

Canadian Coast Guard Association

Winter 2013 Newsletter



Message from the editor - Phil Dauphinee - The article in this newsletter entitled "My First Trip to the Arctic" by Gerry Gailey, got me thinking about my first trip to the arctic on the Sir Wilfrid Laurier. You may have also thought back to your first trip to the arctic and if so you should write those memories down and send them to me, or like Abe Van Oeveren did with his "A Sailor's Journal". Any memorable Coast Guard experience and photos will be welcomed. Please pass all input to me: Phil Dauphinee, Editor, 3621 Crestview Road, Victoria B.C. V8P-5C5; 250-595-2335; E-mail: pdauphinee@shaw.ca

Members with access to the Internet should bookmark the Coast Guard Association website at www.ccgawest.ca Members are encouraged to forward pictures to the Editor for publication on the website.

The Newsletter is also available on the Coast Guard Alumni website at <http://www.coastguardalumni.com/>

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1. Greetings from the President

Greetings, one and all!

I hope all is going well with you and your families.

We are having such an exceptional autumn season this year with plenty of beautiful warm, clear, sunny days. The fog did creep in, but overall we have been enjoying some great non-rainy weather, and life in Victoria is great! The cooler weather of course has turned the foliage to a range of gorgeous vibrant fall colours seen throughout our fair city. The east coast has nothing on us!

As we come to the end of the year, and the start of winter, we can look forward to the holiday season. It is a great time to get together and celebrate Christmas with family and friends.

I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and all the best to you in the New Year.

Hope to see you at our December Luncheon. Remember to remind your buddies to join us for a great meal with plenty of fun and friendship

Sincerely,

Terry Weber.

2. Membership Dues and Updates

Annual dues will remain at \$5.00 for the year 2014 and if not already submitted can be paid at the winter luncheon. Please note that the spouses of deceased members are most welcome to continue as associate members of the CCGA.

Secretary **Joan Scharf** reminds members to keep us informed of any changes to telephone numbers, mailing addresses and/or email addresses. Changes should be emailed to **Frank Statham** f_statham@shaw.ca or **Joan Scharf** hjmacdon@shaw.ca or #204 - 3969 Shelbourne St, Victoria, BC V8N 6J5 or 250-477-1390

Remember to keep our Service Committee informed about how our members are doing. Anyone knowing of a member (or member's spouse) who is ill, or who has suffered a family bereavement or problem and/or who may need a little help, comfort or recognition, please give **Joan Scharf** or **Bill Dancer** a call. We will be pleased to see if there is any way our organization can be of assistance, and to let fellow members who may be concerned know of the situation. Joan Scharf can be reached at 250-477-1390 and Bill Dancer at 250-721-5273.

3. Summer 2014 Luncheon - Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

WHEN: Thursday December 5th - 11:30 - mingle; 12:30 luncheon starts at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, 3475 Ripon Road Victoria

AIM: To relax, yarn, enjoy the Luncheon Buffet and celebrate the coming summer with friends and colleagues in the dining room of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

WHO: Coast Guard Association members, Coast Guard Retirees, their Spouses and Guests and serving Coast Guardsers are most welcome!

RVYC Lunch Menu

Salad;

Greens with Raisin Vinaigrette
Spice Potato & Green Bean Salad

Sliced Turkey, Stuffing, Turkey Pan Juice Gravy
Roasted Potatoes & Cranberry Sauce
Maple Glazed Root Vegetables - Parsnips, Carrots & Rutabaga

Cost will be \$ 31.00 which includes Tax & Gratuity

To facilitate catering, we need to give the Yacht Club staff firm numbers not later than Friday November 29 and we are liable for the numbers reserved. To avoid disappointment, please reserve your place(s) with -

Bill Dancer 250-721-5273 w.dancer@telus.net or

Terry Weber 250-383-6626 terrytw@shaw.ca

Mark Thursday December 5th on your calendar and make your RESERVATIONS NOW!

For Vancouver/Mainland attendees: Usual ferry arrangements prevail. Please let Herb Adrian (Surrey) 604-596-9355 or Cec Rempel (Chilliwack) 604-858-1983 know by Monday December 2. As usual, if you catch the 9 a.m. BC Ferry as a foot passenger from TSAWWASSEN (free if you are a senior) we will meet you in SWARTZ BAY. After lunch, we will aim to get you back to SWARTZ BAY in time for the 3 p.m. ferry. *Would anyone prepared to help out on please contact Terry Weber terrytw@shaw.ca 250-383-6626*

4. Remembering Those who have crossed the bar since the last edition.

Fred Button passed away September 1, 2013. He worked at Fleet Maintenance and Engineering at the Dallas Road Base.

