

## BRIEF HISTORY OF HMCS ANTIGONISH

On 2 October 1943, at Yarrows Ltd., Esquimalt, the keel was laid for a new River Class frigate which was to become HMCS ANTIGONISH. Within five months the ship was launched, and on 4 July 1944, she was commissioned under her first Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Commander R. D. Barrett, RCNR.

HMCS ANTIGONISH, like other River Class frigates built in Canadian shipyards, had a displacement of 1,445 tons, an overall length of 301 feet 6 inches and drew 14 feet 4 inches of water aft when fully loaded. She was designed for a top speed of twenty knots under deep draught. Her armament consisted of twin four-inch guns forward and a single twelve-pounder aft (both on High Angle mountings), as well as four twin Oerlikons and two Bren machine-guns. As purely anti-submarine armament she possessed the multiple firing, ahead-throwing "hedgehog", and 150 conventional depth-charges. These were discharged from two rails over the stern and from four throwers or mortars.

It was not until 28 July 1944, after completing her trials and her last minute fitting out, that ANTIGONISH left Esquimalt for the first leg of the long voyage to join the escort vessels of the North Atlantic Command at Halifax. The voyage was not entirely uneventful. On 7 August her radar equipment broke down, and she had to complete the cruise without its aid. From 11 to 14 August, the ship was secured alongside at Cristobal, in the Canal Zone, while undergoing engine repairs, and the American naval authorities at Coco Solo seized the opportunity to provide abundant entertainment for everyone on board.

An occurrence near the end of the voyage was of a more serious nature. ANTIGONISH, steaming ahead in darkness without the aid of her radar, ran afoul of a convoy escorted by US Task Group 21.5. As it happened, however, collision was averted, and the incident led to nothing but a rather lengthy exchange of correspondence. The only other event of importance occurring during the voyage was the premature explosion, during practice firing, of a "snowflake" rocket which injured an officer and two ratings. This was the first of two such accidents in the ANTIGONISH. Both, fortunately, occurred during practice firing and not while in contact with the enemy.

When HMCS ANTIGONISH arrived at Halifax on 22 August 1944, she had still to complete a thorough "work-up" programme, preceded and followed by a refit, before being put into active service. After the initial refit, ANTIGONISH was sent to Mulgrave, N.S., on 5 October in order to allow the officers and men to take part in the festivities arranged by the townspeople of Antigonish, N.S., who planned to adopt the ship. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of October were taken up by the official adoption ceremonies and festivities. The entire ship's company was entertained by the townspeople; there were formal parades and presentations, dinners and dances, and private and public entertaining on a large scale. At the conclusion of the visit, the ship's Commanding Officer gave an address of thanks over a local radio station. Apparently, the adoption ceremonies and

the subsequent entertainments were a huge success, and so were forged the ties which from that day to this bind the ship and the town Antigonish.

The name Antigonish is said to be a Micmac word, but its meaning is not undisputed. According to some authorities it means "river of fish", an allusion to the large numbers of fish in the creek running into Antigonish harbour. Other authorities have it that the word means "broken branches", a reference to the tale that bears used to come and break down the branches of the numerous beech trees growing thereabouts in order to get at the beech nuts. This latter explanation has been accepted in the design of the ship's badge which is described as: "Argent, a bear rampant sable, langued gules, grasping and breaking with its fore-paws a beech bough proper". As suggested by the badge, the ship's colours are black and gold. Unfortunately, no motto to go with this badge has yet been formally approved.

After leaving Mulgrave on 7 October, upon conclusion of the adaption ceremonies, HMCS ANTIGONISH proceeded to St Margaret's Bay for H/F D/F<sup>1</sup> calibration, and thence to Halifax for minor repairs before beginning her final "work-ups". The "work-ups" were to be carried out at HMCS SOMERS ISLES, and on 9 October 1944, the ship left Halifax for Bermuda. There, from 11 to 31 October, she completed the usual series of "work-ups" and exercises, returning to Halifax again on 2 November. The Bermuda voyage was uneventful, except that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> a whale or other large fish came within range of the ship's asdic and suffered a depth-charge and hedge-hog attack for its carelessness.

