



CFB ESQUIMALT NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

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CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum is located at Naden on Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, in the city of Victoria, which is situated on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, province of British Columbia, Canada.

The museum’s goal is to collect, preserve, interpret and display the history and heritage of the naval presence on Canada’s West Coast and of the military on Southern Vancouver Island.

www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org

Grace Under Pressure Nurse Divers with the Navy



Ships Officer Diving course participants – L to R: Top row - Sgt (S) F. Olkovich, Cpl (S) K. Keith; Capt (S) Gardners (kneeling). Bottom row - Lt (A) G. Wiwcharuck; Lt (S) J.C. Macquarrie; Lt (A) S. Delaney.

LIKE HER fellow nurses who embrace the body’s frailties, and even dare confront them, Grace Bohn (nee Wiwcharuck) has never been one to back down from a challenge.

So in 1971, when Grace had the chance to train to become a diver with the Navy, she took the opportunity to explore a different medical frontier. She was already serving in the Air Wing as a Lieutenant on staff at the Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt hospital, where she worked as a Registered Nurse. She knew the Ships Diving Officer training course offered through the Fleet Diving Unit

Continued on page 3

HOLIDAY CLOSURES: Labour Day: Monday, September 5.

THE MUSEUM *Team*

Museum Team

Debbie Towell – Curator
 Joseph Lenarcik – Assistant Curator
 Clare Sharpe – Museum Exhibit Designer/
 Administrative Assistant/Webmaster/
 Volunteer Coordinator
 Tatiana Robinson – Archival Assistant
 Mike Baran – Workshop staff
 Vince Hadley-O'Shaughnessy – Workshop staff
 Gerry Kennedy – Workshop staff
 John Scambler – Workshop staff



Our Active Volunteers

Cecil Baker	Brian McGregor-Foxcroft
Don Bendall	Florence McGregor-Foxcroft
Valerie Chatten	Paul O'Reilly
David Churchill	Tom Pound
Jeremy Clunn	Zoila B. Proud
Janet Kay Curley	Greg Sharpe
Dave Freeman	Don Thomas
Michael Harrison	Norm Truswell
Bob Hewitt	Ed Widenmaier
Clarence Lockyer	

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www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org
 Daily interesting historical facts, updates on exhibits,
 West Coast lore and characters of CFB Esquimalt's past

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Grace Under Pressure continued

(Pacific) in Colwood was acknowledged to be tough.

But Grace and her colleague Lt (AW) Sheila Delaney, who also signed up for the training, weren't put off. They were, after all, answering a call. The command surgeon, Surgeon-Captain Derek Kidd. Kidd, himself a diver and an expert on underwater medicine, had issued a strong plea for nurses to take the qualifying course. In Kidd's view, the diving officer course was an important prerequisite for nurses to assist in the treatment of Canada-wide diving accidents. Nurses who underwent the three-week training could develop a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of underwater accidents, and work with high expertise and efficiency as part of a specialized treatment team.

This was ground-breaking stuff for a time when women in the Armed Forces could not stay overnight on a Canadian naval vessel, and were not necessarily welcome in new roles. Ground-breaking too for those who had to kit the two nurses out in the right equipment. "My feet were too small for standard issue, so my flippers came from the Royal Navy," said Grace, who still has the original work order for her dive suit. "It was a bit of an embarrassment for the fellows designing the suits as they had never had to deal with women before!"

Grace, who now lives in Parksville, recalls: "Those

were exciting times but I'm afraid we still had a long ways to go when it came to women's roles in the forces and society."

Newspaper articles of the time about the two nurses' involvement in the diver training program highlight contemporary attitudes – for example "Diver Training Helps Nurses Improve Their Bedside Manner" - *Victoria Daily Times* of Sat. 27 February, 1971; and "First Lady Diving Officers (Women's Lib!)" – *Maritime Command Pacific Lookout* newspaper, Thurs. 11 March, 1971.

