an output of 80,000 watts. This new station cost Canada six million dollars, but it was estimated that the cost was repaid in three months in the amount of North Atlantic shipping saved. When this station was first "turned on" in May 1943 it must have seemed like one huge light going on to those trying to communicate between the ships at sea and the offices ashore. There must have been nearly a thousand ships copying the signals from this station at any given time during the war. During the year 1944 this station's message traffic averaged one million code groups a month. A standby diesel power plant made certain that the station was able to operate if the outside sources of power had failed.

Royal Canadian Navy D2/C995

This is the transmitter site Newport Corner on July 22nd, 1942.

Royal Canadian Navy D2/C993

This is the transmitter site Newport Corner on July 22nd, 1942.

Canadian Armed Forces HS 70 4509

This is LS J. Burgoyne, PO L. Schofield, and MWO W. Whitefield, setting the frequency at the main console of the Newport Transmitter site. The late Joe Burgoyne retired a radio operator at VCS.

Canadian Armed Forces HS 70 4510

This is Leading Seaman Joseph F. Burgoyne and Master Warrant Officer William Whitefield testing the power tubes in one of the many transmitters at the Newport Transmitter site.

The three towers of its main transmitter were 560 feet high and two other towers were 320 feet high. The transmitters and auxiliary power plants were housed in brick buildings. The tubes that were in the power amplifier of the main transmitter weighed 250 pounds each. These tubes had to be cooled by forced streams of purified air. There were oil switches that stood eighteen feet high controlling electric voltages of 350,000 volts. The main aerial had insulators, nine feet long and eighteen inches in diameter, each tested to stand a strain of 90,000 pounds and a voltage of 350,000 volts.

Lieutenant D. V. Carroll, MBE, RCN, was the officer who stood by Newport during its construction and was in charge of the station throughout the war. Doug joined the Royal Canadian Navy as a boy seaman telegraphist in 1925 and was a Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist in the RESTIGOUCHE during the evacuation of Dunkirk. On January 1st, 1945, he was honoured with the award of the MBE for his dedicated service in getting the transmitters of this station in service.

Royal Canadian Navy

Lieutenant D. V. Carroll

D. V. Carroll, VE3VC, is recorded in “Silent Keys” on page 51 of the January 1973 QST.

Everything transmitted in radiotelegraph during World War II was done in a coded form. The standard procedure for each naval ship was to copy everything from the station it was assigned to monitor, normally CFH Halifax. Each message was broken down or decoded to the point of the address. Each operator copied

this traffic with an ordinary lead pencil into a logbook. The size of these logbooks was similar to the Reader's Digest of today. I once saw one of these old logs. I wish I had one to retain as an artifact from this war service.

Each naval base around the country had a radio station that any naval ship could work. The naval base at Gaspe, Quebec, was known as HMCS FORT RAMSEY and had international call sign CFL. Canada had many small naval bases during the war. For example there was one at Sydney and Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The naval radio operators in the ships, especially the small ships like the Fairmiles, would copy the CFH Halifax or any other station's broadcasts they were assigned to monitor, but could transmit their message traffic to these small radio stations.

The following is a list of these stations dated June 9th, 1948:

Call sign, authority and location, frequencies used in Kilocycles, type of emission:

***** Not yet in use.

CFD Naval Air Section, Dartmouth, N.S., 3468, 4400 A0.1, A3

CFE Naval Air Section, Patricia Bay, B.C., 3468, 4400 A0.1, A3

CFF * Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario 4850, 8824, 13230, 17995 A0.1, RATT

CFH Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. *44.8, *78, *92.3, 107, 115, 2844, 5502.5, 8400, 9040, 12500, 17580, 24070 A0.1, RATT

CFH4/6/8/12/16 Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 4470, 6395, 8370, 12520, 16845 A0.1

CFI Spare, not yet allocated.

CFL Spare, not yet allocated. (HMCS FORT RAMSEY must have closed.)

CFS Spare, not yet allocated.

CFV Spare, not yet allocated.

CGE Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. *2768, 7515, *13230, *17995 A0.1, RATT

CGH Any or all Canadian Naval Shore Station (s)

CGI Spare, not yet allocated.

CGN Esquimalt Radio, Esquimalt, B.C. 2716 A3

CGV Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 5435, 8190, 13510, 15665 A0.1 RATT

CGW Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 5735, 7985, 9055, 10945, 12157.5, 14660, 16005, 20215 A0.1 RATT

CGX Halifax Radio, Newport Corner, N.S. 2716, 3468, 3480, 6800, 9890 A0.1, A3, RATT

CKD Naval Reserve Division, Winnipeg, Manitoba 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKE Naval Reserve Division, Regina, Saskatchewan 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKF Naval Reserve Division, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKG Naval Reserve Division, Edmonton, Alberta 6550, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKH Naval Reserve Division, Calgary, Alberta 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKJ H.M.C. Communication School, Halifax, N.S. (The Communication School had not moved to HMCS CORNWALLIS.)

CKK Naval Reserve Division, Vancouver, B.C. 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CKL Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 9055, 11500, 17560, 18800, 23125 A0.1, RATT

CKN Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. *44.8, *78, *92.3, 155, 2844, 6600, 16760, 24380 A0.1, RATT

CKN4/6/8/12/16 Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. *4740, 6395, 8290, 12520, 16845 A0.1 (CKN was the West Coast sister of CFH.)

CKP *Prince Rupert Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C. 111 A0.1, RATT

CKP4/6/8/12/16 *Prince Rupert Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C. 4740, 6395, 8290, 12520, 16845 A0.1

CKR Communication Training Centre, HMCS NADEN, Esquimalt, B.C. (This was the call sign of the transmission of the old broadcasts made from CKN that were retransmitted on the 2 mhz band for practice for the naval operators on the West Coast. CKB was the call sign of similar broadcasts made on the East Coast but does not appear on this list.)

CKS *Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 4850, 9780, 13510, 15665 A0.1, RATT

CKT Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. Frequencies not yet assigned. (CKT was the call sign of HMCS COVERDALE, Moncton, New Brunswick, from 1953 or 1954 until in closed.)

CK? Vancouver Radio, Matsqui, B.C. 2716, 3468, 3480, 6800, 9890, 13975 A0.1, A3, RATT (Someone cut a hole in the document and removed the third letter of this call sign.)

CZB *Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario 3468, 8190 A0.1, RATT

CZC Spare, not yet allocated.

CZD Spare, not yet allocated.

CZE Naval Reserve Division, Saint John, N.B. 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZF Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario Frequencies not yet assigned

CZG Ottawa Radio, Ottawa, Ontario Frequencies not yet assigned

CZH Naval Reserve Division, Quebec, P.Q. 4850, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZI Naval Reserve Division, Montreal, P.Q. 4850, 7985, 13510 A0.1 RATT

CZJ Naval Reserve Division, Ottawa, Ontario 7985, 9480, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZM Naval Reserve Division, Kingston, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZN Naval Reserve Division, Toronto, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZP Naval Reserve Division, Hamilton, Ontario 5735, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZR Naval Reserve Division, London, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZS Spare, not yet allocated.

CZT Naval Reserve Division, Windsor, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZY Naval Reserve Division, Port Arthur, Ontario 4306, 7985, 13510 A0.1, RATT

CZZ Spare, not yet allocated.

If you are not familiar with these old codes, A0.1 was radiotelegraph, A3 was radiotelephone and RATT was radioteletype. Oh yes, P.Q. stood for the province of Quebec and is now simply Quebec.

It appears as though there were grand plans for a large station in the Ottawa area but I have no idea where they planned to put this station. There was a naval monitoring station in the village of Gloucester, South of Ottawa that became the radio monitoring school. This station became HMCS GLOUCESTER and was the home of our branch the Communicator Supplementary branch that was renamed Radioman Special in 1960. They may have planned to operate it from there. As far as I know it was no more than a plan that did not amount to anything. At least I have no knowledge of any naval radio station of that size in the Ottawa area.

I had made a list of these stations many years before I received a copy of the record I recorded above. I made my list from the records at the International Telecommunication Union and listed them by the divisions or stations as follow:

CZE HMCS BRUNSWICKER, Saint John, New Brunswick

CZC HMCS CABOT, St. John's, Newfoundland (Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.)

CZJ HMCS CARLETON, Ottawa, Ontario

CZM HMCS CATARAQUI, Kingston, Ontario

CKL HMCS CHATHAM, Prince Rupert, British Columbia

CKD HMCS CHIPPAWA, Winnipeg, Manitoba

CKK HMCS DISCOVERY, Vancouver, British Columbia

CZI HMCS DONNACONA, Montreal, Quebec

CZY HMCS GRIFFON, Thunder Bay, Ontario (The cities of Fort William and Port Arthur were combined into the one City, Thunder Bay)

CZT HMCS HUNTER, Windsor, Ontario

CKZ HMCS MALAHAT, Victoria, British Columbia

CZH HMCS MONTCALM, Quebec City, Quebec

CKG HMCS NONSUCH, Edmonton, Alberta

CZP HMCS PATRIOT, Hamilton, Ontario (HMCS PATRIOT was used by the Commanding Officer, Naval Divisions. HMCS STAR is the Reserve Naval Division at Hamilton, Ontario.)

CZR HMCS PREVOST, London, Ontario

CJU HMCS QUADRA, Comox, British Columbia

CKE HMCS QUEEN, Regina, Saskatchewan

CGE HMCS QUEEN CHARLOTTE, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

CZZ HMCS SCOTIAN, Halifax, Nova Scotia

CZL HMCS STAR, Hamilton, Ontario

CKH HMCS TECUMSEH, Calgary, Alberta

CKF HMCS UNICORN, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

CZN HMCS YORK, Toronto, Ontario

CKN HMCS ALDERGROVE, Aldergrove, British Columbia (This station was the West Coast sister of CFH HMCS ALBRO LAKE. CFH was known as Halifax Radio and CKN was known as Vancouver Radio. Both stations were constructed during World War II and opened in 1943. HMCS ALDERGROVE was the operations site with Matsqui the transmitter site. HMCS ALBRO LAKE was the operations site with Newport Corner the transmitter site. Both ALDERGROVE and ALBRO LAKE were simply NRS, naval radio stations, until they were commissioned in 1955. The round uniform cap tally read HMCS STADACONA for those stationed at Albro Lake but I do not know what cap tally was worn at Aldergrove until the station received its commission.

CKS HMCS AVALON, St. John's, Newfoundland (This was the shore establishment for the Senior Naval Officer in command. HMCS CABOT was the Reserve Naval Division at St. John's.)

CZB HMCS BERMUDA (This was a Radioman Special station. It became CFS, Canadian Forces Station BERMUDA on unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1968. This station was a Royal Navy monitoring station until the Canadian Navy took it over in 1963.)

CFF HMCS BYTOWN, Naval Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario

CFL HMCS CHURCHILL, Churchill, Manitoba (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station from 1949 until it closed in 1968.)

CZW HMCS CORNWALLIS, Deep Brook, Nova Scotia (This was the new entry training base for all new enlisted members of the navy for many years, and was also the communications school where all Signalmen and Radioman received their training. The communications school was moved from Halifax around 1950 and was transferred to Esquimalt, British Columbia, at the time of unification of the Armed Forces in 1968. The dipole antenna for this station was mounted on two heavy steel towers of about fifty feet in height.)

CKT HMCS COVERDALE, Moncton, New Brunswick (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station that closed in the 1970's. This station was assigned CGT in 1949 but was changed to CKT in 1953 or 1954. The operators were running the characters together and CGT became CQ.)

HMCS D'IBERVILLE, Quebec City, Quebec (This was a new entry base where those who were French were taught English and received their new entry training. I have not found the call sign to this base. There was something about the graduates of this base that made the Canadian Navy special. They went from this base to the various trade schools in the navy with the rest of us. I do not know

what it was but whatever it was they were born with it. They were a wonderful bunch to work and sail with.)

CGV HMCS GANDER, Gander, Newfoundland (This was a Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special station. This station was assigned the CGV call sign when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.)

CGI HMCS GLOUCESTER, Ottawa, Ontario (This was the Communicator Supplementary and Radioman Special school and headquarters until it closed in 1972.)

CKI HMCS HOCHELAGA, Montreal, Quebec (This was the supply school for the cook, steward, storesmen, administrative writer and pay writer trades.)

CFV HMCS INUVIK, Inuvik, North West Territories (This was another communicator supplementary and radioman special station that was moved to Inuvik from Aklavik, North West Territories, on March 12th, 1961. The CFV call sign was assigned to Aklavik and moved to Inuvik with the station.)

CFS HMCS MASSET, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia (This was a communicator supplementary and radioman special station. This station was never commissioned so did not become HMCS MASSET.)

CKR and CGN HMCS NADEN, Esquimalt, British Columbia (The West Coast main naval base that was the sister to HMCS STADACONA, the East Coast main naval base. CKR would retransmit the broadcasts from CKN for receiving practice for any radiomen in a position to receive the transmissions. I have no knowledge of station CGN.)

CFD HMCS SHEARWATER, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (The main naval air station when the Canadian navy had an air force.)

CZS HMCS SHELBURNE, Shelburne, Nova Scotia (This was a joint United States Navy and Royal Canadian Navy oceanographic station.)

CKB and CGQ HMCS STADACONA, Halifax, Nova Scotia (This was the main naval base on the East Coast and the sister of HMCS NADEN on the West Coast. CKB would retransmit old perforated tapes from the CFH broadcasts. This was done on a two-megahertz frequency, from 2000 to 2100 kilohertz (2012 kilohertz in the 1970's), and was for receiving practice for any of the radiomen in a position to copy the transmission. I do not have any knowledge of station CGQ.)