When ANTIGONISH returned to Halifax, she at once went in for a refit which lasted until 14 November. In the meantime, however, she had been allocated to Escort Group 16 to replace HMCS MAGOG which had recently been badly damaged, while in the St. Lawrence, by a German "gnat"<sup>2</sup> torpedo. Escort Group 16 had been formed in July 1944, as a support group based on Halifax, and although for a short while two of its ships had been used for close escort duties, by the time ANTIGONISH joined, EG-16 was operating almost exclusively as a support or striking force.

When, in 1942 and 1943, the number of vessels available had begun to exceed the number required for close escort of convoys, several of these support groups had been formed. Their primary task was to hunt down and kill submarines or, failing that, to keep them submerged in order to lessen their ability to shadow and attack the convoys. In principle, the support group was a force more or less independent of a convoy, and not primarily responsible for its safety, which "supported" it by hunting U-boats that were in the vicinity. Exceptions were occasionally made for very important convoys, when both support and close escort ships would be made responsible for the convoy's safe arrival. When not supporting any particular convoy, the support group occupied itself in making anti-submarine sweeps in areas known to be threatened and in perfecting the team work which was essential to successful supporting operations.

HMCS ANTIGONISH came out of refit on 14 November 1944, completed the usual trials, carried out the necessary calibration on her equipment, and was ready to

sail on the 19<sup>th</sup>. On that date, along with HMC Ships STETTLER (temporarily SO in the absence of SPRINGHILL) and CHARLOTTETOWN, she sailed on her first operational voyage, proceeding to the outer Halifax approaches on an anti-submarine sweep.

When HMCS ANTIGONISH joined EG-16 for operational duty, the enemy was not nearly so active in Canadian coastal waters as he had been, for instance, in 1942 in the heyday of *U-553* and *U-517*. But there were still enough U-boats around to make it dangerous for any ship in the area to relax its vigilance. In November 1944, it was estimated that there were four U-boats operating in Canadian coastal waters. One of these advertised its presence in Cabot Strait on 25 November by torpedoing and sinking with all hands the Canadian Corvette HMCS SHAWINIGAN. Earlier, on 2 November 1944, the *SS Fort Thompson*, while en route from Quebec to Sydney, had been torpedoed and damaged.

But though the enemy was active enough in the area, HMCS ANTIGONISH had rather a dull time of it for the next three months. In the alternately dull and vicious winter weather of the Canadian east coast, the ships of EG-16 swept back and forth on anti-submarine patrols, supporting or escorting one convoy after another for short distances, screening individual stragglers, breaking out now and again to attack what always turned out to be “non-sub” contacts. Time and again an aircraft, a coastal observer, a merchant or fishing vessel would report sighting a U-boat. ANTIGONISH and the ships of EG-16 would dash to the area of the sighting, sweeping over it again and again, always with the same result: No definite contact with the enemy.

The history HMCS ANTIGONISH during the months from November 1944, to early March 1945, is little more than a collection of movement signals. After carrying out her first operation, an anti-submarine search of the Halifax approaches, ANTIGONISH, with EG-16, sailed to support QS-106<sup>3</sup> to Sydney. ANTIGONISH was having trouble with high chloride content in the boiler water as well as defective radar, but she continued with her group, supporting SH-186<sup>4</sup> to Halifax, where repairs were carried out on 5 December. She continued to have trouble with her radar and asdic, however, and had to return to port for further repairs on the very next day. On 7 December, ANTIGONISH rejoined EG-16 in supporting SH-187. After bringing this convoy in, the group patrolled in the Halifax approaches until 10 December. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, EG-16 met ON-269<sup>5</sup> at the Halifax Ocean Meeting Point and provided close escort for the ships of the Halifax and Fundy section of this convoy from HOMP to port. When SPRINGHILL, CHARLOTTETOWN and ANTIGONISH arrived with the convoy at Halifax on 12 December, ANTIGONISH was the only ship of the escort that had not suffered weather damage.

The remainder of the winter was spent in doing the type of work described above. EG-16 operated out of Halifax, supporting or escorting the Halifax and Sydney sections of convoys to and from the Halifax Ocean Meeting Point. When not engaged in convoy work, the group carried out anti-submarine sweeps in and around the Halifax approaches.

Very seldom was there any exciting event to break the monotony. On 28 December, however, one of the ships of EG-16, HMCS KIRKLAND LAKE, which had recently joined the group from new construction, obtained a promising contact one mile south-west of No. 6 buoy in the Halifax approaches. No wreck was known to be in the area, but an attack by hedgehog, though producing three explosions, yielded only a light oil slick.