Elmer Cordoni started his career as a Lightkeeper at Scarlett Point in 1958 and then at Active Pass Lightstation. He worked in the lamproom at the old depot yard in Victoria and then became the Aids to Navigation Technician in the Vancouver area, including the lower Fraser River, Howe Sound, Pitt Lake and Harrison Lake areas.

Gary Dahlgren was a well-known Victoria Base CG helicopter pilot. He passed away on April 30, 2013

Capt. Murray Ross passed away September 19. He retired in 1991 from Coast Guard SAR.

George Swaren passed away after a long illness on August 21st. Murry was one of the original "on the air voices" Marine Traffic Regulators (MTR) at VTS Kap100.

Capt. Fred Wedgewood To many who sailed with Captain Wedgewood he will be fondly remembered as "Fair Weather Freddy" for his instinctive ability to read the weather and dodge storms. Fred started as a deckhand in 1953 and retired as Commanding Officer of the *George E Darby* in 1988. Fred especially enjoyed his many trips to the arctic.

Fred at the Summer 2013 CCGA Luncheon



5 - My First Trip to Arctic by Gerry Gailey

My first trip to the Arctic was in March 1979. I was with Ship Safety at the time and was sent at short notice to do a damage survey on the "John A Macdonald", which had been holed in the ice while under charter to Canadian Marine Drilling (Canmar), a division of Dome Petroleum. The crew was Coast Guard, but under Dome's operational control and regulations.



The group leaving Vancouver consisted of the Macdonald's mate, a Canmar Port Engineer Bob Rushton and me. Vancouver was springlike and warm, Edmonton was also sunny and above freezing, but when we arrived in Inuvik it was dark, clear and minus 40 C.

Like all Canmar's ships the Macdonald was frozen in for the winter, dead ship with no caretakers on board. She was lying in Summer's Harbour, about an hour's flight northeast of Inuvik. We circled the frozen ships to see that there were no polar bears hiding and landed beside a barge secured to a drill ship.

We had a kilometre walk to the Macdonald and were accompanied by one of Canmar's Port Captains armed with a rifle in case of a bear encounter. The temperature was minus 45 C. with a wind chill of about minus 95. We arrived at the ship without incident, except for the mate who had some frostbite on his face, which was cured by wrapping a scarf around the affected area.

My survey did not take long, being merely to confirm for the Ottawa mandarins that the ship was holed below the waterline. We were able to enter the tank where the damage was because the hole was plugged by a mass of ice and the tank had been pumped before the water in it froze.

It was amazing to walk through the ship and see paint that had peeled off the bulkheads like sheets of plywood, some 6 ft. X 4 ft. At least being frozen in all winter had helped to remove a considerable fire hazard.

Our flight back to Inuvik was uneventful, and the following morning I was back in Vancouver.

In May I was back in Summer's Harbour to survey the repairs on the John A. Macdonald and Canmar Explorer II. Because the Macdonald's damage was a few feet below the waterline the repair would be done from within an open topped cofferdam tightly secured to the outside of the hull. About 50 sq.ft. of plating had to be removed and replaced by a plate 7/8 inch thick of specially strengthened steel, made by the builders of the ship, Burrard Drydock Co. of North

Vancouver. Coast Guard (Maritimes) insisted on x-rays of 100% of the weld before approval of the repair.

The damage to the drill ship was to be repaired by divers working within a diving bell filled with inert gas. The survey was by closed circuit TV within the diving bell. The repair was carried out at the same time as the Macdonald's, so I was constantly making 5 minute flights by helicopter from one ship to the other.

That both projects were successfully completed under difficult Arctic conditions speaks well for the skill of the welders and divers, and also for the organizing expertise of the Canmar staff.

I felt very privileged to have had the opportunity to do the surveys on both jobs that would normally have been done in a drydock.

6 - A SAILOR'S JOURNAL by Abe Van Oeveren

The Canadian Coast Guard mission statement revolves primarily around search and rescue, providing aids to navigation, participating in sovereignty and security, waterways management, icebreaking in eastern Canadian waterways and the Arctic, marine communications and traffic services, lightstation re-supply and environmental response to marine accidents. Every summer one of the fleet's ships becomes the platform to re-supply, service and maintain the radio repeater sites that dot the coast of British Columbia and the island archipelago of Haida Gwaii. A team of specialists including diesel mechanics, radio technicians, communications engineers, and riggers are on board along with a helicopter and crew to access these remote sites along the coast. Maintenance trips typically last about three weeks, and are divided between a circumnavigation of Haida Gwaii and the mainland coast between Prince Rupert and Port Hardy.