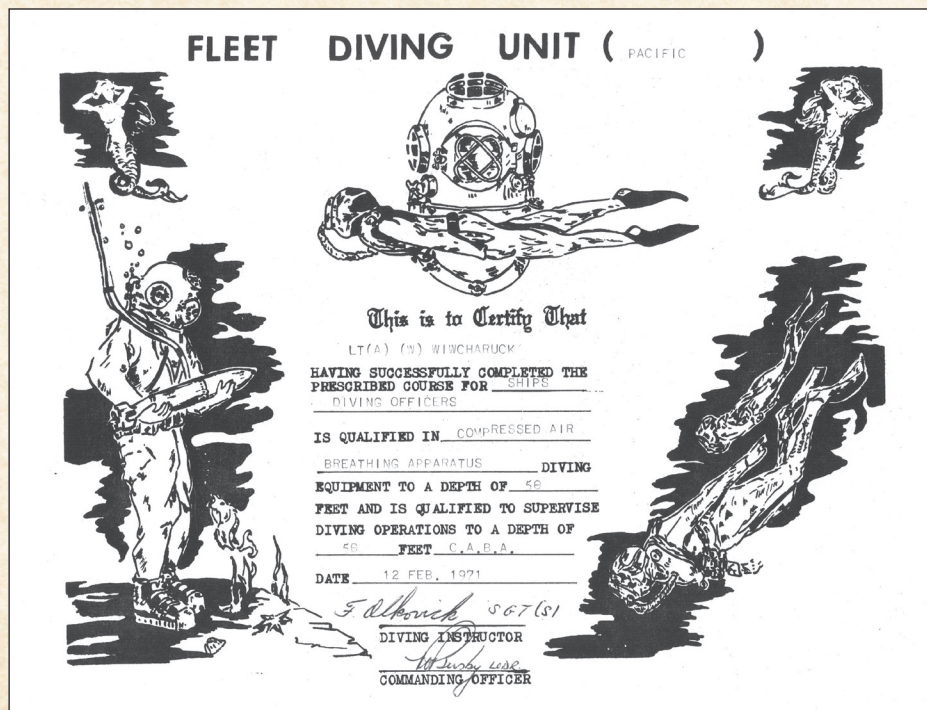
Despite feeling, at times, like fish out of water even when they were in the water, Lt. Delaney and Wiwcharuck successfully went through the course and did all the qualifying routines and work. These included daily morning runs and push-ups, classroom studies, plus practice searches on the harbour bed, hacking through angle wire and breaking chains at 30 feet, and experiencing the shot-line, a deep marine plunge at the end of a lifeline, performed in weighted

boots. When this procedure goes wrong, and the line is yanked up too fast, it can result in divers suffering pressure injuries – one of the diver emergencies Grace and her colleague were hoping to better understand, and treat.

Of the five people who started the course, only Grace, Sheila and one male trainee made it through to certification. "It was a matter of principle that we pass the course and get that certification," says Grace. Both nurses planned to keep their training up-to-date in the hope it would lead to opportunities to assist the Rescue Coordination Centre with emergency calls from divers in distress. But this was not to be – as Grace recalls, "we had great plans. But our regional matron was not happy about our doing the course and quickly had me posted to CFS Masset and Sheila posted to Germany. We never got to work with Capt. Kidd and I'm afraid his and our dreams died."

Despite the obvious disappointment of not being able to put her diving ability

to good practical use, Grace recalls participating in the course was a positive experience and a bit of an adventure in her career. "I feel it was an important part of the history of military nursing in Esquimalt, and part of FDU's history to deal with two women in the male domain."



Lt(A) (W)Wiwcharuck's certificate of completion of the Ships Diving Officer training course.

Photo Catalogue No.
VR992.42.3, CFB Esquimalt
Naval & Military museum
collection.

The Parry began service as a support ship to HMCS GIVENCHY, an old re-commissioned naval trawler, and other vessels.



An Old War Vet Sails On

There are not many vessels from World War II still afloat today, which were veterans of Canada's Fisherman's Reserve (AKA the Gumboot Navy). But our museum team found several that are still afloat, and are still in service on British Columbia's West Coast as commercial

vessels and private yachts. The most notable among them is the Motor Vessel Parry, which is still enjoying a very active life as a commercial vessel with Westwind Tugboat Adventures, located in New Westminster.

Built by Armstrong Brothers Shipyard,

Victoria, in 1942 for the Canadian Government, she was originally named the Talapus II, and served in the Canadian Navy's Fisherman's Reserve until war's end as HMCS TALAPUS. The 24.08 metre vessel is still powered by her Vancouver-built 240hp Vivian direct reverse diesel engine. According to her present owners, Parry was built for the Canadian Navy as a patrol and towing vessel. Her hull and superstructure design does suggest she was intended for something along classic towboat lines.