Again, early in January, 1945, EG-16 was despatched to the area in which the tanker *Nipiwán Park* and *SS Polarland*, two of the three ships of SH-194, were torpedoed. It took two hours to reach the scene of the attack, however, and again ANTIGONISH and her companions had to report negative results. When BX-141<sup>6</sup> was attacked off Chebucto Head a few days later, and lost two tankers and a merchant ship, EG-16 was not in the vicinity and did not have the opportunity of searching for the attacking submarine.

On 12 February, 1945, ANTIGONISH, while patrolling with EG-16 in the Halifax approaches, was ordered to Sable Island to rescue the crew of a Liberator which had crash landed there. A force four wind prevented a landing, however, and ANTIGONISH stayed only long enough to determine that the crew members were safe and would be evacuated later by air. After this mildly exciting incident, which at least provided a break in the wet and dreary routine of patrolling and supporting, ANTIGONISH rejoined EG-16.

February was the last month of operational service in Canadian waters for HMCS ANTIGONISH and the ships of EG-16. On 22 February 1945, it had been decided by Naval Service Headquarters<sup>7</sup> that EG-28, then being formed, would relieve EG-16 in order to release that group for service in United Kingdom waters. In the three-month period 20 November 1944, to 23 February 1945, while she operated out from Halifax, ANTIGONISH had assisted in supporting at least twenty-three convoys or portions of convoys and in providing close escort for at least two, ON-269 and ONS-41. In addition, she had been involved in endless patrols and investigated countless reports of U-boat sightings and contacts. During that same period, eight merchant ships and two Canadian warships were torpedoed in Canadian coastal waters, but none was in convoys supported by EG-16.

After carrying out necessary repairs and generally fitting out for the voyage, HMC Ships SPRINGHILL (Senior Officer), CHARLOTTETOWN, STETTLER, KIRKLAND LAKE, and ANTIGONISH joined up off Halifax on 8 March 1945, and sailed for the United Kingdom. The voyage was an uneventful one. Two doubtful submarine contacts were made, but the searches proved unsuccessful. ANTIGONISH took a prominent part in neither search as her asdic was out of order from 10 March. On 18 March, EG-16 joined with the Irish Sea section of CU-61<sup>8</sup> and supported it as far as the mouth of the Foyle. The same day, the group secured at Londonderry to become the fifth Canadian support group allocated to United Kingdom waters.

From Londonderry, the group was sent out to the training base, *HMS Philante* in Ireland and then to the Loch Alsh exercise area on the west coast of Scotland. There the newcomers were drilled in the tactics and techniques used against the schnorkel-equipped U-boats operating in the shallow, wreck-strewn waters of the British coast.

On 3 April, EG-16 was back in Londonderry ready to be sent on operations, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> it was out patrolling with Force 36 in St. George's Channel. During the week following EG-16 patrolled in the Irish Sea, supporting convoy after convoy. A few contracts were obtained, and a few attacks were made but with no success. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, EG-16 was back in port, this time at Belfast.

After sailing out on patrol again, on 15 April, the group was split up. HMC Ships KIRKLAND LAKE (Senior Officer) and ANTIGONISH were sent to Portsmouth, and SPRINGHILL, CHARLOTTETOWN and STETTLER came under the command of Commander-in-Chief, The Nore.

From 15 to 24 April, KIRKLAND LAKE and ANTIGONISH operated out of Portsmouth, usually supporting convoys in the approaches but once going as far afield as Cherbourg. Five anti-submarine contacts were made during this period and four attacks carried out, but in every case the contacts turned out to be "non-sub".

When ANTIGONISH and KIRKLAND LAKE rejoined EG-16 at Portsmouth on 24 April, it had been decided<sup>9</sup> that the group be used for close escort duty with the KMF, MKF fast troop convoys running between the United Kingdom and Alexandria.<sup>10</sup> The ships of EG-16, therefore, went to Londonderry for boiler cleaning and general repair before taking over this new task. At this time, the group consisted of HMC Ships CHARLOTTETOWN (Senior Officer), KIRKLAND LAKE, STETTLER, CARLPLACE, (who had replaced SPRINGHILL on her return to Canada for refit), and ANTIGONISH.

