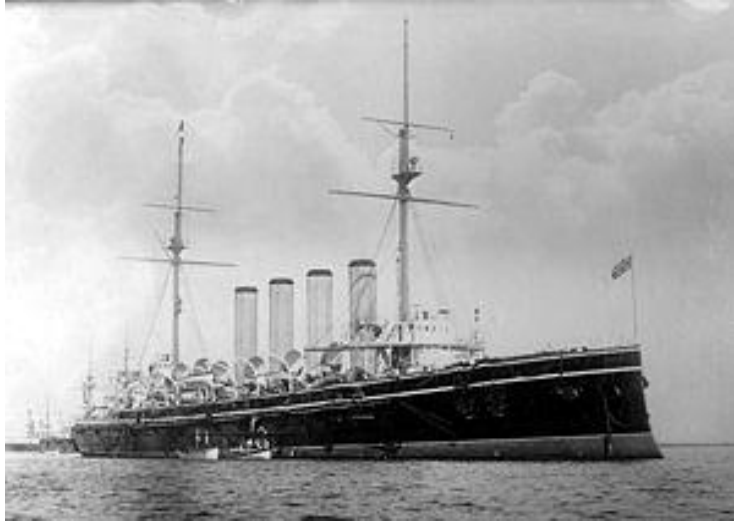


# MARINE SOUNDINGS

SNB 1406-6506

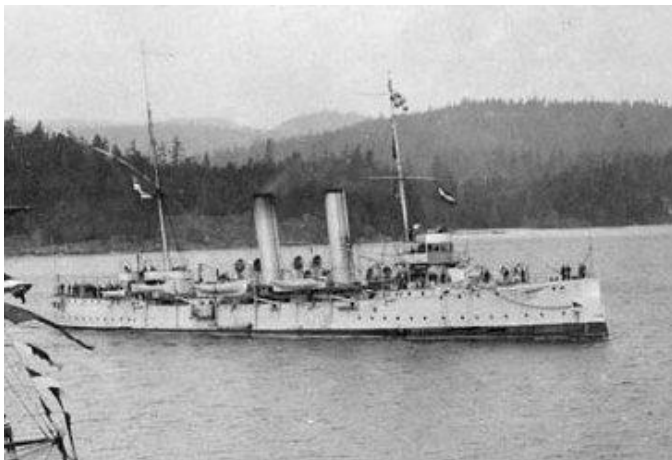
The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RCN—We look at early ships February, Marine Soundings



## HMCS NIOBE, symbol for the new Dominion

This large cruiser was built by Vickers and launched on February 20, 1897 entering service in 1898. She was part of the Channel Squadron at the outbreak of the Boer War (1899-1900), and was sent to Gibraltar to escort troop transports ferrying reinforcements to South Africa. On 4 December 1899, *Niobe* and HMS Doris rescued troops from the SS *Ismore*, which had run aground. She saw further action in the Boer War, and the Queen's South Africa Medal was subsequently awarded to the crew. She returned to the Channel, but later escorted vessels as far as Colombo, Ceylon.

She and the *Rainbow* were given to the Dominion of Canada to form part of the new RCN. She was transferred to the RCN on September 6, 1910, commissioning in England and reaching Halifax on October 21 that year. **After running aground** off Cape Sable, NS, on the night of July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1911, she went out of service for repairs for 18 months. Repaired, she had a permanently reduced maximum speed. With the outbreak of the WW I she was part of the Royal Navy's 4th Cruiser Squadron on the Halifax-West Indies Station. She was engaged in intercepting German ships along the American coast for a year, but being worn out, she was paid off on 6 September 1915 remaining as a depot ship in Halifax. The Halifax Explosion of 1917 caused serious damage to her upper works, and the deaths of several of her crew. However she remained in use as a depot ship (quarters for manning crews) until disposed of in 1920, decommissioned and sold for scrap and broken up in 1922 in Pennsylvania. All in all it was a very limited period of active service in Canada.



**HMS *Rainbow*** was an Apollo-class protected cruiser built for Britain's RN by Palmers in England. She was launched on 25 March 1891 as HMS *Rainbow* and entered service in 1893 serving in the China seas in Hong Kong from 1895 to 1898 and in Malta from 1898 to 1899. Her operating costs being excessive, she saw very limited service between 1900 and 1909 service staying mostly in home waters. During this time, she only had a few minor modernization updates. She was basically used for a training cycle. Eventually, she was not used at sea from 1907 - 1909 at all. In early 1909 the Admiralty ordered her decommissioned and placed on the Inactive List

(Ships of the Line that were not in service). The *Rainbow* was presented to the RCN and recommissioned as the *Rainbow* in 1910. These two cruisers are generally considered the two first ships of the RCN. She entered Canadian service on 4 May 1910. The *Rainbow*'s initial duties included training, ceremonial visits and fishery patrols. *Rainbow* served Canada's Pacific Coast from Esquimalt, BC. On the East Coast because of damage, *Niobe* only served for a limited period and then served as a depot ship. However, these two large ships gave our fledgling navy a chance to run large vessels. **An unfortunate precedence was set, however, in acquiring worn out ships and making do. We became very good at that. More page 3**

MARINE SOUNDINGS is a quarterly newsletter of the PROVINCIAL MARINE RE-ENACTMENT GROUP of Amherstburg. It is put out in FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST and NOVEMBER Ideas, questions, articles are needed at the **beginning** of the month of publication. Note the change in our publication dates.