The Parry, along with a number of other very unorthodox West Coast navy patrol vessels, augmented what became known as the Fisherman's Reserve, an adjunct navy coastal patrol force made up of various types of vessels skippered and manned by coastal mariners. These

“The Parry, along with a number of other very unorthodox West Coast navy patrol vessels, augmented what became known as the Fisherman's Reserve.”

men and their boats knew and were known to the extended coastal community of British Columbia. As early as 1938, as imminent war were threatening, Canadian naval authorities felt the urgent need to reinforce very meagre West Coast defence forces. And when war did break out in 1939, the small naval force Canada had in Esquimalt was committed to the East Coast for the Battle of the Atlantic. In December of 1941, with the Japanese attack on the United States fleet at Pearl Harbour, the need for coastal patrol forces became even more urgent, and so, additional stopgap measures were stepped up.

The Parry entered naval service as a support ship to the HMCS GIVENCHY, an old recommissioned naval trawler, as well as to other assorted coastal vessels. The Parry, along with a diverse assortment of fishing boats, private yachts, and commercial vessels, was responsible

for patrolling the shoreline and fiords of Canada's extensive West Coast until Canada's naval service could provide regular naval vessels to take over the job. This Fisherman's Reserve, made up of very irregular naval personnel, would in time be rolled into the ranks of the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve.

Renamed in 1946, the Parry was sold to Canada's Hydrographic Service and operated out of Victoria's Coast Guard Station located in Victoria's Inner Harbour. She served as a government vessel until her retirement and resale to a private owner in 1968. Today, under her current ownership, she serves as a tour vessel offering sight-seeing, whale watching, and fishing adventures along British Columbia's Inside Passage. She is truly a piece of floating Canadian West Coast maritime history.

- By Brian McGregor-Foxcroft,
Museum Volunteer

Sources:

Background information on the Parry provided by Westcoast Tugboat Adventures, New Westminster, BC.

Nauticapedia.ca

Gilbert N. Tucker, The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History, Volumes 1 & 2, King's Printer, Ottawa.

"Fisherman's Reserve," Crowsnest Magazine, May-June 1960



Photo courtesy of Westcoast Tugboat Adventures, New Westminster, BC.



PO John Scambler of the museum workshop puts the finishing touches on the display panel he made to showcase HMS Algerine's figurehead.

A Head of His Time

Our museum has an imposing addition to its active exhibits and displays in Naden Building 37, thanks to the help of PO John Scambler.

While working in the museum carpentry shop prior to his release from the Forces, John did a really top-notch job of incorporating the new feature, a fierce-looking figurehead that once graced the prow of HMS Algerine. The name of the ship, a Phoenix-class steel screw sloop of the Royal Navy active in the Pacific from 1897-1925, means 'of or relating to Algeria and its inhabitants', and the figurehead, with its bearded face

and white burnoose, seems to represent a Barbary pirate. These pirates – also called corsairs – captured thousands of vessels, and conducted raids on coastal European towns and villages, mainly in Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal, but also as far afield as Iceland and the British Isles. The main purpose of their attacks was to capture Christian slaves for the Ottoman slave trade as well as the general Arabic market in North Africa and the Middle East.

No wonder, then, that the figurehead's appearance is formidable, given its history. Such figureheads have adorned

ships and embodied their spirit since human beings first went to sea; in the ancient past, ships were considered living entities that needed to appease the sea gods and gain their protection in order to enjoy safe passage and 'see' their way across the waters. To provide protection and 'eyes', and ward off evil spirits, the Egyptians depicted holy birds on their vessels. Horses, with their associations with speed, were often symbolic figureheads for Phoenician sailors. The Vikings favoured dragons and serpents or dragons, and First Nations navigators on the BC coast used



Algerine's figurehead in its original place aboard the ship.

Photo credit: from the museum collection, photo catalogue # VR1999.687.7.

“Such figureheads have adorned ships and embodied their spirit since human beings first went to sea.

figureheads on their canoes long prior to the arrival of Europeans.

The last British battleship to carry a figurehead was HMS Rodney, although smaller RN ships continued to carry them for some time. The last example may have been the sloop HMS Cadmus, launched in 1903.

The Algerine figurehead, which is on long-term loan to us, is an interesting artifact of the days of sail, and a bloodthirsty reminder of seafaring warfare. We're grateful to John Scambler for making a display that showcases it effectively for our museum visitors.

- Clare Sharpe,
Museum Exhibit Designer/Administrative
Assistant/Webmaster

A Brief History of Algerine

The Royal Navy sloop HMS Algerine was built at Devonport Dockyard in 1895, saw action in China during the Boxer Rebellion, and later served on the Pacific Station.

She was based at Esquimalt before the First World War, and as part of a treaty between the US and Britain, used to police sealing practices. She shared these patrols with HS Shearwater and also cooperated with Shearwater in patrolling southern waters. In these duties, Algerine ranged as far north as the Bering Sea.