On 5 May 1945, EG-16 took over her new duties and set out for Gibraltar as close escort for KMF-44. There were no untoward incidents during the voyage, except that a little rough weather caused two casualties in the *Highland Queen*. But the passage was not entirely uneventful, for on the fourth day out, Grand Admiral Donitz broadcast the order which was to end the U-boat war. That did not mean, of course, that the escort could relax its vigilance. It was quite possible that not all U-boats would hear the message – or obey if they did hear it.

Consequently, the convoy system was retained, and EG-16 escorted three<sup>11</sup> more convoys to and from Gibraltar before being sent to Londonderry on 9 June in preparation for return to Canada.

On 17 June, after picking up Service personnel at Greenock, HMCS ANTIGONISH, in company with CHARLOTTETOWN, STETTLER, and KIRKLAND LAKE, sailed for home. The ships arrived in Halifax on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and on that day EG-16 was disbanded, the units being placed under command of C.-in-C., Canadian North Atlantic.

With the ending of the war in Europe, it had been decided that forty-six of Canada's frigates would be "tropicalized" for use in the Pacific. ANTIGONISH was one of those selected and accordingly went into refit at Pictou, N.S., on 30 June, 1945. Long before the refit was complete, however, the war in the Pacific had ended, and plans had again to be revised. Under the new plan, ANTIGONISH was tentatively selected for retention in the post-war fleet, and her refit, unlike that of some less fortunate ships, was carried through to completion. By the end of 1945, having carried out her trials, she was again ready for sea.

By that time ANTIGONISH had been allocated to Group 3 with the frigates BEACON HILL, LEVIS, NEW WATERFORD, CHARLOTTETOWN and GROU. It was now proposed to send her to Esquimalt, where she would be placed in reserve. On 22 December 1945, HMCS ANTIGONISH, in company with BEACON HILL, set sail for Esquimalt via Colon, Balboa, and San Pedro. After an uneventful cruise, the two ships secured at Esquimalt on 18 January 1946. On 1 February, ANTIGONISH was allocated to the Reserve Fleet, and on 5 February she was paid off.

HMCS ANTIGONISH was not to remain idle for long, however, for on 6 March 1947, it was ordered that she be recommissioned for training duties. There was much work to be carried out before the ship could take over her new duties, but this was rushed through, sometimes at the expense of other ships then being refitted, in order that ANTIGONISH might be ready to undertake the training of the year's first group of UNTD<sup>12</sup> cadets reporting in May.

On 26 April 1947, HMCS ANTIGONISH was recommissioned under Acting Lieutenant-Commander J. E. Wolfenden, RCN(R). On 1 May, she completed her power and gun trails, and on the 5<sup>th</sup>, she was out at sea on her first assignment, searching for a missing TCA aircraft which was thought to have gone down at sea. The search was unsuccessful though it was carried out off and on for two weeks.

After a two-day search for the missing aircraft, ANTIGONISH returned to Esquimalt to embark her first contingent of UNTD cadets, and so begin her long career as a training ship. Throughout the summer of 1947, ANTIGONISH, while training UNTD cadets and providing several day cruises for sea cadets, made numerous calls at ports on Vancouver Island and on the mainland and one call at Fort Worden, Washington. In fact, not much time, except during refit, was spent in her base at Esquimalt. When not otherwise occupied, ANTIGONISH conducted exercises with other ships of the Royal Canadian Navy and occasionally with units of the United States Navy. Twice in 1947, she held anti-submarine exercises with the US Submarines *Razorback* and *Queenfish*. In August 1947, she conducted an unsuccessful search for another missing TCA aircraft.

The year 1948 was more eventful. Being ready for sea earlier in the year, HMCS ANTIGONISH was able to participate in a winter cruise to Mexico and the United States in February. With HMC Ships ONTARIO and CRESCENT, she carried out exercises

with the United States Fleet during February. During the cruise, she made official calls at San Diego, Long Beach, Santa Barbara and Magdalena Bay, Mexico. There were further RCN – USN exercises in March and May with US Submarines *Blenny* and *Caiman*, as well as exercises with *HMS Sheffield* in August. In April, HMCS ANTIGONISH carried out an interesting cruise along the mainland of British Columbia, carrying a naval party which was surveying for possible submarine bases and a representative of the Army who was making arrangements for the establishment of Ranger bases in the area.