HMCS VENTURE, Esquimalt, British Columbia. (This was the Junior Naval Officer Training Establishment. I have not found a call sign assigned to this establishment.)

One can see there were quite a few of these stations over the years. These lists should bring back many fond memories to those who had the pleasure of working these stations. The main, and in the majority of cases the only station in use on these stations was the Canadian Marconi CM11 station. The coast station version of the shipboard CM11 station was known as the TM11 transmitter because it did not have a CSR5 receiver mounted in the same cabinet. These stations were connected to a dipole antenna arrangement. These reserve naval divisions were the local recruiting office for the regular navy and had a few regular navy personnel on staff, including radiomen. These stations did not get much use but they were there and ready to go if they were required. CKN and CFH were very big stations with probably the most powerful transmitters in service in Canada. Some of the smaller stations may have had a transmitter as large as the Canadian Marconi PV500. HMCS GLOUCESTER had a PV500 that was used as an amateur radio transmitter with call sign VE3GLO.

The following stations used a PV500 Transmitter:

CFL CHURCHILL

CGI GLOUCESTER
CKT COVERDALE
CFV AKLAVIK
CGV GANDER
CFS MASSET
CFI FROBISHER had a fire in 1954 and then used a borrowed RCAF AT-3 Transmitter.

THE FRIGATES

Canada had a number of larger naval vessels in addition to the naval fleet described thus far. Soon after the famous Corvettes entered service, it was decided to improve the basic design of these ships. With the installation of new equipment, they had become very cramped. This improvement involved a new design of these famous ships that were proving themselves time and again as a most effective weapon against the German U-boat. This new design was a larger ship, one with twin-screws (propellers) and two engines. When they first came out they were called a Twin Screw Corvette. This was soon changed to a River Class Frigate and again many were named for the various towns across Canada. The British named their copies of this ship after their rivers and this is where the River Class originated. The Royal Canadian Navy had seventy of these and sixty were built in this country. The seventy were:

----	1944-1945	HMS ANNAN
CGJC	1944-1945	ANTIGONISH
CGJJ	1944-1946	BEACON HILL
CZDZ	1944-1945	BUCKINGHAM
CGKZ	1944-1945	CAP DE LA MADELEINE
CYTY	1943-1945	CAPE BRETON
CGKY	1944-1945	CAPILANO
CGLG	1944-1945	CARLPLACE
CGVY	1944-1945	CHARLOTTETOWN
CYTR	1944-1945	CHEBOGUE
CGLL	1944-1945	COATICOOK
CGKC	1943-1945	DUNVER
CGNC	1944-1945	EASTVIEW
GBJH	1944-1945	HMS ETTRICK
CGWY	1944-1945	FORT ERIE
CGNG	1944-1945	GLACE BAY
CGXX	1943-1945	GROU
CGPB	1944-1945	HALLOWELL
CGQG	1944-1945	INCH ARRAN
CGRC	1944-1945	JOLIETTE
CYTZ	1944-1945	KIRKLAND LAKE
CGRR	1944-1945	KOKANEE
CGWV	1944-1945	LA HULLOISE
CGWX	1944-1945	LANARK
CGWG	1944-1945	LASALLE
CGWZ	1944-1945	LAUZON
CGNT	1944-1945	LEVIS
----	1944-1945	HMS LOCH ACHANALT
MWRB	1944-1945	HMS LOCH ALVIE
----	1944-1945	HMS LOCH MORLICH
CGZZ	1944-1945	LONGUEUIL
CYTF	1944	MAGOG (served 8 months)
CGXG	1943-1945	MATANE
GGMW	1944-1945	HMS MEON
----	1944-1945	HMS MONNOW

CGJR	1943-1945	MONTREAL
----	1944-1945	HMS NENE
CYTP	1943-1945	NEW GLASGOW
CYTQ	1944-1945	NEW WATERFORD
CYTJ	1944-1945	ORKNEY
CGXZ	1943-1945	OUTREMONT
CYTL	1944-1945	PENETANG
CYTM	1943-1945	PORT COLBORNE
CYTK	1944-1945	POUNDMAKER
CGKX	1944-1945	PRESTONIAN
CGXF	1943-1945	PRINCE RUPERT
----	1944-1945	HMS RIBBLE
CYTT	1944-1945	ROYALMOUNT
CYVV	1944-1945	RUNNYMEDE
CGLS	1943-1945	ST. CATHERINES
CGTC	1944-1945	STE THERESE
CGYB	1943-1945	SAINT JOHN
CYZC	1944-1945	ST. PIERRE
CYZY	1944-1945	ST. STEPHEN
CYVL	1944-1945	SEA CLIFF
CYTS	1944-1945	SPRINGHILL
CYWW	1944-1945	STETTLER
CYWY	1944-1945	STONE TOWN
CGBQ	1943-1945	STORMONT
CYXX	1944-1945	STRATHADAM
CZDD	1944-1945	SUSSEXVALE
CYRF	1943-1945	SWANSEA
----	1944-1945	HMS TEME
CYZZ	1944-1945	THETFORD MINES
CYZW	1944-1945	TORONTO
CGXN	1943-1944	VALLEYFIELD (sunk on May 7th, 1944)
CZDK	1944-1945	VICTORIAVILLE
CGQJ	1943-1945	WASKESIU
CYTN	1943-1945	WENTWORTH

Like the older Corvette, these seventy frigates were used mainly in ocean escort, escorting convoys of merchant ships back and forth across the Atlantic. One can see that some were not commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy and remained part of the Royal Navy. Since I have included photographs of HMCS PRINCE RUPERT, it is only fitting that I give a brief account of her contribution to the war effort. She, like each of the other sixty-nine, was 301 feet 6 inches long, 36 feet 7 inches wide, and had a draft of 14 feet 4 inches with a standard displacement of 1,445 tons. Her full speed was only 19 knots, rather slow compared to a destroyer, but was most effective. The armament on these Frigates varied somewhat from one to the other, but PRINCE RUPERT had one four-inch gun forward and a twelve-pounder aft. She carried depth charges and hedgehog for use against German U-boats.

Canadian Armed Forces CN3669

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT

Canadian Armed Forces CN3641

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT

HMCS PRINCE RUPERT commenced and terminated her naval career at Esquimalt, British Columbia. She was constructed by Yarrow's Limited and was laid down on August 1st, 1942, launched on March 3rd, 1943, and commissioned on August 30th, 1943. After three weeks of training she visited her namesake, the town of Prince Rupert, British Columbia, and remained there overnight. On September 30th, 1943, she sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia, and arrived here on October 21st, 1943. The photograph of her Radio Room

was taken the next day, October 22nd. After a further period of training and fitting of additional gear, she sailed in Escort Group C-3 escorting Convoy SC-150 on January 3rd, 1944, from St. John's, Newfoundland.

March 13th, 1944, found HMCS PRINCE RUPERT on her second westbound convoy. She detached from this convoy on that date to join in an action against a U-boat and took part in the kill of the U-boat, sharing the honours with USS HAVERFIELD, USS HOBSON, two British Coastal Command, and three American carrier-borne aircraft.

She continued with Escort Group C-3, on the Newfoundland to Londonderry, Ireland, run until November 11th, 1944, when she reported to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, for refit. She had two weeks of exercises at Bermuda following further work at Shelburne and Halifax after her refit. She then joined Escort Group EG-27 at Halifax on April 12th, 1945, for the remaining month of the war in the Atlantic. On May 24th, 1945, she and HMCS DUNVER returned to Yarrow's Limited, Esquimalt, British Columbia, where she was to be tropicalized. It should be noted that HMCS DUNVER was named for Verdun, Quebec. The Royal Navy had HMS VERDUN so the name was reversed. This was done to prevent any confusion between the two. This tropicalization work on HMCS PRINCE RUPERT was terminated after VJ-day and on January 16th, 1946, she was handed over to the War Assets Corporation for disposal.

Public Archives Canada DND HS-0262-1

This is the Radio Room in HMCS PRINCE RUPERT on October 22nd, 1943.

The radio operators in HMCS PRINCE RUPERT must have had some merry old rides in her but this station to me is the ideal layout. The Receivers, starting from the back of the Radio Room working towards you, are: two SMR-3's an FR-12, and just a slim portion of the corner of an MSL-5. All this equipment is Canadian Marconi and the transmitter just behind the operating positions is an early model of the famous PV-500. Note the large fuse panel. There would be no standing on your head and feeling around in the dark

trying to check these. With a simple continuity meter you could check them all while comfortably seated in the operating position. Everything very neat and compact and the smell of the plywood would be a welcome warm feeling. The two brass telegraph keys permanently secured to the operating desk had a beautiful movement. Although I do not know the history of these keys, I believe they were constructed in Canada for the Marconi Company. If not, they may have come from the Signal Company of Boston, Massachusetts. The wooden rectangular piping above the operating position is a forced air ventilator. Most, if not all, of these seventy frigates had a Radio Room identical to this, which resembled the Radio Room in each Corvette.

The United States built ninety-eight of these frigates and called them a Patrol Frigate giving them a pendant number with a PF prefix. The first two USS ASHEVILLE PF1 and USS NATCHEZ PF2 were built here in Canada. USS HALLOWEL PF72 through to USS PROWSE PF92, were built at Providence, Rhode Island and all twenty-one were turned over to the Royal Navy on completion. These twenty-one were known as the Colony Class in the Royal Navy and were named after British colonies. They were HMS ANGUILLA K500 through to HMS ZANZIBAR K596 inclusive. All twenty-one were returned to the United States in 1946. These ninety-eight Patrol Frigates were the basis of the United States large Destroyer Escort program. They were a very interesting vessel. There were quite a few of these frigates used as weather ships both during the war and afterwards.

THE DESTROYERS

The next largest vessel in the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet was the Destroyer. These were the larger fighting ships of our Navy. They were not assigned the normal escort duties of the Corvettes and Frigates, except in the capacity of the ship in command of a convoy therefore each had a most interesting career during the war that is a separate story in itself. In addition to the six with which we entered the war, we had an additional twenty-one as follow:

1943-1945	ALGONQUIN	CZJX
1940-1945	ANNAPOLIS	CGNJ
1939-1945	ASSINIBOINE	CGDF
1943-1944	ATHABASKAN	CGWM
1943-1945	CHAUDIERE	CZJK
1940-1945	COLUMBIA	CGNK
1943-1945	GATINEAU	CGXC
1943-1945	HAIDA	CGDK
1941-1945	HAMILTON	CGBM
1943-1945	HURON	CGXY
1942-1945	IROQUOIS	CZGD
1943-1945	KOOTENAY	CGQC
1940	MARGAREE	----
1940-1944	NIAGRA	CGNL
1943-1945	OTTAWA	CGRG
1944-1945	QU'APPELLE	CZJL
1940-1945	ST. CLAIR	CGNM
1940-1943	ST. CROIX	CGNP
1940-1945	ST. FRANCIS	CGNQ
1943-1945	SASKATCHEWAN	CGVV
1944-1945	SIOUX	CZJY

This made for a total Destroyer fleet of twenty-seven during the war. At the end of the war, in 1945, we acquired another four as follow:

CRESCENT	CZCC
CRUSADER	CGJG
MICMAC	CYVN

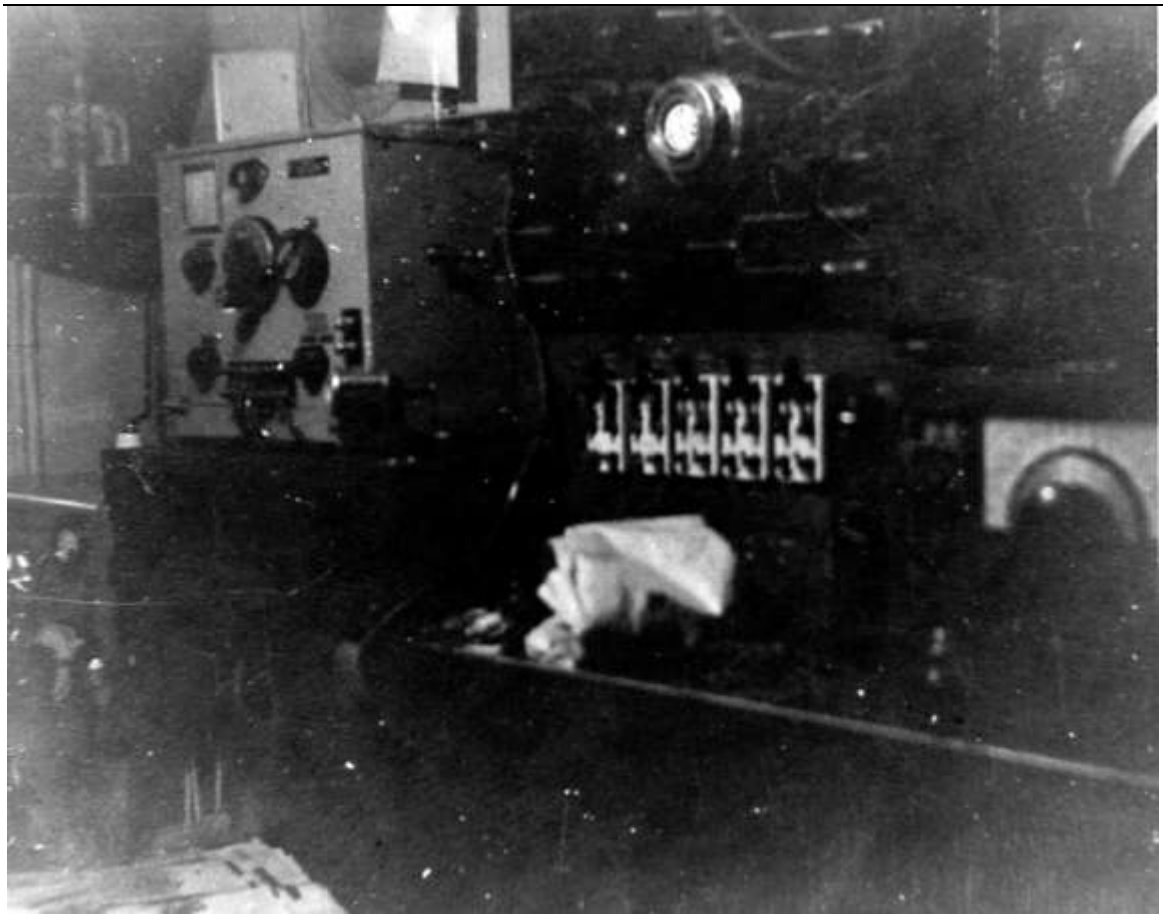
NOOTKA CZJS

These four did not participate in the war as Canadian but brought the overall total up to thirty-one for that period.