At the outbreak of the First World War, she returned from San Francisco to Esquimalt to be used as a depot ship and her crew was sent to Halifax, NS, to man HMCS NIOBE for service in the Atlantic. She was sold in 1916 to the Pacific Salvage Company of Victoria and converted to a deep-sea salvage vessel. Algerine was wrecked in Principe Channel, BC, on 13 October 1923.



Heritage Colours



One of the most challenging and fascinating research questions I ever received came to us from Base Commander, Captain (N) Steve Waddell, this past June. CFHA was planning to install new siding and repaint Building #1 in Dockyard and we were asked “Can you provide some recommendations for a colour scheme that would be appropriate for the heritage status/year of the house? CFHA has left it up to us to decide.” This building, known as the Base Commander’s Residence or Engineer’s House, was built in 1879 by the Royal Navy as a residence for the Chief Engineer. We have photos of this building in our archive that date back to 1885 and we

even know who its’ first occupant was, Daniel Cartmell. However, none of our records mention the original colours of the exterior walls. All we had to go on was the following information on the house: “The previous (green) shakes were painted beige quite some time ago, and are now seriously peeling. The trim is a deep/royal blue.”

While I would like to thank everyone who helped me in my search, I am especially grateful to Greg Anaka, a DND painter, and Tom Pound, one of our museum guides; for opening my eyes to the colourful world of Victorian homes. I had long assumed that the house had been painted two colours, one for the walls and another for the trim.

However, when I showed Greg a c.1885 b&w photo of the house he said he could see at least “five” different colours. He believed the exterior walls were light grey or beige and the windows were white, with blue frames. He also thought the roof gables were two colours, with the darker one on the top and a lighter one on the bottom. The underside of the gable roofs may be yet another colour and the pillars on the porch are white. We did not discuss the front door colour but when I questioned the odds of so many colours being used in a Victorian house he said that five different colours was the rule not the exception. Taken aback by this information, I went to check on something else in our museum and came upon Tom Pound. I told Tom that I thought it was too bad that house colours were so much harder to trace than car colours. If you know the year, make and model of a car the manufacturer can provide you with samples of all the colours that car was available in. Tom assured me that there were websites that could provide me with this information on houses and furthermore he agreed with Greg that using five different colours on a Victorian house was standard practice. He then sent me links to two web sites, where I read about “colour palettes” for heritage buildings.

“ We did not discuss the front door colour but when I questioned the odds of so many colours being used in a Victorian house he said that five different colours was the rule not the exception.”



Engineer's House, c.1885.

Photo credit: from the FDH Nelson collection, CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum.

In 1976, the Benjamin Moore paint company created "The Historic Color Collection" as a U.S. Bicentennial project. This collection consists of 191 time honoured hues inspired by America's historic landmarks. One of these colours, Wetherburn's Blue, is based on a paint sample taken from Wetherburn's Tavern, in Colonial Williamsburg. Besides just making these colours available to the public, Benjamin Moore began working with local heritage groups to create colour

palettes for individual cities. The idea being that colours used in heritage homes should reflect the geography and history of a place. The thirty five colours in the sample provided are from the "Historical Vancouver True Colours" palette, which is a collaboration between Benjamin Moore and the Vancouver Heritage Foundation. Donald Luxton, the Heritage Consultant who volunteered hundreds of hours scraping Vancouver homes to uncover these original paint schemes, remarked that "What

I have learned through this program is how carefully colours were chosen to highlight different types of historic architecture, and how paint technology and appearance was so well understood by the designers and builders of the time. The use of colour was not arbitrary, and was an integral part of design."

For more information on the True Colours Program, go to www.vancouverfoundation.org.

- Joseph Lenarcik,
Assistant Curator

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Paul O'Reilly,
Museum Volunteer

Britannia's Navy – On The West Coast Of North America 1812-1914

By Barry Gough

ISBN 978-1-77203-109-6 (bound); ISBN 978-1-77203-110-2 (epub); and

ISBN 978-1-77203-111-9 (pdf)

Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd.

heritagehouse.ca

As a nation, we Canadians tend to sell our history short, presumably because it is too tame and boring. We've tended to focus on the stories from our southern brethren, the Americans, or our European ancestors, notably the British and French. Barry Gough has presented us with a thrilling and detailed account on the history of the Canadian west coast and how it fit into the grand scheme of world events during the 1800s and early 20th century. Of note is the effect of seemingly unrelated events in Australia, France, England and Russia that had a direct effect on the development of Canadian interests and an influence on our history. If one has the least bit of interest in the history of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, as each was a separate colony of Great Britain, then this book is required reading. A most delightful read! Of note, one can

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Please join us for a reception in celebration of Barry Gough's new book

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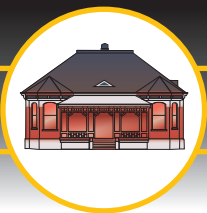
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SITE VISIT

An article from our website:

www.navalandmilitarymuseum.org/archives/articles/sailors-life/canadas-boy-seamen



Image is from The Crowsnest Magazine, October 1950.