During the Fraser Valley floods of 1948, HMCS ANTIGONISH was again on special duty. On 28 May, she was sent to New Westminster to become the headquarters ship for Commander O. C. S. Robertson, RCN, who was the Senior Naval Officer in Charge for the Fraser area. There she remained during the most critical stage of the floods. It was not until 14 June, when UNTD training commitments made it imperative that she leave, that ANTIGONISH was relieved by HMCS ROCKCLIFFE.

The first summer training cruise of 1948 took ANTIGONISH to Juneau, Alaska, to join with the Americans in celebrating their Fourth of July holiday. The remainder of the summer was largely spent in shorter training cruises to and from points along the British Columbia coast.

In August, HMCS ANTIGONISH distinguished herself in a very interesting exercise, Operation "NOOTKA". In this exercise, ANTIGONISH took the part of an enemy raider trying to land fifth columnists, picking up escaping P.O.Ws., lay mines, and spread alarm and despondency along the British Columbia coast. Three Canadian destroyers (CAYUGA, ATHABASKAN and CRESCENT) had the task of finding and destroying her. Displaying "commendable initiative and imagination,"<sup>13</sup> ANTIGONISH not only accomplished her mission but succeeded by "careful planning and excellent tactical handling"<sup>14</sup> in mining or torpedoing all three destroyers.

When HMCS ANTIGONISH came out of annual refit in January, 1949, it was to join the Canadian Destroyer Division in a cruise to the West Indies. En route, there were exercises with units of the US Navy off Magdalena Bay. In the Caribbean, exercises were held with the West Indies Squadron of the Royal Navy and with the Atlantic-based Canadian ships, MAGNIFICENT, NOOTKA and HAIDA.

The cruise was not entirely uneventful. While off Magdalena Bay, ANTIGONISH found and brought into port the crippled motor vessel *See Konk*. Later, while at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, ANTIGONISH suffered minor damage to her superstructure from *HMS Snipe* while the latter was coming alongside.

HMCS ANTIGONISH returned to Esquimalt on 28 April 1949, and began to prepare for the training programme which was to occupy her throughout the summer. From May to December, she was engaged in training UNTD cadets and new-entry seamen. The usual series of calls at British Columbia and United States ports was highlighted by a six-day visit to New Westminster in September, when the townspeople

enthusiastically welcomed their old acquaintance from the days of the Fraser Valley floods.

During 1950, HMCS ANTIGONISH was not quite so busy as usual. First, there was the annual refit, with its accompanying sea trials, which were not completed until the end of April. In May, began the UNTD training cruises, the occasional exercises with Canadian and United States ships and aircraft, and the usual round of calls at Canadian and United States ports, which continued until the autumn. Further, exercises with US submarines and surface units, and visits to San Diego and Guadalupe Island, completed the programme for the year.

The year 1951 began with another southern cruise to San Diego, Magdalena Bay, and Acapulco, Mexico. This voyage was enlivened by a collision with a whale, and by the sighting, while off Point Conception on 28 January, of a "brilliant flash" in the eastern sky presumed to have been caused by an atomic bomb exploded on the Las Vegas proving grounds.

The bright spots in the summer training programme were the visits to Los Angeles in June, and to Pearl Harbor in August, during both of which the ship engaged in joint RCN-USN exercises. But the highlight of the year came in October when HMCS ANTIGONISH acted as a guard-ship for Their Royal Highnesses, the Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip, during their passage between Vancouver and Victoria, in HMCS CRUSADER. A visit to Port Alberni and a training cruise around Vancouver Island, which rounded out the year, were somewhat of an anticlimax.

A seven-week training cruise opened the operational programme in 1952, and took ANTIGONISH to several ports in Peru, the Canal Zone, Nicaragua, and the United States. It was a long cruise and a merry one, though no doubt strenuous enough, especially for the senior officers who had to bear the brunt of the entertainments at the various ports of call. As Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham has remarked; "Courtesy visits to foreign ports and 'Showing the Flag' cruises . . . are among the most strenuous exercises I know and ruinous to the digestion".<sup>15</sup>

Upon returning from her southern cruise, ANTIGONISH went in for refit, and when this was completed she returned to the UNTD training duties she carried out every summer from May to September. Another refit in late autumn, a series of short training cruises in December with personnel from HMCS NADEN, the RCN base at Esquimalt, and a series of anti-submarine exercises with RCAF aircraft completed her programme for the year.