These destroyers were divided into two classes. The Tribal Class was named for the various first nation Indian Tribes throughout the country. The River Class was named for the various rivers throughout the country, with the exception of HMCS HAMILTON who would have been a River Class had she not served a while in the Royal Navy and retained her name when she became a Canadian ship.

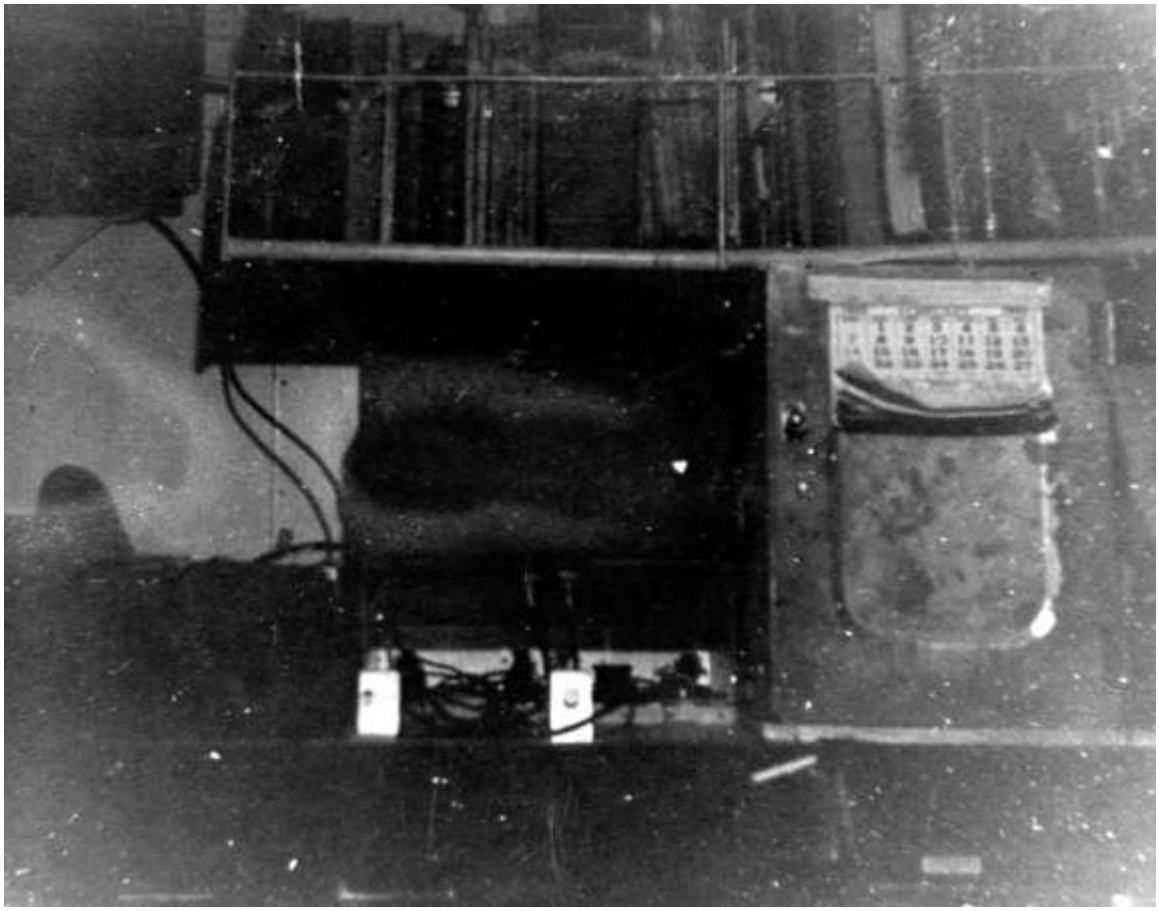
These ships, as were all the larger warships, equipped with several radio rooms. Seven of these were part of the fifty destroyers built by the United States Navy for World War I and given to Britain in exchange for bases within her territories. These seven were ANNAPOLIS, COLUMBIA, NIAGRA, ST. CLAIR, ST. CROIX, ST. FRANCIS, and HAMILTON. All of these would have had identical radio rooms and the main high frequency transmitter was a TBL-5. A few photographs of one of the radio rooms in HMCS ST. CLAIR appear below.

HMCS QU'APPELLE was one of six that were overage Royal Navy fleet destroyers. The other five were KOOTENAY, SASKATCHEWAN, GATINEAU, CHAUDIERE, and OTTAWA to replace the original OTTAWA that had been sunk by the enemy on September 13th, 1942, with a loss of five officers and 109 men. The QU'APPELLE's main radio room consisted of an R.C.A. type 89-transmitter that was capable of 500 watts. Her radio room consisted of three bays containing emergency Royal Navy Receivers and a FR-12. QU'APPELLE, as well as the others, was equipped with very high frequency equipment and both medium and high frequency direction finders in various radio rooms throughout the ship.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is a portion of the radio equipment in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

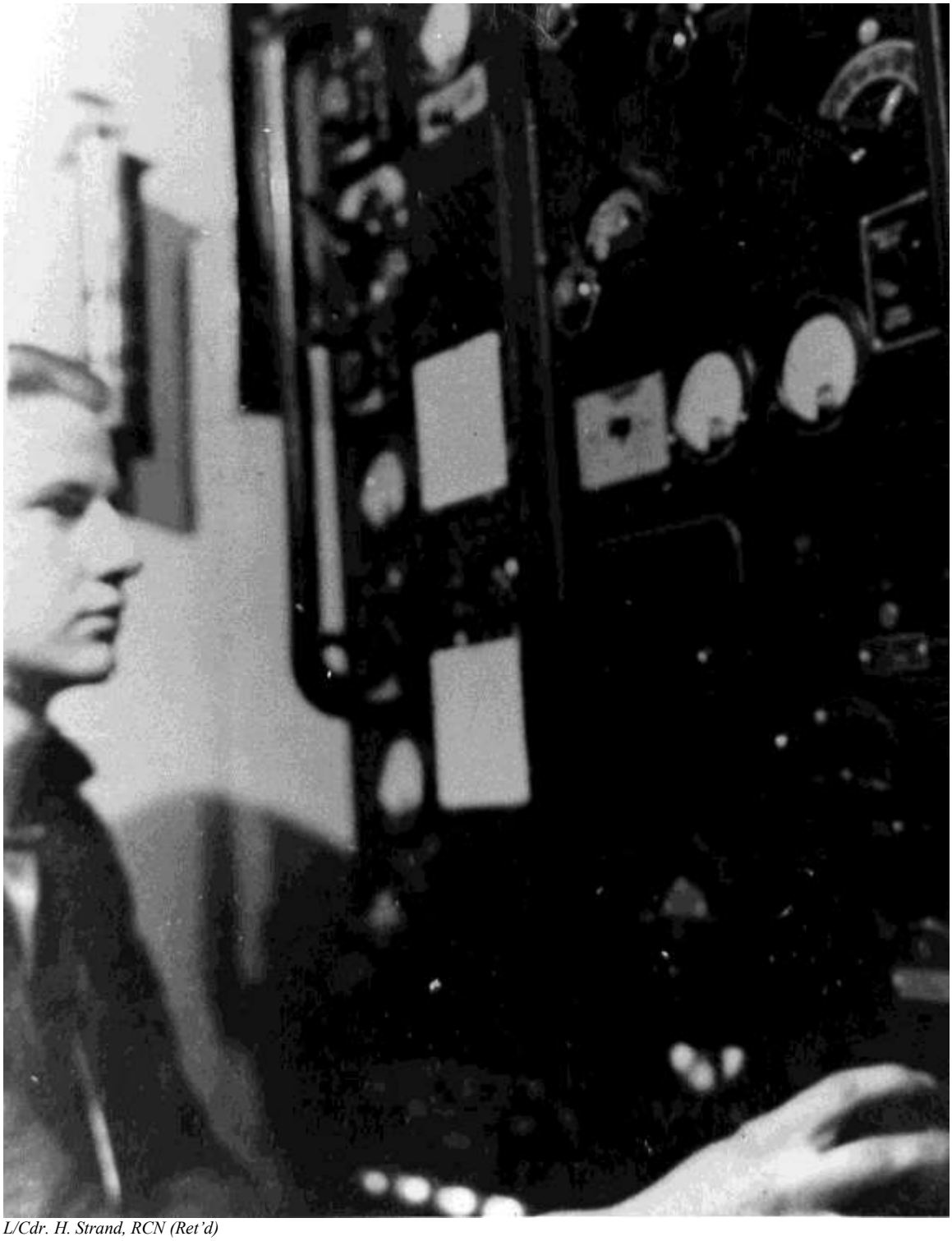
This is a corner of the radio room in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942 and the photo is not good but someone may get something from it.

L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand tuning one of the American made transmitters in HMCS ST. CLAIR in 1942.

L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand on duty in HMCS ST. CLAIR in February 1942.



L/Cdr. H. Strand, RCN (Ret'd)

This is Leading Telegraphist H. Strand on duty in HMCS ST. CLAIR in February 1942.

Public Archives Canada PA-114379

This is HMCS ALGONQUIN in October 1944.

Public Archives Canada HS-1533-1

This is the W/T Office looking aft in HMCS ALGONQUIN on July 31st, 1945. One can get more detail on the equipment shown here by visiting the web site of Jerry Proc VE3FAB.

The ALGONQUIN and SIOUX were the former Royal Navy Fleet Destroyers VALENTINE and VIXEN and were commissioned in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1944. The only equipment I was able to identify in the photograph of one of ALGONQUIN's radio rooms that appears here and was taken on July 31st, 1945, is the Canadian Marconi CSR-5 Receiver. This receiver became a very popular receiver and was part of the CM-11 unit. This unit combined both a transmitter and receiver (CSR-5) and was installed in many vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy fleet. This photograph indicates that this equipment was mostly British, coming with her when transferred, but this must have been her main radio operations position. Notice the four voice pipes. The Navy was set up in order to do most anything via radiotelegraph including the firing of the guns. A preparatory signal was first transmitted and then the operators stood by for the actual signal to fire, at which point they hung on and yelled. With all these voice pipes, everyone including the duty cook "got the word".

HMCS ASSINIBOINE was the former HMS KEMPENFELT and acquired from the Royal Navy at the beginning of the war, arriving in Halifax on November 17th, 1939, and proceeding on convoy duty the next day. Her original name was in memory of Admiral Kempenfelt, who was one to make an attempt at constructing a communications system within the Navy about 1780.

HMCS MARGAREE was the former HMS DIANA and had a short career with the Royal Canadian Navy. On her first trip, October 20th, 1940, during a storm she was in collision with a merchant ship, the PORT FAIRY, of the convoy she was trying to protect and escort. The ship, her commanding officer, and 141 of her crew were lost.

HMCS's ATHABASKAN, HAIDA, HURON, and IROQUOIS were four powerful Tribal Destroyers built in England especially for Canada. IROQUOIS was the first and was commissioned late in 1942 and the other three arrived in 1943. The Royal Navy had a number of these destroyers all named for various native tribes throughout the Commonwealth.