The following account is based on personal experience.



On an unusually warm evening in early May, the Canadian Coast Guard light icebreaker Sir Wilfrid Laurier cast off lines from Seal Cove Base in Prince Rupert and set sail for Haida Gwaii. By 1600 hours the next afternoon we watched from the flight deck of the ship as the mountaintop radio repeater site known as Cumshewa disappeared into the fog of an approaching weather front. Suddenly all misty, grey and cold, low clouds and wind swept choppy seas greeted the ship as she sailed from Skidegate Inlet back into Hecate Strait. Near and distant islands change shape but not appearance as the Laurier makes its way through the archipelago of South Moresby towards Juan Perez Sound and the anchorage below Barry Inlet.

It's a bumpy ride. On the ship's bridge the captain was heard to voice his wish for mother nature to save her "bitter box" for November and February, but this year May also seems to be a good time for crappy weather. Yesterday's warm and sultry air billowing the curtains in the

portholes and passageways of the Upper Deck are already a receding memory. Now every window is rain streaked, every seat is damp on the ass, and rust streaks have found new life. It's a climate you love to hate, and hate to love.

Our southward track keeps us about 6 nautical miles off shore. The forecast gale force winds are coming straight on the bow and the ship soon begins to pitch like a drunken cork. 35-knot winds combined with a long fetch make for spectacular sailing. The captain and officers on the bridge were suddenly paying more attention to the sea state, wind speed and lowering clouds than giving curious passengers a running commentary on the various navigation systems, gyro compasses, chart tables. And no, I was not allowed to sit in the captain's chair and play with the steering wheel or the throttles. A couple of decks down, the crane operator's cabin is a great observation point to watch the ship dive into the swells and come up with spray and green water surging over the foc'sle and washing down the well deck. Our speed settles to a steady 10-12 knots, the air temperature is a shade over 10 degrees C., and the barometer, which had been falling all day, finally begins to rise. Some small storm petrels, attracted by the lights of the ship last night, were still flopping around on the well deck, soaked, exhausted, and unable to fly. Gathered up in an apple crate, heat lamped and blow-dried, they were allowed to recuperate before being tossed over the side on new found wings. Aft of the fantail, a curious albatross wheeled and disappeared into the haze astern.

For the passengers, idle time in transit is a great opportunity to explore the ship from wheelhouse to engine room. Chief Engineer is happy to explain. The ALCO diesel GE electric propulsion system is similar to that of the Martha L. Black and George R. Pearkes. These are the other 1100 class light icebreakers that used to work the west coast before going east in trade for other vessels a number of years ago. Watchkeepers stand 12 hour watches and keep a very close eye on the functions of the engines, pumps, electrical and air circulation systems. Above the engine control panel is a TV monitor with a live video feed showing the bow of the ship as she plows on and on, up and down. Brace yourself; here comes another set of big swells.

From an electrical point of view, the diesel electric propulsion system goes something like this. While steaming, at least one of the 3 main diesels is running at a steady 900 RPM at any one time to provide power for all the propulsion systems. Under load, the RPM does not change, but the fuel consumption goes up. AC power generated by the diesels goes to a main bus, which is connected to a power load converter, which rectifies the AC into DC in the cycloconverter - a schaklekist in its own special room. The DC converts again into another form of AC before powering the two main drive motors, each one connected directly to a main drive shaft - an 18" diameter solid steel shaft - that goes through a stuffing box to the two propellers. Apologies to knowledgeable readers for the oversimplification.

Tagging along with one of the oilers on his rounds leads to the foc'sle end of the ship's well deck. There are lockers for paint and other rigging equipment, a tool crib for fabricating spare parts, and a workbench. In the centre of this space the walls contain the anchor chain lockers, both port and starboard. The "bitter end" is where the massive chain is anchored to the wall. In the hold, there are at least two levels below the well deck. Freezers, woodworking shop and supplies for delivery to various stations are kept here. A deeper level contains stacks of buoy chain and ugly 5-ton anchors along with big blocks of concrete. This is also the rope and cable locker. There are reels of various sizes of hemp rope. Hemp? I wondered what this 19th century rope has to do with today's world of synthetic lines. Appears it's used for staging of buoys when they are being deployed in position at sea and for bosen's chairs, because it has a non-slip property synthetic ropes don't have. I've come to realize that the ship is really a self-contained world, capable of being totally self-sufficient and self-reliant for months at sea.