The last year of ANTIGONISH's second commission, 1953, was not much different from those that had gone before, and it is proposed to describe in greater detail her activities during this period as being representative of her seven years as a training ship.



The year opened with another cruise to the Hawaiian Islands. On 22 January, HMCS ANTIGONISH, together with BEACON HILL, left Vancouver Island for Pearl Harbor, where they secured on 2 February. The usual official calls were made and returned, and no doubt the ship's company enjoyed their shore leave at Pearl Harbor and Honolulu, but the bright spot of the cruise was a six-day visit to Hilo on the island of Hawaii. There the ships were greeted by a large gathering, including a bevy of hula dancers, and presented with a large mahogany key to the city by the Mayor himself. The entire ship's company benefitted from the hospitable nature of the population. There were dinners and dances. Free trips to view the wonders of Volcano National Park and other unusual features of the island were provided. All the facilities of the US Army Rest Camp were made available to the men. The men repaid this treatment by exemplary behaviour while in port, and the visit proved a highly successful one from the viewpoint of goodwill and friendly international relations.

Before leaving again for Esquimalt, the ships put in at Kealahou Bay on the other side of the island from Hilo to lay a wreath on the memorial which marks the spot where Captain James Cook, RN, was killed in 1779. Before holding the wreath-laying ceremonies, it was found necessary to make some repairs to the memorial, which had apparently not been adequately maintained. This event, as well as all the others that involved Canadian ships, received very favourable mention in the local press.

Not all the time in Hawaii was spent in entertaining and being entertained. ANTIGONISH and BEACON HILL held exercises with units of the US Navy and carried out bombardments on American targets. The long voyages to and from Esquimalt were of course utilized to carry out sea training of every description.

After returning from Hawaii, ANTIGONISH with HMC Ships SIOUX, BEACON HILL and SAULT STE MARIE, engaged in exercises off the American coast with surface and submarine units of the US Fleet. In March, ANTIGONISH took part in the US Navy's exercise "Seaspring", and as usual acquitted herself well.

In May, the regular summer UNTD training programme began. This task, which had occupied HMCS ANTIGONISH every summer since 1947, was by no means a sinecure. It involved almost continual work, both in and out of harbour, and fully occupied the time of both officers and men, particularly when, as so often happened, the ship was operating with a reduced complement.

In 1953, the summer training programme began on 9 May, when ANTIGONISH embarked twenty-six UNTD cadets and four sea training officers. For the next four and a half months ANTIGONISH, usually in company with BEACON HILL, the other training frigate on the west coast, carried out cadet training. Most of the time this was done in the waters in and around Bedwell Harbour. Occasionally, however, there were cruises further afield. In June, the ship spent three days at Long Beach, California. In July, there was a four-day visit to San Diego, and in August, ANTIGONISH made short visits to Astoria, Oregon, and Vancouver. These were by no means holiday cruises. Training continued on the voyages out and back, and there were occasional joint exercises, not

only with RCN ships but with ships and submarines of the USN and aircraft of both countries.

After UNTD training had been completed in September, and the ship's company had taken annual leave, ANTIGONISH was engaged in work of a technical nature. Trips were made to Saanich Inlet, Parry Bay and the Straits of Juan de Fuca, where scientific tests were conducted under the direction of Pacific Naval Laboratory personnel.

On completion of these tests, ANTIGONISH went back to her training duties. From 2 to 6 November, classes were held for personnel of the Torpedo Anti-submarine Training Centre, and the rest of the month was taken up with exercises with US Submarine *Bugara* and aircraft from the US naval base at Whidby Island.

During the month of December, with its gales and dirty weather, ANTIGONISH was fortunately in port most of the time. Training cruises, however, took the ship to Powell River, Prince Rupert and Port Alberni, where the friendly feeling of the townspeople for the Navy led to a great deal of entertaining and being entertained. The Powell River Paper Company gave a dinner for the officers and arranged tours of its huge mills for the ship's company. At Prince Rupert and Port Alberni, there were civic receptions and dances. An endeavour was made to repay this hospitality by entertaining notable townspeople and by throwing open the ship to visitors. At Port Alberni, the civic officials and some members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Navy League were taken on a two-hour cruise of the Alberni Canal.