THE CRUISERS AND AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

The remainder of the Royal Canadian Navy's fleet consisted of four large ships during the war:
Two Cruisers:

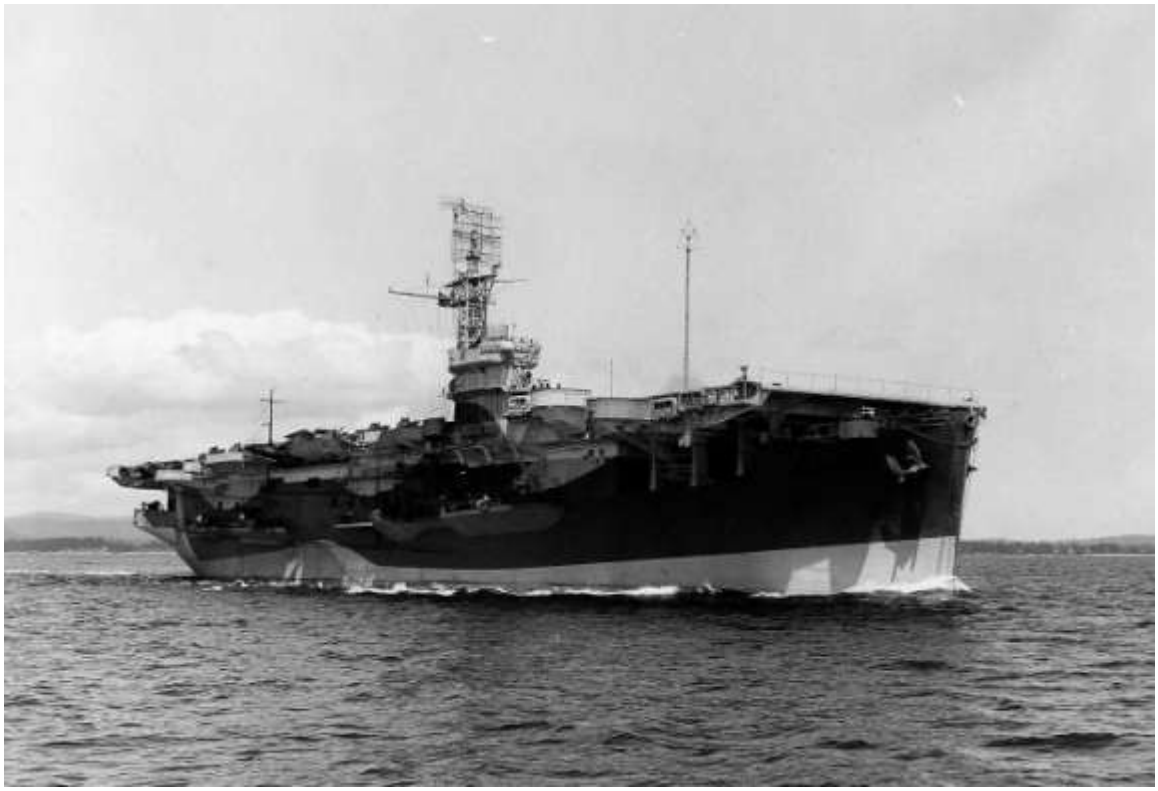
UGANDA	CZCK
ONTARIO	CZCF

Two Aircraft Escort Carriers that remained Royal Navy, but had complete Canadian Navy crews except for the air branch. Those who maintained and operated the aircraft were Royal Navy:

HMS NABOB
HMS PUNCHER

These four had numerous radio rooms capable of transmitting on any frequency throughout the radio spectrum up to the very high frequencies.

So many of the commercial radio operators in this country have started as naval operators that I am sure this World War II Royal Canadian Navy fleet is familiar to them all.



Public Archives Canada F-3165

HMS PUNCHER

CONVOY BX-141

The Camperdown station VCS was to participate in the action, involving an attacked convoy during the closing months of World War II in the Atlantic. On January 12th, 1945, minesweeper HMCS WESTMOUNT passed the Boston Gate Vessel outbound at fifty minutes past noon Nova Scotia time, with the minesweeper HMCS NIPIGON in company. By 5:47 PM WESTMOUNT had convoy BX-141 formed up and moving out towards its destination, Halifax. Lieutenant R. L. B. Hunter, RCNVR, was in command of WESTMOUNT and was also convoy commander. These two minesweepers were to be assisted with this convoy by Escort Group EG-27, the same group PRINCE RUPERT would join in three months. EG-27 at this time consisted of the three Frigates, MEON (as Senior Ship), COATICOOK, and ETTRICK.

The convoy radiotelephone frequency was 2110 kilocycles or kilohertz in today's terminology. All the ships in every convoy used this same frequency.

Public Archive Canada PA114516

HMCS WESTMOUNT and HMCS NIPIGON were Bangor Class Minesweepers and HMCS KENTVILLE was a sister of these two. This is a photograph of HMCS KENTVILLE taken after the war in 1954.

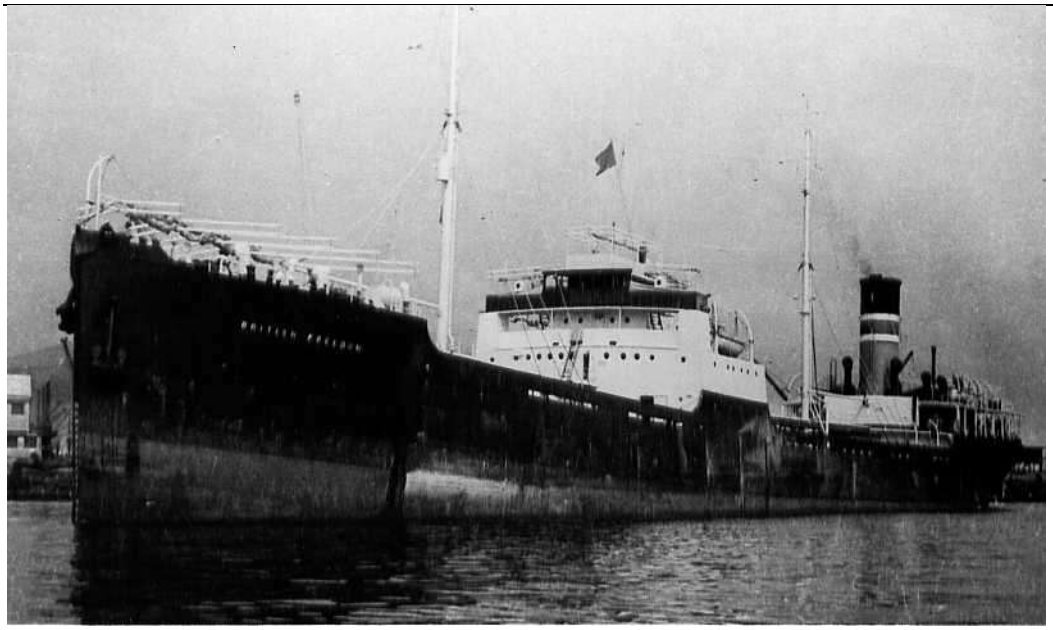
It should be noted that this convoy system of escorting merchant ships across the various oceans of the world originated back when man first started moving goods by ships. Apparently the Spanish were the ones who created the name convoy. They perfected this system a long time ago, while transporting the vast fortunes they removed from Central America over many years to the home country of Spain. The basic principle of the convoy system is to have all merchant ships within the convoy to be protected formed in uniform ranks. These uniform ranks of merchant ships then proceed along a prearranged course to their destination, with a number of warships patrolling around the perimeter of the convoy or ranks of merchant ships. Naturally the speed of any convoy is only as fast as the slowest ship within the convoy.

During World War II the Royal Canadian Navy became a perfectly geared machine for escorting these convoys from various points around our coasts and across the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these large convoys were designated SC followed by a number. The SC stood for Slow Convoy, meaning they were moving as slow as the slowest ship, but these ships were much slower than most. Many were built before World War I. There were fast convoys containing ships capable of around fifteen knots, and besides these two types of convoys, there were ships that were considered sufficiently fast to travel unescorted, letting their speed act as a form of protection.

Convoy BX-141 was to travel at 7.5 knots, meaning the slowest ship in the convoy was capable of maintaining no more than 7.5 knots. The BX stood for Boston to Halifax. The number 141 meant that this was the 141st convoy on this route and twenty merchant ships were being escorted to Halifax to go to anchor in Bedford Basin and then form up with a much larger convoy to be escorted across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom.

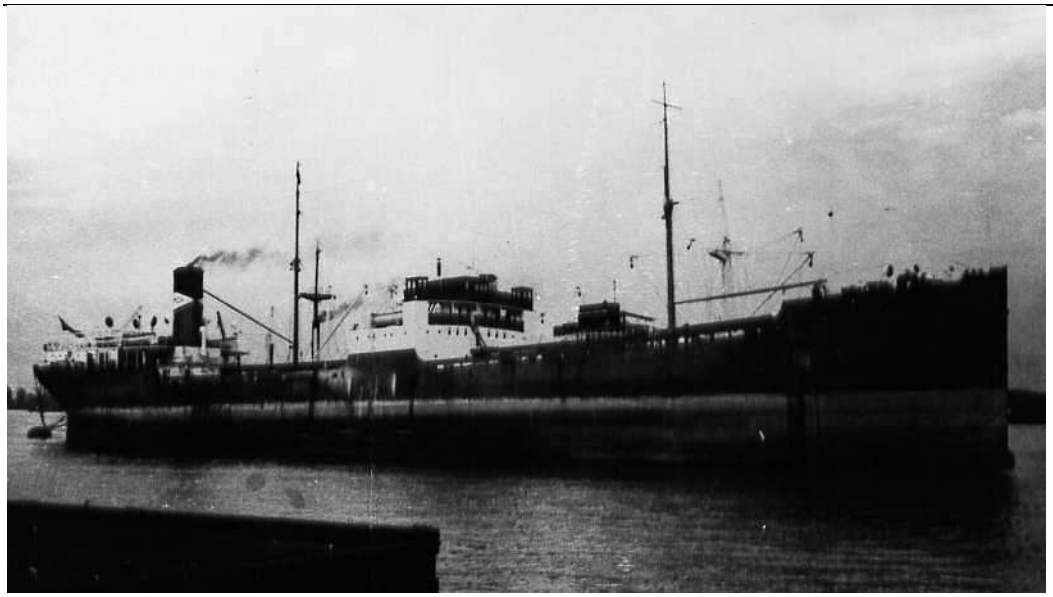
Three of the twenty merchant ships in convoy BX-141 were the American Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN, and the British tankers BRITISH FREEDOM and ATHEL VIKING. MARTIN VAN BUREN was the newest ship of the three and less than two years old. She was much the same size as the other two

measuring 7176 gross tons, one of 2,742 Liberty Ships that were mass-produced by the United States for this war. She was owned by the American Government through their War Shipping Administration and was operated by the West India Steamship Company. She had joined convoy BX-141 loaded with an Army cargo of provisions, locomotives, and vehicles, and had on board a regular wartime crew consisting of forty-one merchant seamen. She also carried a United States Navy complement of 27 men. The ship was under the command of forty-four year old Captain James H. Hiss from New York. The naval component of her crew, mainly gunners and their assistants, was in the charge of Lieutenant (Jg) Joseph M. Dollens, USNR. Chief Radio Officer Edward Bloomenthal from Philadelphia was in charge of her radio room. His assistant was Heromer Arato from Arkansas and the two of them were to operate the radio station around the clock for this voyage.



World Ship Photo Library

BRITISH FREEDOM



World Ship Photo Library

ATHEL VIKING

National Archives Washington 80-G-289655
This is the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN on November 1st, 1944, in position 3655N 7515W, enroute to join Convoy BX-141

ATHEL VIKING was a tanker that had been built in 1926. Actually she had been built as a bulk molasses carrier, one of a series of twelve built for United Molasses Company Limited (Athel Tanker Lines) of London, England. She was 8779 gross tons with twin screws (two propellers) and was capable of a speed of 11 knots. She had a wartime complement of fifty-one men under the command of Captain Egerton G. B. Martin. Her Chief Radio Officer was forty-eight year old W. E. Mitchell, who held a second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, and his two assistants, with special wartime certificates, were A. G. Stark as second, and A. Whatley as third.

BRITISH FREEDOM was a tanker of 6984 gross tons that had been built in 1928 for the BP Oil Company. Earlier in the war, in 1942, BRITISH FREEDOM had been torpedoed in position 3445N 7522W, but survived this to be repaired and sail again. Albert Hawling joined her as Chief Radio Officer just before D-day and expected to be in this invasion, but that was not to be. They came over to New York for another load of crude oil and back to Scapa Flow, and then spent a period on the East Coast of the United Kingdom hauling gasoline up and down that area and the Thames River. The crew did not mind when told they were to come back over to New York in late 1944, because the advent of newer weapons within the German arsenal meant the coast over around their home was not as safe as it had been.

BRITISH FREEDOM had an uneventful but very rough passage on this trip to New York. She encountered rain, snow, and gales the entire trip, but on Christmas Eve 1944 arrived at New York, taking all of thirty days to make the run. After Christmas and when the cargo had been loaded, she was to sail from Boston in convoy to Halifax. Because BRITISH FREEDOM could not reach Boston until the day before this convoy was due to sail, Second Officer K. C. McConnell and Chief Radio Officer Bert Hawling were sent to Boston to attend this convoy conference and obtain their instructions and orders for same. This was not to be and McConnell and Hawling joined the ship at the Cape Cod Canal to await the following convoy, BX-141. These BX convoys operated between Boston and Halifax and they were assembled in Buzzard's Bay, went through the Cape Cod Canal and then formed up in Cape Cod Bay ready to sail to Halifax. This waiting proved to be a rather cold experience for all the ships of this convoy. Ice formed around the ships

and on the ships, freezing the falls (lines) supporting the lifeboats to the point these boats were frozen in their davits.

BRITISH FREEDOM was under the command of Captain M. L. Morris, and as was the procedure in British ships, Bert Hawling had two assistants. W. J. Stewart was second and J. Hendry was third. Bert held a first class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, whereas Stewart and Hendry held the wartime Special Class Certificates. In theory these two were capable of receiving signals only with a limited knowledge of the actual operation of the equipment. They were capable, or should have been, of operating the equipment in an emergency.

Convoy BX-141

11	21	31	41	51	61	71	81
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		33	43	53	63		
		X	X	X	X		

January 1945
Convoy Identification YD

Convoy Escorts the Minesweepers HMCS WESTMOUNT (Convoy Commander) and HMCS NIPIGON. These two were assisted by Escort Group EG-27 consisting of the Frigates HMCS MEON, HMCS COATICOOK, and HMCS ETTRICK.