It's a world that relies on the people that live in it to keep everything functioning normally, from electricians tracing ground faults in resistor heater elements in the helicopter hangar to keeping all the toilets flushing. The crew is busy all the time, and I haven't spoken to one who doesn't like his job. And the captain is responsible for keeping it all together while servicing a SAR zone and having a bunch of passengers wandering all over his ship.

Skunked on the east side of the Misty Isles, we round the Cape St. James and make for the open Pacific. The Land's End of the Kerouard Islands thrusts ugly black fingers of rock out of turbulent waters. Crew and passengers alike huddle deeper into their floater coats, but spirits remain high and rise even further with a comforting dinner of roast chicken with mashed and butternut squash topped off with a caramel sundae and coffee. Enter mess on time, doff head gear (or face rebuke from the crew), order food, eat dinner, bus table, leave mess and thank Bert and Tim for another fine meal on the way out.

The ship navigates the spectacularly narrow entrance to Tasu Inlet and rides at anchor while John and Scott service more beacons before sailing north again. Late at night, long after dark, the revelry on the outer decks continues. The fishing has been good and as a result there is a carnival atmosphere. Aija, the tough, knife-on-the-hip deckhand, landed a huge halibut this afternoon. It is only a few pounds shy of the 94 pound monster landed by Matt, the oiler from the engine room, who explained how the engineers took apart Number 3 ALCO diesel in preparation for fitting new pistons and liners while playing chess with Tara, the dark-eyed, brown-skinned, black-haired beauty who talked about her remote childhood in the woods while Ginny the stewardess with the sweet smile and the pigtails suddenly famous for catching a huge octopus that slithered about in all directions on the fantail winch deck until Andrew, the tall, handsome deckhand whipped out his knife and decapitated the poor beast to the delight of Dana the stores-keeper who will soon have four months off to operate her B & B at Shirley near Point No Point.

Even Bosen Buhlers of the flying hair, guff voice, rust stained pea jacket and amazing knowledge of ropes and chains came to have a look. I like the Bosen. He's bursting at the seams with the willingness to teach, and a few pointed questions soon get him explaining about "shots" of forged link anchor chain, "devil's claw" hooks to hold it fast while a "guillotine" clamps down on it after the two tonne anchor is "fetched out" on the sea floor. Shots are connected with links, which have a pin driven home hard and plugged with molten lead.

While anchored off Marble Island next day, two of the larger cruise ships that call on Vancouver in season pass well to the west just at sunset. They must make at least 20 knots and look majestic, even from a distance. They are chased by distant showers and a cold wind that whips in over the railings. Jesse got his mojo back tonight with a couple of snappers, as did Paul. Don the Logistics Officer caught (and released) a 5 foot long wolf eel and Senior Engineer Howard came all the way from Newfoundland to catch a giant ling cod which he deftly and expertly sliced into fillets while Scott the amiable lamproom tech from Seal Cove lit another cheroot and tried mightily to unskunk himself with "the big one" that so far has eluded him. We worked Hunter Point today, so we are finally getting some maintenance done. Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that this is a working trip.

While maintenance work goes ahead on the mountaintop sites, the ship spins slowly at anchor far below, a reassuring sight for the men who are refuelling the engines, checking the radios, installing new antennas or fixing broken ones, and surveying future requirements. The MBB 105 helicopter is kept busy slinging full drums of diesel up and empties back down, transferring technicians, their tools and the all-important "mug-up" box, bringing in new radio racks, antennas, and tower hardware, and taking bonnet slings full of surplus equipment back to the ship.

Early one morning after breakfast an announcement of dolphins chasing the ship brought crew and cameras out onto the aft winch deck. For at least half an hour, a large school of Pacific white-sided dolphins followed in the wake of the ship. What a wonderful sight. At times they would leap completely out of the water, 10, 20, 30 at a time. Nature at its finest. And they were always smiling! Eventually they tired of the game and swam elsewhere.