Alice, the celebrity dog.

Good Companions

Over the years, there have been some wonderful stories and images of mascots and animal companions who became closely identified with ships and the crews they befriended.

Many of these tales are featured in the Creature Comforts article on our website. Good Companions, however, is devoted to some very special characters whose stories merit extra attention.

PERCY was a groundhog notable for his adventurous and amusing escapades while mascot of, possibly, HMCS ASSINIBOINE.

O.D. (ORDINARY DOG) ALICE became very popular with the media during her reign as mascot of HMCS CAYUGA during the Korean conflict. The sheer volume of information about Alice, and endearing photos of that were shared with Canadians by the press, made a compelling reason for Alice to have her very own page.

TIM RYLEY'S PARROT was acquired by him in Nicaragua when HMS SHEARWATER was on a southern patrol there in 1908. The antics of the much-loved bird were chronicled in Tim's journal of the voyage.



Another Successful Museum Open House

On Saturday, July 9th, the museum threw open its doors to all for its 2nd annual Open House – yes that’s right, 2nd Annual. We may be just newbies in the Open House world but, we were able to deliver a lot of fun to our visitors and we look forward to doing this every 2nd Saturday in July.

Just like last year’s event, we welcomed the members from the Victoria-Esquimalt Military Re-enactors Association (VEMRA), who were able to bring Canada’s military history to life. In each part of the museum, a VEMRA member was staged to tell such stories as the Battle of the Atlantic, Canada’s participation in the First World War, and civilian life during the war. We also had a Civil Defence exhibit in front of the museum with a re-enactor offering a nice cup of tea and reminding you to “duck and cover!” Another portrayed a member of the United States Marine Corps in the Pacific.

Another highlight was the return of representatives from the Queen’s Own Rifles and Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry Associations. These veterans were here to answer questions, talk about their service and also stand guard over the Afghanistan Book of Remembrance. Many visitors were overwhelmed with emotion as they turned its pages and remembered their own family members or acquaintances that they had lost.

There were also games for our younger visitors to play such as an oversized checkerboard and mini golf. Although the water buffalo proved to be just as big a hit with the wee ones who were enjoying demonstrating it to their parents for the entire morning!

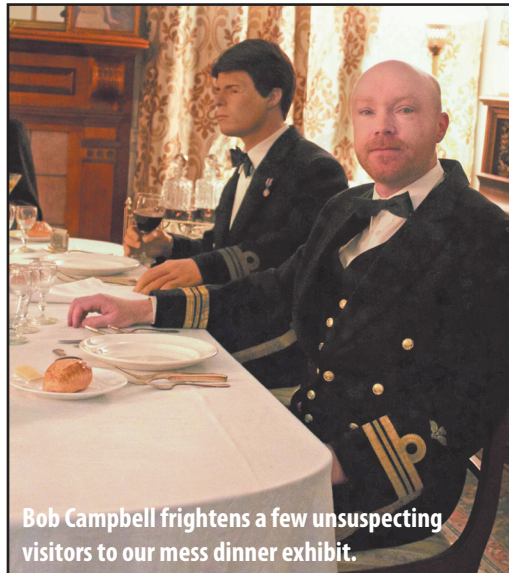
Thank you to all who came out in support of our event and we hope to see you again next year.

A special shout out to Christine Farrington, CFB Esquimalt’s Event Coordinator, for making sure everything ran so smoothly.

- By Debbie Towell, Curator



Re-enactors Tony Austin and Connor Thomas enthrall visitors with tales from the Battle of the Atlantic



Bob Campbell frightens a few unsuspecting visitors to our mess dinner exhibit.



Don Thomas reminds everyone to duck and cover.

Write us...

We welcome your questions and comments with regard to any of the articles we have featured in this or past issues of *Headway*.

Please write to the museum at:

CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum
P.O. Box 17000 Stn. Forces
Victoria B.C. V9A 7N2

Or email:

curator@navalandmilitarymuseum.org

CFB Esquimalt

NAVAL & MILITARY MUSEUM

Stat holiday closures:

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