On 11 December, ANTIGONISH was back at Esquimalt, her period of service as a River Class training frigate at an end. During the month following stores were landed and machinery and armament readied for lay-up. Finally on 15 January, 1954, HMCS ANTIGONISH was paid off into the custody of the Superintendent, HMC Dockyard, Esquimalt. Most of the officers and the ship's company travelled across the continent to Halifax, where HMCS STETTLER, with whom ANTIGONISH had served in EG-16, was about to be recommissioned as a modernized Prestonian Class frigate.

After seven dangerous and arduous months as a war-time escort vessel, and seven long years, at times no less arduous, as a training ship, HMCS ANTIGONISH had earned her rest. Some of her equipment had become obsolete. Her hedgehog and depth-charges, for instance, were no longer adequate weapons with which to train men who would be operating the "squid" on newer, more modern ships. Nor were all her guns, in caliber, type, and siting, those of the Prestonian Class frigates.

But ANTIGONISH's days of service have by no means ended. After lying in reserve for four years, she is once again to sail the seas, re-equipped and remodelled, and fit to take her place alongside any ship of her class. When recommissioned, probably in October 1957, she will blossom forth as a Prestonian Class frigate. Her beautiful frigate lines will have gone, but to compensate for that her new armament will make her a more efficient submarine hunter. A "squid"<sup>16</sup> mounted in the after well will

replace the hedgehog on the forecastle and the depth-charges on the quarter-deck. The forward gun-deck will still have its four-inch guns, but aft there will be a twin forty-millimetre Bofors instead of the twelve-pounder and the Oerlikons. Bofors will also replace the twin Oerlikons on the bridge wings, but they will be single mountings.

When she is commissioned for the third time, HMCS ANTIGONISH will probably return to her training duties. Once again, perhaps, she will visit on her training cruises the old familiar ports on the British Columbia coast, in the United States, Mexico, South America and the Hawaiian Islands. Future generations of junior officers, UNTD cadets, new-entry seamen, and many others will probably be schooled by her for a career in the Royal Canadian Navy. And assuredly all of them will be more than happy to belong to a ship which has served with distinction for seven years with the post-war Navy and which, in her own right, bears the battle honour:

Atlantic 1944-45.

## HMCS ANTIGONISH

### LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

4 July 1944 to 4 May 1945	Lieutenant-Commander R. D. Barrett, RCNR.
5 May 1945 to 22 July 1945	Acting Lieutenant-Commander J. A. Dunn, RCNVR.
13 August 1945 to 28 October 1945	Acting Lieutenant-Commander G. G. K. Holder, RCNVR.
29 October 1945 to 6 February 1946	Acting Commander A. H. G. Storrs, DSC and Bar, RCN.
26 April 1947 to 16 August 1947	Acting Lieutenant-Commander J. E. Wolfenden, RCN(R).
16 August 1947 to 4 December 1948	Lieutenant C. A. Law, DSC, RCN.
4 December 1948 to 28 September 1950	Lieutenant-Commander W. S. T. McCully, RCN.
28 September 1950 to 4 August 1952	Lieutenant-Commander R. Phillips, RCN.
4 August 1952 to 15 January 1954	Lieutenant-Commander H. R. Beck, RCN.

Naval Historical Section,  
Naval Headquarters,  
Ottawa, Ontario.  
20 August, 1957.

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<sup>1</sup> High frequency direction finding.

<sup>2</sup> So called from the initial letters of German naval acoustic torpedo.

<sup>3</sup> Quebec-Sydney convoys were so designated.

<sup>4</sup> Sydney- Halifax convoys.

<sup>5</sup> United Kingdom-North America.

<sup>6</sup> Boston to Halifax convoys.

<sup>7</sup> NSHQ 222203Z-2-45.

<sup>8</sup> New York to UK convoys, usually fast tankers, freighters and troopers.

<sup>9</sup> Signal 211603/4/45 C.-in-C., Western Approaches.

<sup>10</sup> Western Approaches ships only escorted them as far as Gibraltar.

<sup>11</sup> MKF-44, KMF-45 and MKF-45.

<sup>12</sup> University Naval Training Division.

<sup>13</sup> FOPC S 8800-381/2(SOI), Sept. 15/48.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> A Sailor's Odyssey, p.131.

<sup>16</sup> An ahead-throwing anti-submarine mortar. Usually fitted in pairs, each weapon throwing a pattern of three H.E. projectiles with great accuracy. An electronic fire control system is used to fire the charges, which can be automatically set to explode at a predetermined depth.