At anchor in Beresford Bay, and the diesel techs are working Naden Harbour. Wind calm, sea smooth. Directly under the bustle on the flight deck, the fishing lines (no fishing licence = no line) are in the water and soon the halibut start coming in. Once caught, the fish are immediately dragged up from 18 fathoms, gaffed, flipped onto the well deck, and clubbed to death with an ugly brickbat. The smack of hardwood on hard skull and blood flying everywhere is not for the squeamish. In the harsh light of the morning sun, the gradual descent from civility to savagery has finally got me in its inexorable grip, so I offered to clean Paul's halibut. A bit of a hatchet job, but we managed to carve four nice fillets, and packed them for freezing. Elsewhere on the well deck, the iridescent Devonian ratfish gasps for water and dies.

Enough of the fishing stories. Back to work. Leading Seaman Keith has offered to teach Jesse and me how to make a modified Liverpool locking eye splice with the 3,4 tuck in 3/8" wire rope. Although it is necessary to concentrate on what Keith is saying when he explains the intricate instructions for the Liverpool, the mind tends to wander and just watch. Work hardened fingers deftly turn and twist the polished steel marlinspike between the cable strands. From wrist to bicep the mermaids and serpents, ships and anchors, old flames and other multicoloured tattoos leap and dance and come alive around rock hard sinews and tendons and muscles. As deft as the Zen butcher whose knife never dulls nor touches a bone when carving a joint, Keith is a practitioner of an ancient art passed down from all the sailors that forsook the surly bonds of land for a life far from home on the world's oceans. "Now that the first set of tucks is complete, continue to work from left to right..."

In drawers full of tools I've never seen before; beneath a hulking black workbench with two big vises; among grimy walls hung heavy with swaying wrenches, old ropes, grease guns and grommet slings; by bins with big shackles with exotic names like "kinter" and "pear joining"; in the shadowy glow of a dusty fluorescent hung beneath tightly packed electrical wiring and humming hydraulic lines, Keith dances and turns from side to side in quiet concentration. The marlinspike is pushed in under the next strand and then turned - crunch, crunch, crunch - as the wire is tightly wrapped and twisted into position. It's like an operetta in the foc'sle, and I've got a front row seat. Around 1630 hours the heavy rhythmic clatter and clank of the anchor chain being winched aboard reverberates through the narrow confines of the foc'sle. Our work is complete. We're on our way home.

7. Short History of the Canadian Coast Guard Association

An informal group of 12 Retired Coast Guard Officers met for a Christmas Lunch at the Princess Mary in 1988 and the number increased to 96 by 1995, due largely to the dedication and hard work of Migs Turner. A Canadian Coast Guard Retired Officer's Association Steering Committee was formed in March 1995 to determine the future of the Association. It was agreed that Art Mountain would chair a small working group to look into incorporating under the Societies Act of B.C. On June 20, 1996, Art was elected President of the newly formed Canadian Coast Guard Association and began the process of incorporation, which was completed on July 17, 1996. We now have over 150 members.

8 - Photos from the Summer 2013 luncheon by Bill McKechnie



9. CANADIAN COAST GUARD ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/ RENEWAL

THE PURPOSES of the Canadian Coast Guard Association (incorporated in July, 1996, under the B.C. Society Act) are:

- 1) To continue our Canadian Coast Guard camaraderie into retirement.
- 2) To support our Membership and their families, when and as appropriate.
- 3) To support those currently serving in the Canadian Coast Guard and other maritime interests, when and as appropriate.
- 4) To undertake or support other activities approved by the Membership.

MEMBERSHIP - A person who has retired from, or is serving in the Canadian Coast Guard, with at least five years of Federal public service, who is willing to accept the purposes and objectives of the Society and pay the annual membership dues, may apply to the Directors for membership in the Society and on acceptance by the Directors, shall be a member.

The Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard has fully endorsed the Association and its purposes, with the understanding that serving CCG personnel would not become directly involved in controversial issues through their membership in the Association or serve on the executive.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP may be made by completing the information below and forwarding the signed application, along with one year's membership dues to

**W. McKechnie, Treasurer, Canadian Coast Guard Association,
2010 Corniche Place, Victoria, B.C. V8N 6C1**

(Current Annual Dues \$5 - covers Newsletter mailing and administrative costs).

FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS, complete name and address sections, check "Renewal", enclose one year's current membership dues, sign and mail as above. Thanks!

Name:	Tel. No.	RENEWAL? <input type="checkbox"/>
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Address:

Email address:

Canadian Coast Guard Service:

Retired (Date):	Still Serving?
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Started career as:

On (Date):

Other areas of work/location in Coast Guard:

Retired or left as:

On (Date):

Other Canadian Federal Service:

From: To:

Signature _____ Date _____