The merchant ships in this convoy were strung out in eight columns per the above diagram. All convoys were formed up in this fashion with the numbers being used to form their pendants number. For example, the number across the top of the line became the first digit of their pendants number and their position below this number made the second or suffix of the pendants number. The American Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN was pendants number 71 in Convoy BX-141, placing her in position seven over from the left hand side and in the top row of the merchant ships. This pendant number became her permanent number while part of this convoy and was used in communications. In addition to this she was assigned the standard coded call sign consisting of two letters, a digit, and a two-letter suffix. MARTIN VAN BUREN also had her international call sign KVFJ. Therefore she had three call signs or means of identification while a member of this convoy. The other nineteen ships were also in the same position, and had three distinct means of identification.

Within every convoy there was a Convoy Commodore and Rear Commodore. Every ship in the convoy flew every flag signal made by the Commodore. These convoys took up several square miles of the ocean's surface as they passed so a ship on the left column would not likely be able to see one on the right during conditions of good visibility. During times of poor visibility one ship would likely see only the ships next to her. This is the reason all ships were required to repeat every visual signal made by the Commodore. The majority of these merchant ships carried naval personnel and a convoy Commodore was an officer in that department. The convoy Commodore was often a retired Naval Officer recalled for the duration of the war. He would choose an appropriate ship, along with a staff of several naval personnel, and make the necessary decisions and orders as they arose. This ship always was in the front center of these ranks flying either pendants 41 or 51 in a convoy the size of BX-141. I did not learn the name or pendant's number of the Commodore's ship in convoy BX-141. The Rear Commodore kept up to date with the convoy's progress and in the event the Commodore's ship dropped out of the convoy for any reason, he would immediately

take over command of the convoy. The Liberty Ship MARTIN VAN BUREN was Rear Commodore in Convoy BX-141.

The naval ships performing the actual patrols and protection around the convoys had their Senior Officer under whom they worked, and he worked with the convoy Commodore in order to see the convoy safely along its route. Naturally the officers involved in the overall picture were experienced officers but the rank of any given officer as held in the Navy had nothing to do with who was in command at any given time. If for example one ship developed defects in a portion of her equipment, she immediately relinquished command to a ship better equipped. These were the cogs of a precision instrument that not only worked, worked very well.

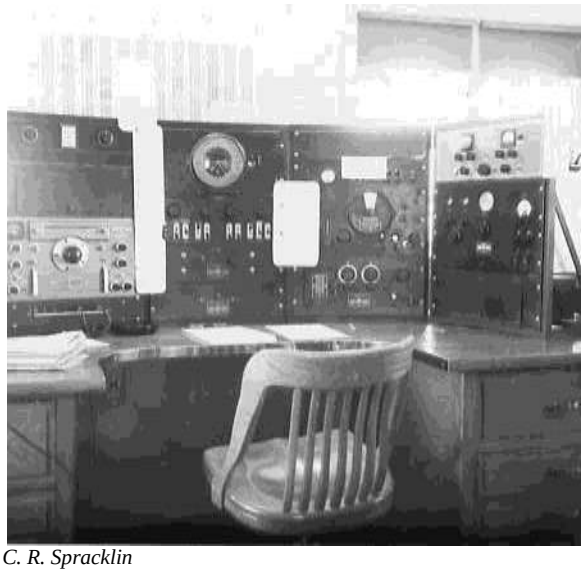
Once the twenty merchant ships off Boston on January 12th, 1945 had formed up in this formation, they became Convoy BX-141 and commenced steaming along at 7.5 knots per orders towards Halifax. The two minesweepers kept patrolling around the convoy keeping a sharp lookout both above and below the surface of the ocean. At 2:12 AM January 13th the first ship of EG-27, HMCS ETTRICK joined the convoy and was assigned her position to patrol. At 7:45 AM NIPIGON reported to WESTMOUNT that her radar had broken down and she was not able to repair it. In the meantime the weather had gotten warmer de-icing the ships in the convoy, but an overcast condition threatening a storm began to form behind the convoy. At 9:40 AM merchant ship with pendants 32 stopped with engine trouble and NIPIGON was ordered to stop and stand by her until she managed to get going again, and then she was to rejoin the convoy at her best speed. At 7:24 PM the two remaining Frigates of Escort Group EG-27 joined the convoy and were assigned their patrol sections known as screening positions. The next morning Lt. Hunter ordered "cat-gear" to be strung out behind the naval escort vessels about four miles from the Sambro Light Vessel at 8:41 AM January 14th, 1945. This "cat-gear" was a device towed by a ship that made a lot of noise well away from the stern of the ship. Acoustic torpedoes were the major menace at this time and these torpedoes homed in on the sound of a ship's propeller thrashing through the water. The first of this "cat-gear" equipment had been developed from experiments with the Fairmile Motor Launches. At the time this cat-gear was being strung out, the convoy was breaking down from the eight lines into a single line for entering Halifax.

Although pendants number 32 managed to get her engine going at 2:30 PM and was broken down for only five hours, NIPIGON was unable to catch up with the convoy by the time they were forming in line to enter Halifax. WESTMOUNT passed the Sambro Light Vessel at 9:45 AM on January 14th, 1945 and at 10:00 AM altered course and took up station astern of the convoy leaving the Frigates to pass the convoy on through the cleared channel QJA254 to Halifax. (Everything was numbered and named in true military fashion. This all makes sense and makes for an easy and fast means of identification). 10:30 AM found WESTMOUNT screening astern of the convoy.

The weather is always a major factor in any of our activities. If the ship or her equipment break down repairs can be made. If the crew is not what they should be they can be replaced; but there is nothing that can be done to change the weather.

The weather of course played a big part in the outcome of many of the battles fought throughout history. Hitler's last great effort to break the allied offensive, during World War II occurred in the Ardennes Forest just before the Allies could cross the river Rhine. This took place in December 1944 and Hitler not only made the plans he nearly succeeded in breaking through the allied lines. For this reason submarines U-1053, U-870, U-1009, and U-1232 had been sent out to various positions around the North Atlantic to act as weather stations. The only effective tool we have against the weather is to try to predict the conditions at any given time and plan accordingly. These four U-boats recorded the actual weather conditions in their assigned areas and radioed this information back to Germany, in order for the German forecasters to predict the weather for this attempt at breaking through the line in the Ardennes Forest.

U-1232 was under the command of Captain Dobratz. On completion of this weather assignment he proceeded to the approaches of Halifax in order to raise hell with the shipping coming in and out of the port.



C. R. Spracklin

This is the operating position at the Hartlen Point Monitoring Station in 1956. This was a radio monitoring station located across the approaches to Halifax Harbour from Camperdown Radio for many years. This station played an important role in monitoring German U-Boat radio transmissions during World War II.

The largest operational U-boat the German Navy used during the war was the type IX D/2. This boat could perform a variety of tasks and one was known as that of a "Milch Cow". The main U-boat attacking our convoys was the type VII, but this boat had a limited range and had to rely on the larger supply submarines for extra fuel, fresh-water, food, and nearly everything, including crew changes. The type IX was not only the supply boat but was an effective long-range fighter. She carried upwards of twenty-four torpedoes with six torpedo tubes, or could act as a long-distance minelayer. It was one of these that laid the mine in the approaches to Halifax that HMC ML053 collected on June 8th, 1943.

U-1232 was a type IX C, not as large as the IX D, but a large submarine for her day at about 1180 tons. The IX D/2 was the larger at 1616 tons and this type, the IX, varied from 1000 to 1600 tons. U-1232 was using the acoustic torpedo this trip. That meant that Capt. Dobratz could come into the approaches of Halifax and lie on the bottom if he wanted and just pick the ships off as they came in or out of the harbour. One of the first victims of this type of torpedo was HMCS ST. CROIX on September 20th, 1943.

The escorts of BX-141 were towing their cat-gear, the noisemakers to protect themselves from these acoustic torpedoes, but the merchant ships were unprotected and this was due mainly to the device, like the submarine nets they carried, slowing them down. The merchant ship had power sufficient only to move through the water at a reasonable speed. With the towing of any additional gear, it slowed her down to the point that she seldom used anything to protect herself and was more willing to rely on luck.

The radio operators on duty in the various radio rooms throughout Convoy BX-141 were experiencing a routine run. They were maintaining their normal radio watches and listening to 500-khz and making the necessary log entries of signals heard that has been the lot of sea-going radio operators for years. They heard Lantana Radio WOE, in Florida, New York Radio WNY, Amagansett Radio WSL, on Long Island, New York, all call the customary CQ at their traffic list times and terminate this call with QRU. (This International "Q Code" means I have nothing for you.) Our Canadian coast stations were heard to call each other now and then but for what reason I do not know. Possibly this was just to give the ships, which were under radio silence, some signals to tune in, in order for them to know they were listening to the proper frequency. At 6:37 AM the merchant ships in Convoy BX-141 copied the BAMS (Broadcast to Allied Merchant Shipping) Broadcast from Glace Bay Radio. They felt this would be a normal routine wartime voyage with little but the regular broadcasts to copy.

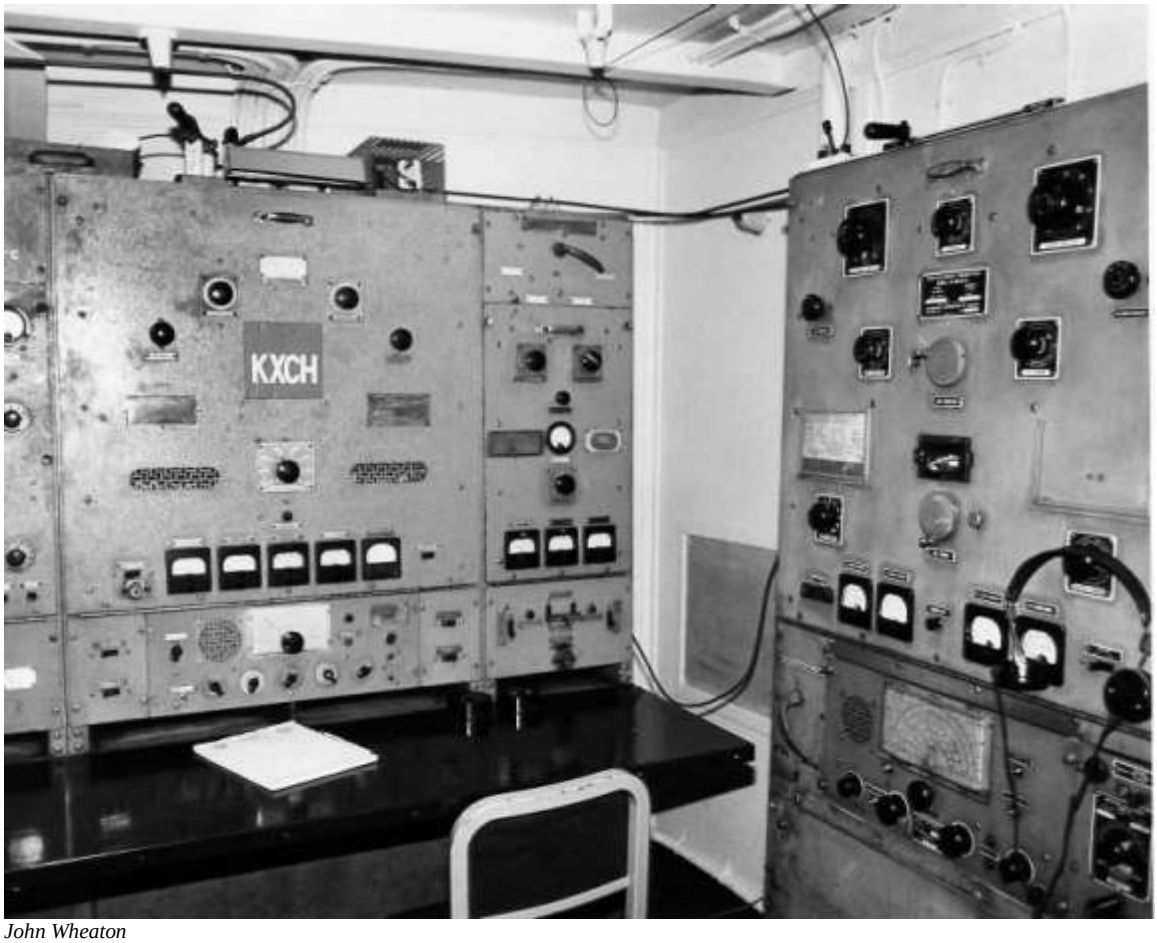
The naval operators were kept busy copying every transmission made from their assigned frequency at the fairly new and powerful station with transmitters at Newport, Nova Scotia. As they started to form their single line formation to enter Halifax, although everyone in each ship was kept busy performing his duties, they all began to feel they were going to terminate with a routine successful run. But Herr Dobratz, the uninvited welcoming committee, was listening and mumbling "gotcha" or whatever it was a German mumbled before firing torpedoes. As he fired these torpedoes BRITISH FREEDOM was proceeding past buoy number one in the swept channel and coming up to buoy number two. She took the first torpedo in her stern as the thing had been designed, at 10:32. Bert Hawling and his two assistants were in the radio room cleaning up and doing some routine maintenance before arriving. The bridge was busy forming up this single line and getting ready to take on board the pilot. When the torpedo exploded it made one hell of a bang, and by the time Bert looked outside through slots in the armour, things looked bad. In no time at all the sea was lapping over the after tank tops. MARTIN VAN BUREN was next ship behind BRITISH FREEDOM and when Captain Hiss witnessed the explosion on the latter he immediately gave orders to swing out around to the right of BRITISH FREEDOM. As MARTIN VAN BUREN came up alongside BRITISH FREEDOM, Bert witnessed the explosion from a torpedo in her stern, at 10:40 AM, which sent up a great gush of water known as "the ghost". In this great gush of water were four naval gunners and considerable debris from the explosion. The four gunners were Andrew Como, Philip F. Giaquinto, Peter S. Percival, and Jimmy O. Mitchell. The only one of the four to survive was Jimmy Mitchell. He managed to swim to the starboard life raft that had been blown over with him and was rescued by HMCS COMOX.

When Captain Martin on the bridge of ATHEL VIKING witnessed these two stopped and torpedoed he gave orders to swing up along the left side of BRITISH FREEDOM. As ATHEL VIKING proceeded up alongside BRITISH FREEDOM she took a torpedo in her stern at 10:45 AM, bringing her to an abrupt stop alongside the other two. To anyone watching it would have appeared that mass confusion had taken over, but not so. All the cogs were starting to mesh at a faster rate. By this time the Navy was fully aware of all that had taken place, although from confusion within the reports being received, they had mistaken certain pendants for others, but they knew that three ships had been torpedoed. WESTMOUNT shifted Convoy Command to the Senior Officer of EG-27 (HMCS MEON) to save a duplication of orders and because EG-27 was in the area of the torpedoing, a better position to direct everything in general. In the meantime HMC Ships, COMOX, GASPE, NAPANEE, GODERICH, OAKVILLE, also STRATHADAM and BUCKINGHAM who were returning from Bermuda, all rushed to the scene as fast as they could and placed themselves under EG-27 to try and find U-1232 with hope of a kill.

Ed Bloomenthal in MARTIN VAN BUREN was the first to get off his distress call at 10:44 AM, one minute prior to ATHEL VIKING being torpedoed. He sent "SSSS (the distress signal of the time, indicating he had been attacked by a submarine) and he signed YD71, the convoy identification and her pendants number.

John Wheaton

This is one of the last unaltered Liberty Ships, SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, at her permanent berth Pier 3 East, Fort Mason, in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California.
Jeremiah O'Brien was a Privateer Captain who lived at Machias, Maine, during the American Revolutionary War.



John Wheaton

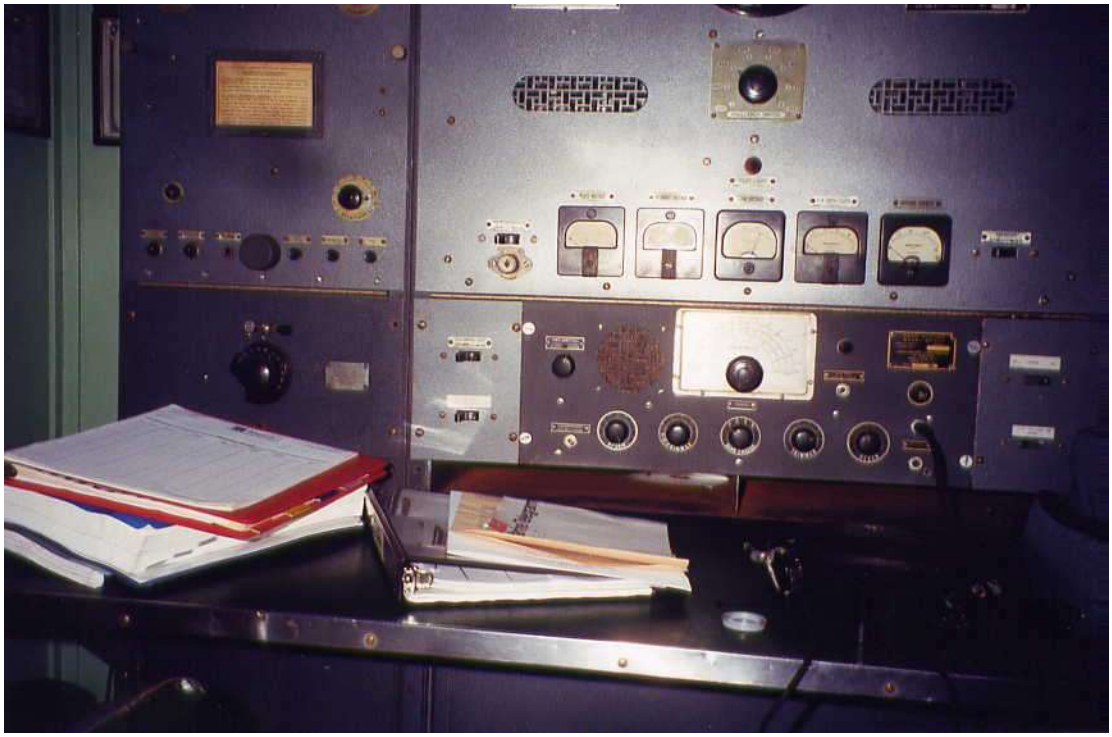
This is the Radio Room in SS JEREMIAH O"BRIEN that was assigned international call sign KXCH. The radio installation is the RCA model 4U.

Spurgeon G. Roscoe

These are some photographs I took of the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN with international call sign KHJL on August 25th, 2000 while alongside at Halifax, Nova Scotia. I spent over four hours explaining her radio room and station to any and all that wanted to listen while touring this vessel.

Spurgeon G. Roscoe VE1BC

Spurgeon G. Roscoe



Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Spurgeon G. Roscoe

There were five Distress Signals in use during World War II as follow:

Class of Distress	Distress Signal	When Used
Warship Raider	R R R R (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by an enemy warship.
Armed Merchant Ship Raider	Q Q Q Q (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by an armed merchant ship raider.
Submarine or mine	S S S S (separate letters made 3 times)	On sighting, or when attacked by a submarine or on striking a mine.

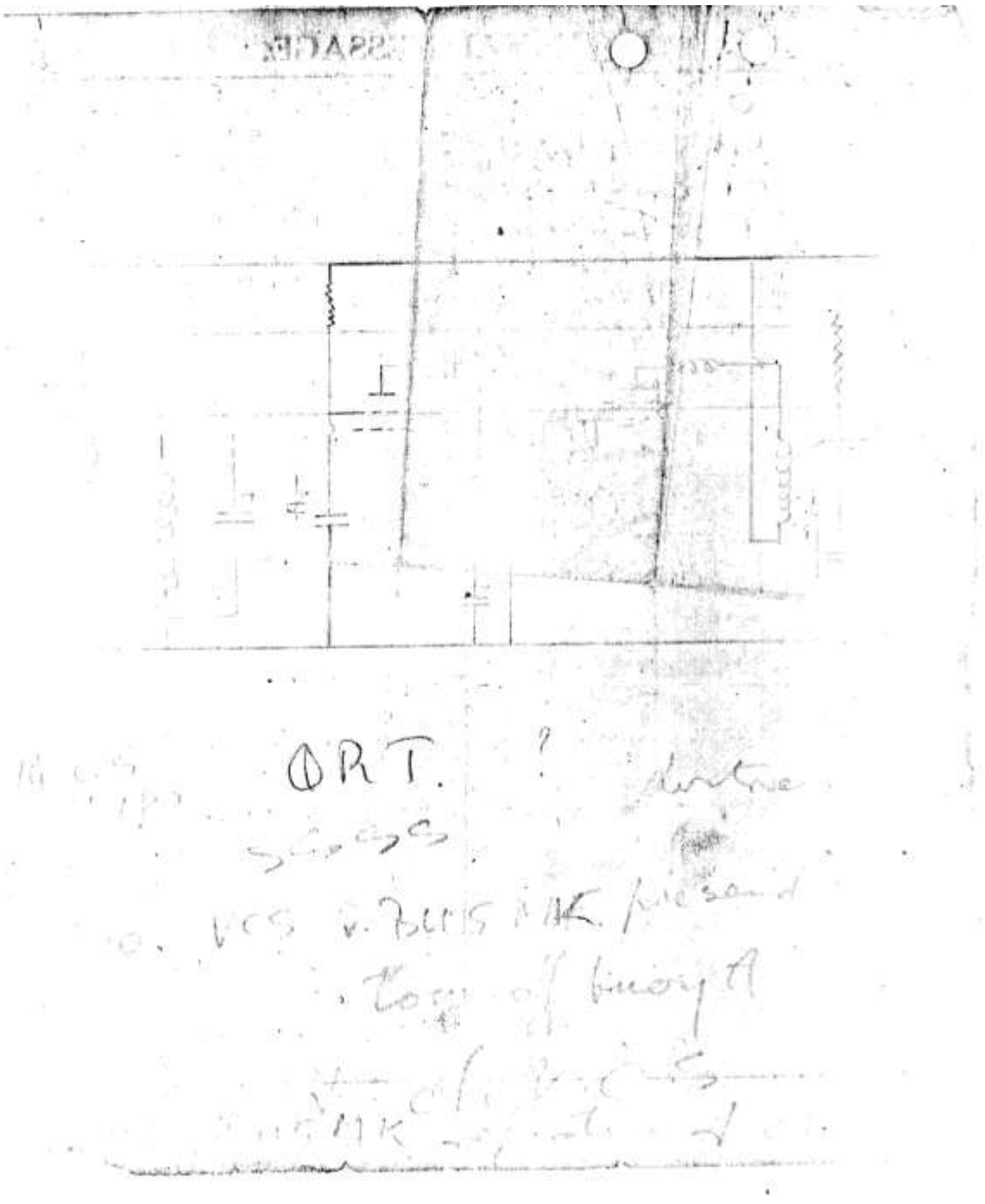
Aircraft	A A A A (separate letters made 3 times)	When attacked by aircraft.
International	S O S (separate letters made 3 times)	When in distress and immediate danger from cause not due to enemy action.

An actual message would look like the following:

Transmitted	Meaning
CT	Attention
R R R R R R R R R R R R	Warship raider
DE	From
KH8FD KH8FD KH8FD	Your own war radio call sign (3 times).
4410N 6202W	Position: Lat 4410N Long 6202W
SUSPICIOUS	Indicates presence of suspicious and unidentified warship.
081430Z	Date-time group (if time permits).
AR	End of message.

BRITISH FREEDOM's Electrician thirty-three year old W. Henderson was down in the engine room and was killed instantly when the torpedo exploded. This explosion blew the skylights (windows in the roof of the engine room) up into the air. The fourth engineer, twenty-three year old Richard Cleland was on watch in the engine room but had gone up into the boiler room with his duty greaser to couple up the oil fired boiler for use in place of the main engine exhaust gas boiler normally used at sea. Rick Cleland was temporarily blinded by the explosion and was led out on deck. Thinking the blast was some error on his part in changing over the boilers, he was apologizing to all that could hear him. Both he and the duty greaser were fortunate they had not been at their normal duty station, the engine controls, or they would have been killed instantly.

BRITISH FREEDOM lost her main ship's electrical power when the torpedo exploded. This meant Bert had to switch to his battery supply with only a dim light for the radio room. In his haste he grabbed the schematic diagram of a simple broadcast receiver he had drawn, for the ship's radio log and kept a brief record of his communications with station VCS on this. He had been planning to build this broadcast receiver from spares and used parts.



This old photo copy of Bert's schematic come radio log is quite faded after nearly thirty years in my file.

Captain Morris told Bert to send his distress call and message. Since BRITISH FREEDOM was no longer a part of the convoy he reverted to his coded call, rather than his pendants number, and sent "SSSS v BU5MK PLEASE SEND TUG FOR TOW OFF BUOY A". The duty operators at Camperdown VCS were doing their best to answer these calls, pass along the necessary requests, and record the bearings taken from the direction finder. ATHEL VIKING called in at one minute to eleven with her report, following Bert's transmission.

Bert had been running back and forth between the radio room and the bridge and at one point he and Captain Morris placed the confidential books plus the Aldis (Signal) Lamp Battery for luck, in their perforated steel box, and tossed it over the side into the sea. This steel box was for that purpose. Captain Morris ordered most of the crew away leaving one lifeboat on the starboard side of the bridge. There were about twelve left when Bert Hawling came down the bridge companionway and slipped on the boat deck. Captain Morris grabbed him as he slid for the open ship's side, and said jokingly, "No, not yet Sparks". Their position was hopeless. Bert had radioed for a tug, but if it had come it would have been of no use. They felt the ship shudder as probably the engine room bulkhead gave way and the bow rose higher. Captain Morris told the twelve remaining on board to get off. He, the Mate, the Chief Engineer, and the Bosun left in a life raft. Bert and the remaining eight left in the last lifeboat. Bert's boat was on the weather side of the ship and was rather difficult to get clear. When they pulled clear of BRITISH FREEDOM the life raft, containing Captain Morris, appeared miles away and going like a rocket. Bert's boat went around astern of the ship through a large patch of oil. The funnel was now under the water and Bert could see into his cabin that opened aft on the Bridge Deck. He could see his personal belongings falling out the open door and his cane wicker chair fell out into the sea while he was watching. Captain Morris had a small dog that had its box outside the Captain's door and enjoyed going about the ship riding in the Captain's uniform jacket with his head sticking out the open part of the front. This little dog went ashore with the Captain in the life raft and on arrival in Halifax managed to make the local newspapers as an Andulusean Greyhound. Captain Morris gave him to the crew of a Hudson Bay Company ship that was in Halifax at the time.

H. H. MacLean

This is the Hudson's Bay Company Supply Vessel MV FORT ROSS at Hebron, Labrador in July 1942

This was the second torpedoing for both BRITISH FREEDOM and Bert Hawling. Bert had been a passenger in the Dutch vessel SOEKABOEMI bound to relieve another radio operator in India. SOEKABOEMI was part of Convoy ONS-154, the convoy that nearly died in December 1942. Bert was landed in Halifax from this incident and instead of being sent on to India, was sent across Canada to take delivery of a new "Sam Boat" being built for the British government on the west coast.

One of the four Basset Class Minesweepers, HMCS GASPE, was to be the rescuer of the BRITISH FREEDOM crew and her log entries are:

1120 No. 1 buoy, BRITISH FREEDOM sinking. Bearing app. 1000 yds. From No. 1 Buoy. Standing by to pick up survivors. All guns crews closed up. Action stations

1125 Picked up 1st lifeboat

1133 Picked up 2nd lifeboat

1135 Picked up 3rd lifeboat

1143 Picked up 4th lifeboat

1147 Picked up raft

Total of survivors picked up from BRITISH FREEDOM:
56. Lifeboats cut adrift. Proceeded into harbour

1202 BRITISH FREEDOM down stern first, only focastle above water

HMCS GASPE had lain well clear of BRITISH FREEDOM and made her lifeboat crew row a good distance because they had spotted the thirty depth charges carried on her Bridge Deck. Had these thirty depth charges exploded while BRITISH FREEDOM sank, it would have destroyed GASPE had she been close by.

When the torpedo exploded in MARTIN VAN BUREN, it blew off the rudder, the propeller, the thrust bearing caps, and stopped the main engines. It caused a two-inch crack on both sides of number three hatch that went below the water line. The deck was bulged on the starboard (right) side between number four and number five hatches and the deck was cracked on the port (left) side of number five hatch. The shaft alley (a tunnel for the propeller shaft) flooded immediately. The watertight doors were closed but all were leaking.

One of the tugs from the famous Foundation fleet was soon at the scene of the torpedo attack. I did not learn whether she was sent there to stand by for this convoy or just happened to be in the area. But, FOUNDATION SECURITY took MARTIN VAN BUREN in tow at eleven o'clock just as the fire alarm system in the latter indicated a fire in the five-inch magazine (storage area for the ammunition for the large guns). Flood valves were opened to flood this magazine with water and this incident prompted Captain Hiss to give the order to abandon ship.

Abandonment was completed at ten minutes past eleven. HMCS COMOX picked up the crew from MARTIN VAN BUREN and her log reads:

1100 Action stations

1103 Away seaboats crew to pick survivors from water

1115 3 boat loads survivors taken on board from MARTIN VAN BUREN, 51 persons, 1 stretcher case

1355 Survivors landed

The stretcher case mentioned is Jimmy Mitchell who was blown off the five-inch gun on the stern. He managed to swim to the life raft, but made the rest of the trip to the hospital in a stretcher. Note this life raft in the photograph of MARTIN VAN BUREN proceeding to join this convoy. This life raft is lashed to the bandstand housing the small gun just forward of the five-inch gun on the stern.

According to the statements made by the MARTIN VAN BUREN survivors on reaching Halifax, the other vessel that rescued them was another Basset Class Minesweeper HMCS FUNDY, but FUNDY's Log shows she was not in the area and I was unable to learn the identity of this other vessel. MARTIN VAN BUREN had a crew of forty-one merchant seamen, twenty-seven U.S. Naval members, and one U.S. Army Security Officer, making a total of sixty-nine people on board. Three of these had been lost from the blast leaving a total of sixty-six survivors. Fourteen survivors are missing in the records available, but they were rescued which is what really matters.

WESTMOUNT had arrived at the scene of the torpedoing at eleven o'clock and she found MARTIN VAN BUREN and BRITISH FREEDOM, the latter in a sinking condition with only her bow (from the bridge forward) sticking out of the water, about one mile west on the number one buoy. But by this time the weather was very bad with the visibility less than three cables (1821.8 feet). She could not find ATHEL VIKING. When FOUNDATION SECURITY took MARTIN VAN BUREN in tow, she did not know the direction so WESTMOUNT gave them a course and proceeded ahead of them.

Meanwhile, at 10:52 AM HMCS ETTRICK had struck a submerged object near ATHEL VIKING. At the same time HMCS MEON reported hearing a torpedo pass near her going from west to east. The Navy had no other choice but try to kill this submarine before it did further damage, so ETTRICK and MEON carried out attacks on contacts between this swept channel and Blind Sisters Rocks.

The crew in ATHEL VIKING felt certain the ship would stay afloat providing they could get a tow into Halifax before long, so remained on board, and waited, and waited. At 3:23 PM ATHEL VIKING's Carpenter, J. W. Platt, and one of her Able Seamen, W. Strand, reported sighting a Submarine on the surface. A later diagnosis by the Navy of this sighting claimed this was a Fairmile and not a Submarine, because Fairmiles were operating in the area.

Third Radio Officer Al Whatley answered my querie as follows:

"The reason that we were not picked up at a similar time to the crews of the BRITISH FREEDOM and the Liberty Ship was that we stayed aboard for about seven hours (I think) until given the order to abandon ship. We were told by VCS that tugs were on the way to us but they never arrived. From memory, there were three tugs sent from Halifax but they all went in the direction of the Liberty Ship. I wouldn't say that we were ignored but they certainly didn't find us. After seven hours we had developed a considerable list which meant that two of the lifeboats had swung inboard and were not useable leaving only two boats plus rafts serviceable.

I am not certain how the rescue vessel eventually found us but it could have been by the rather crude radar system of those days. This was a small R.C.N. sub-chaser which, on the return trip to Halifax, appeared to be more under the water than on top of it. I recall being violently sick on this short trip, the only time that I was sick during the whole of my time at sea. I also recall that the captain, who I think held the rank of Lieutenant, had only returned from leave that Sunday afternoon and had immediately put to sea either to search for us or the U-boat. There was some little mix-up about the code signals to get back through the boom defenses but after a while we met other ships of the same flotilla and went into Halifax with them."

When all the survivors of this convoy landed in Halifax, there was much bitterness among them towards the Royal Canadian Navy for the poor rescue attempt they appeared to show towards the ATHEL VIKING. With this information I tried to locate the log of the actual rescue vessel. Although it had been mentioned that the vessel may have been an R.C.A.F. rescue boat, Al's letter clearly indicates a Navy Fairmile. The Naval records show they were in the area from the report of a submarine sighting. The records I located on the Fairmiles gave me eight possibilities from this detail, mainly the Commanding Officer's recent return. The log for one of these eight, HMC ML112 is missing and none of the others were involved. Was HMC ML112 the source of Al's seasickness?

Four of the ATHEL VIKING crew were missing and believed drowned. The four were E. G. B. Martin, Master; G. Ince, Chief Officer; E. Caijssoe, Chief Steward; and A. J. McHale, Bosun. Oh yes, sorry, there was a fifth. It had been popular for the ships of that era to carry a mascot and the Chief Steward had a little

dog, a right independent little cuss. Some of the other fellows tried to grab him and take him ashore with them but this little dog was having no part of that. If his master wasn't leaving, neither was he, and he therefore became the fifth casualty.

Why were so many rescued and these four, sorry five, did not make it? Again I must refer to correspondence with Al Whatley who describes it better than I can.

"I recall that as the forward lifeboat was full, Captain Martin and the other three stayed aboard the 'Viking'. The idea being to get the majority to the rescue ship and then return to the 'Viking' to take them off – but before the lifeboat even reached the rescue ship the 'Viking' went down so the return trip was not necessary. I think that the rescue vessel searched around the area for a while but didn't find any survivors of the four on board.

One silly little thing that I do remember is that before leaving the wireless room I switched all the gear off – and then in the haste of leaving I left my favourite pipe in the ashtray on the operating table. You see, every minute we expected a tug to appear to take us in tow and it was a bit of a surprise when we got the order to abandon ship. As it so happened, we only just got off in time."

The following are copies of the ATHEL VIKING radio log.

BRITISH WIRELESS MARINE SERVICE.

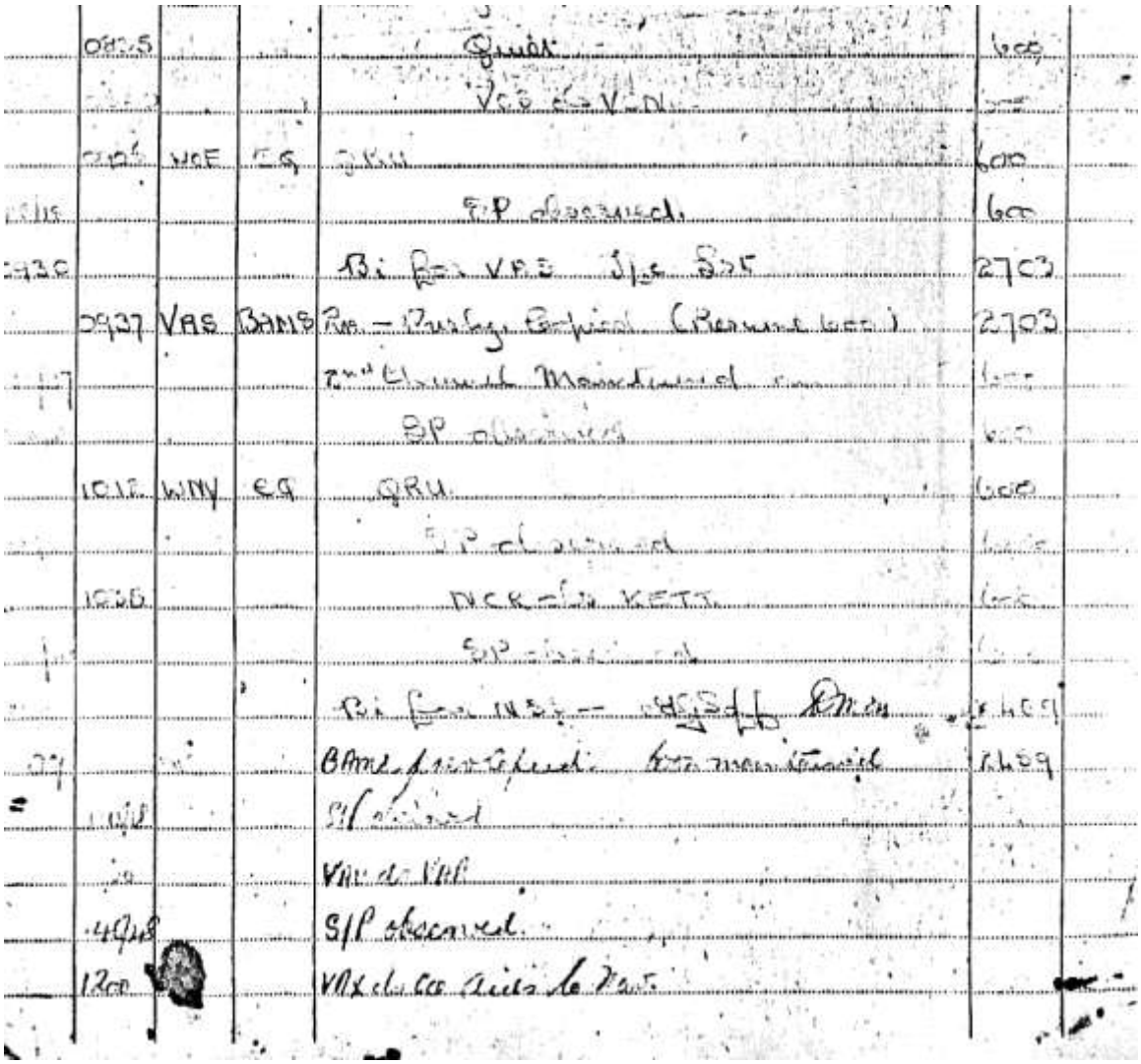
Joint Service Department of :— The Marconi International Marine Communication Co., Ltd., Radio Communication Co., Ltd., and Marconi Sounding Device Co., Ltd., Marconi House, Chelmsford.

WIRELESS LOG ~~S.S.~~ M.V. ATHEL VIKING Call Sign MBDL

From — To —

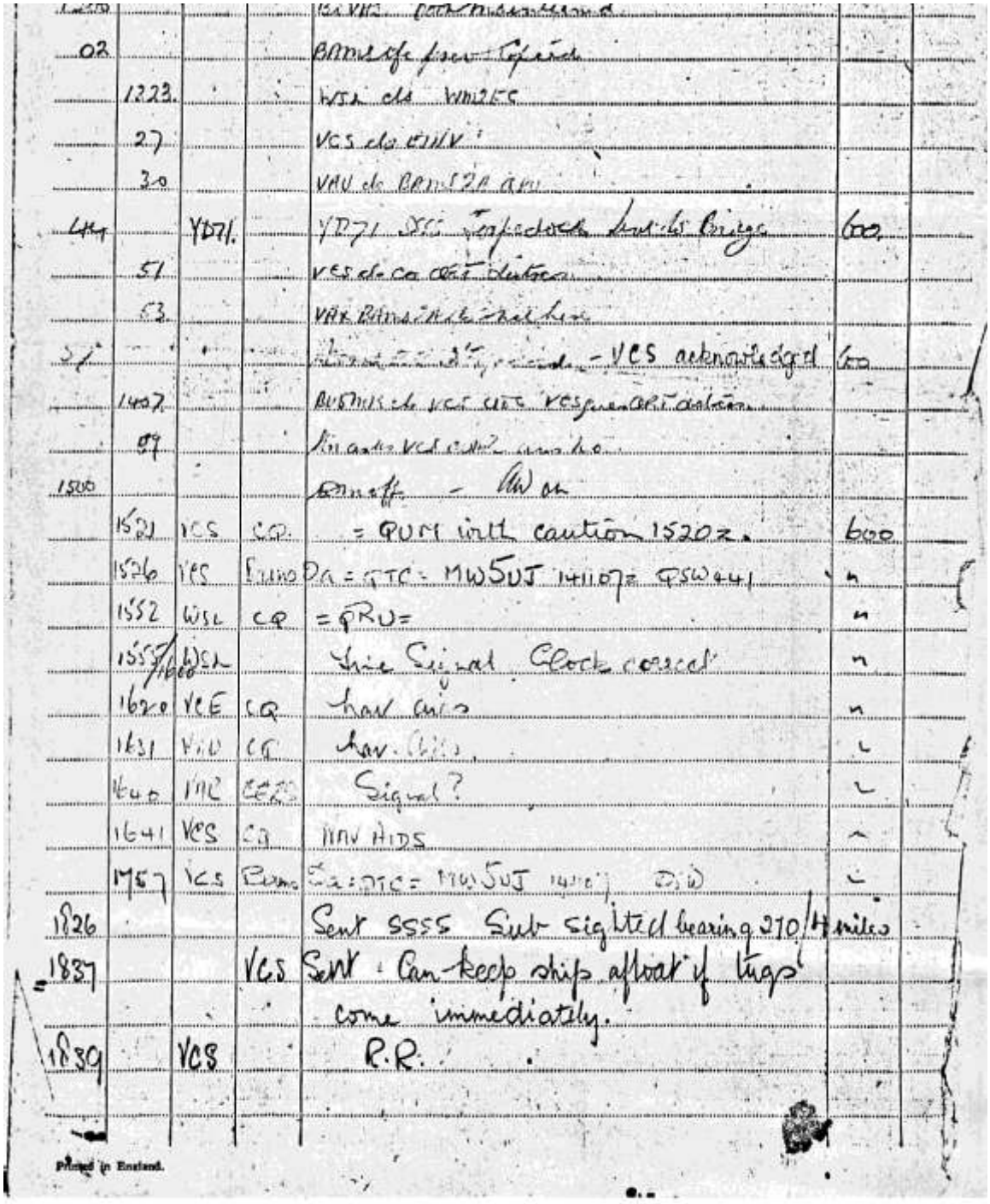
Date 14 January 1945 Position —

Time (G.M.T.) This Ship	Time (G.M.T.) Other Stations Working	From	To	Particulars of Working	Wave Length	Distance
	0605	WOE	CQ	=QRU=	600	
	0610	WNY	CQ	=QRU=	"	
	0630			All Quiet	"	
	0645/48			S.P. observed	"	
	0652	WSL	CQ	=QRU= QSX=	"	
0700				Aw off — [illegible]	"	
0715/18				SP observed	600	
	0730			Quiet	600	
[illegible]				SP observed		
	[illegible]	WSL	CQ	QRU	"	
	0807	WCE	CQ	QRU	"	
	[illegible]			Quiet		
	08?5			Quiet	600	
				[illegible]		
	[illegible]	WCE	CQ	QRU	600	
[illegible]				SP observed.	600	
[illegible]				[illegible] VAS [illegible]	2703	
	0937	VAS	BAMS	[illegible] (Resume [illegible])	2703	
[illegible]				2nd Channel Maintained [illegible]	600	
				SP observed	600	
	1012	WNY	CQ	QRU	600	
				SP observed	600	
	1030			NCK [illegible] KETT	600	
				SP observed		
				[illegible]	2469	
[illegible]				BAMS [illegible] maintained	2469	
	[illegible]			SP observed		



12th January 1942

Time (G.M.T.) This Ship	Time (G.M.T.) Other Stations Working	From	To	Particulars of Working	Wave Length	Distance
1205				RM off: eHGS on	600	
1215/18				SP observed	600	
	1230			Quiet		
1237				eHGS off RM on	600	
	43			VAX de VCS QRZ, NWS		
	51			WSL de CQ QRU.		
	57			VCS de EINV URU?		
1300				[illegible]		
02				[illegible]		
	1323.			WSL de WMZEC		
	27			VCS de EINV		
	30			VAU de BRMS2A [illegible]		
44		YD71.		YD71 SSS Torpedoed [illegible]	600	
	51			VCS de CQ [illegible]		
	53			VAX [illegible]		
57				[illegible] - VCS acknowledged	600	
	1407			[illegible]		
	09			[illegible]		
1500				RM off - AW on		
	1521	VCS	CQ	= QUM with caution 1520z.	600	
	1526	VCS	Euro	DA = GTC = MW5UJ 141107 = GSW441	"	
	1552	WSL	CQ	= QRU =	"	
	1557/1600	WSL		Time Signal Clock correct	"	
	1620	VCE	CQ	nav aids	"	
	1631	VCU	CQ	nav. aids	"	
	1640	VCE	CQ	Signal?	"	
	1641	VCS	CQ	NAV AIDS	"	



Meanwhile another item of interest had taken place. While FOUNDATION SECURITY was towing MARTIN VAN BUREN into Halifax she became disengaged. The records of the MARTIN VAN BUREN survivors made on arrival at Halifax, state the towline broke although those making this statement were not there to witness this. The local fishermen of the Sambro area swear the line between MARTIN VAN BUREN and FOUNDATION SECURITY was cut by a Navy Corvette coming in from Bermuda. They claim this corvette passed between FOUNDATION SECURITY and MARTIN VAN BUREN while this tow was in progress. Since these rumours have an uncanny way to be accurate lets take a look at the

records. First of all we have two Frigates inbound from Bermuda, HMCS BUCKINGHAM and HMCS STRATHADAM. These Frigates were nothing more than the deluxe model of the famous Corvette. Both these ships joined in the hunt for Herr Dobratz and his U-boat and quite conceivably one of these two could be the culprit. HMCS STRATHADAM's Log makes no mention of being the offender, but the question is left unanswered because the Log for HMCS BUCKINGHAM is missing and the logs of all the other naval ships make no mention of this broken towline. No one knows what became of the log of the tug FOUNDATION SECURITY. Why were these two logbooks (HMC ML112 and HMCS BUCKINGHAM) not available – were they used in some naval board of inquiry and never returned to their proper place? Their absence makes these questions all the more intriguing if nothing else.

Because of the deteriorating weather at the time, FOUNDATION SECURITY was unable to secure another towline on MARTIN VAN BUREN mainly because there was no one on board the latter to assist with this operation. The end result was that MARTIN VAN BUREN drifted ashore at Sandy Cove and as one fisherman told me, he has no idea how she managed this because it would take all he could do to get his small fishing vessel in there under the best of conditions. Naturally when a fully laden ship shows up with no one on board, the local residents have a tradition to uphold in the form of stripping the ship as soon as possible. Cyril Garrison replaced the engine in his fishing vessel with one from one of the Army trucks on board, and used this engine for many years. Around five thousand cases of an item called Fruit Cocktail found an immediate home in the basement of a vacant house. Possibly the reason this item was removed so rapidly and carefully is summed up in the statement made by the mother of a fourteen-year old boy. Her boy was to have no part in sampling the contents, although he had been one of the main removers, anything with cocktail in the name had to be booze of some kind. The local village stores nearly went broke. It was several years before they could so much as give anyone a package of cigarettes.

Captain Hiss learned shortly after his arrival in Halifax that his ship was still afloat and had drifted into Sandy Cove. He became rather concerned and wanted to get back on board as soon as possible, because in their haste to leave on receiving the signal of a fire in the magazine, they failed to dispose of the confidential books. He and a few others including the famous old salvage master of the tug FOUNDATION FRANKLIN fame, Captain Featherstone, went back aboard the BUREN the next afternoon. They found all the confidential books in order mainly because you cannot drink, eat, smoke, or fish with them. The MARTIN VAN BUREN had broken in two at the point she had cracked on the explosion of the torpedo when she grounded at Sandy Cove. As impossible as it seemed, Captain Featherstone managed to remove the two train locomotives that had been lashed on deck after the photograph was taken in November, and managed to set many of the vehicles ashore. These vehicles proceeded in convoy under their own power up the road past the old VCS station, that had done all she could to assist in this incident, and on into Halifax. The two locomotives were taken in by barge, one dangling on the end of the boom that had lifted her off the MARTIN VAN BUREN.

The search for U-1232 would continue by many pieces of naval equipment, including ships and anti-submarine aircraft for nine days. At fourteen minutes past midnight on January 23rd a submarine made radio contact with its headquarters in Germany from position 4300N 5200W, believed to be U-1232, the submarine that torpedoed Convoy BX-141. This prompted action on abandoning the search. U-1232 and Captain Dobratz were to survive World War II.

A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is a memorial in England with Mr. Henderson's name engraved on it.

A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is the same memorial as above with the names of those who lost their lives in ATHEL VIKING.

Mr. Martin Van Buren, as a point of interest, was the eighth president of the United States. If he left no mark anywhere else, he certainly left one to the local residents in the area of radio station VCS. Today there is little to show for what is left of the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN. An occasional severe storm will reveal a

rusty plate of her hull and many of those in the area claim the black scum on the rocks of the area is a remnant of the Bunker C fuel she carried to fuel her main engines.

Rex Garrison, Sambro, Nova Scotia

This is the MARTIN VAN BUREN wreck.

Nova Scotia Museum

Nova Scotia Museum

Nova Scotia Museum

Nova Scotia Museum

These are four more views of the wreck of the SS MARTIN VAN BUREN that are held at the Nova Scotia Museum.

Evelyn McCready

This is Mrs. Clyde Fleming and Evelyn McCready opening cases of contraband from the wreck of SS MARTIN VAN BUREN January 1945

A. W. "Bert" Hawling

This is Bert Hawling's dog Cleo guarding his torch that is a flashlight in our world. These had to be the original "walkie talkie" because they had a key on them that one can see in the photo for transmitting Morse code via light. I enjoyed my correspondence with Bert and so many others very much and many thanks for all the help from all of you with this project.

TERMINATION OF WORLD WAR II

On the termination of World War II the "so called Electronic War" ended, but the changes made during this war were to make many changes in marine communications the world over. The Albro Lake – Newport Corner station (Halifax Radio CFH) was to continue in operation along the lines developed during this war. This station was a part of the British Commonwealth Scheme, the most enormous marine communications network ever to be constructed. The world's oceans were divided into various areas. A powerful high frequency coast station within the British Commonwealth countries, and within each area, was made controlling station of that area. Halifax Radio CFH became the controlling station for the Western North Atlantic. (Vancouver Radio CKN, a sister station to CFH, became the controlling station for the Eastern Pacific). After the war these controlling stations continued the practice of broadcasting a traffic list (a list of ships by alphabetical order of their call signs for messages on hand at each station) and after the transmission of this traffic list, a broadcast of these actual messages. This started during the war when ships did not use their radio transmitters because enemy ships and stations could tell their position via radio direction finders. This meant that each of these controlling British Commonwealth stations had a broadcast frequency for these broadcasts. All these controlling stations had the same working frequency in each band for any direct communication with any ship. In other words you could be calling Halifax Radio CFH4 and have Portishead Radio GKL, England, answer you and take your message(s). There was no additional charge involved in forwarding a message sent via one station or another. This made for a most efficient and simple (for the ship) means of communication. A ship could sail around the world with little trouble and nothing more than a medium frequency (500 kilohertz and a working frequency) transmitter.

The British are quite capable of producing and organizing some excellent equipment and organizations, but they seem different to the point of being awkward when doing anything average, or for the average person. This communications scheme was rather strange and confusing for anyone not familiar with it. The reason it was retained after the war was for the convenience of British ships. All any ship had to do was contact the closest British Commonwealth station with a TR message advising when it crossed from one area to another. (A TR message is a service message stating the ship's position, normally in nautical miles from a known geographical position and its next port of call.) Then the ship monitored the controlling station's

broadcasts. The ship could acknowledge receipt of any message received via a service message to the controlling station or any British Commonwealth station. In other words if the ship received a message from a CFH broadcast, she could acknowledge receipt via service message to CFH direct or send this message via Camperdown VCS, Sydney VCO, Montreal VFN, or any other commonwealth station including Portishead, England, Gibraltar, and so on.

To be truthful about it, I could never see the point of the scheme other than the fact it made it convenient for British ships to wander around with nothing but a medium frequency transmitter. Many who used this scheme became rather "gung ho" about it and felt it the only system by which to communicate. Why a coast station should have to know where a ship was bound or anything else about her made no sense to me. If a station had a message for a ship, list her in the traffic list and let her call in and collect the message. Why all the unnecessary chatter? But it was to be nearly twenty years before the British Commonwealth stations reverted to this very system, the one the American stations had used for years.

The call signs in use at each controlling station varied depending on the job. All the broadcasts at Halifax Radio were conducted with call sign CFH, but each working frequency had a number added to this call sign. CFH3 was the six-megahertz working frequency and this number varied depending on the frequency. All of these British Commonwealth controlling stations were the same with the exception of Portishead Radio in England. The Portishead Broadcasts used call sign GKA and the letter in the suffix changed depending on the working frequency. GKL was the eight-megahertz working frequency call sign. Whatever constituted the reasoning behind these various calls remains a mystery, but it was just another aspect of this system that took some time to learn and one more detail that had to be remembered.

There were many of these large controlling stations around the world and many smaller stations that were also members of this communications scheme. Every station in every British protectorate participated, and some that come to mind are, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Malta, Gibraltar, Jamaica, and Bermuda. These large controlling stations did not use the medium frequency band containing 500-khz and a working frequency, but any ship fitted only with a medium frequency transmitter could use any one of a number of such coast stations in every commonwealth country or colony. Since there were no additional charges involved this meant that a ship could send a message to Sydney, Australia, via Camperdown VCS for the same charge as sending it direct to Sydney Radio VIS, Australia. Since the overall majority of the shipping involved ships registered in Britain, these ships had neither the expense of installing good stations nor the expense of paying very much for the messages they transmitted at the expense of the commonwealth countries or colonies.