## Marine Soundings

is published by the Provincial Marine Amherstburg, a Re-enactment Group.

Membership at \$15 a year includes the right to go on encampments, training with equipment, sailing on our vessels plus an insurance component and our quarterly newsletter. In addition we have many social events each year. Active re-enactors pay an additional \$7.00 towards insurance.

Members of similar organizations may apply for just a newsletter subscription. At \$6.00 Canadian funds and \$6.00 US, we simply recover our costs.

### The Executive for 2009 (Elections May 5th)

David May Sr.—President  
 Peter Rindlisbacher--Vice-President  
 Ellen Rindlisbacher—Treasurer  
 Secretary—Jenny Lajoie

#### Board Directors:

David May, Bob Ferguson, Peter Rindlisbacher, Ellen Rindlisbacher, Vern Coon, Jim Ouellette, Jane Teeple, Vicky Beaulieu

#### Committees (chairs highlighted) Some positions are vacant.

Newsletter: **George Marshall**, Carol Ferguson (membership matters) Members needed from each area

Education: C. Ferguson, Peter Rindlisbacher

Memberships: **Jane Teeple**

Boats: Bob Ferguson, Vern Coon, P. Rindlisbacher

Events: **Marty Burnett**

Black Powder: **M. Burnett**, David May

Drill: **James Whyte**, Dale Kidd

Social: **vacant**

Promotions: **Jenny Lajoie**

Brick Campaign: **Carol Ferguson**, Bob Ferguson

Commissariat: **vacant**

Period Clothing: **Jane Teeple**, Elizabeth Kersey

Bingos: **Brenda Mayer**, E. Kersey

### Our Sponsors and Supporters:

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To submit articles, questions, ideas e-mail

[gtmar@allstream.net](mailto:gtmar@allstream.net)

To Read articles in our newsletter on the web, visit

[www.provincialmarine.org](http://www.provincialmarine.org)

To contact Marty Burnet, our events coordinator

[Martyb17@hotmail.com](mailto:Martyb17@hotmail.com)

*P1 HMCS Niobe, HMCS Rainbow*

*P2 Sizes of ships; List of officers; contents*

*P3HMCS Shearwater, HMCS Algerine*

*Submarines CC-1, CC-2*

*P4 George V recognizes role of "MerchantNavy";*

*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MARINE SOUNDINGS*

*P5 BETWEEN THE WARS, RCN loses personnel and ships. "5 Trawler Navy!"*

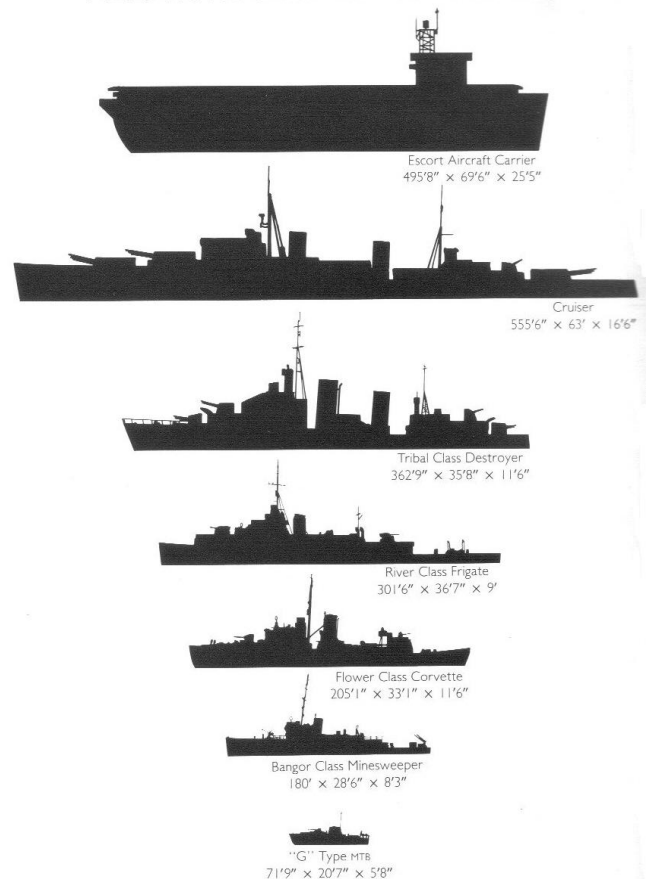
*P6 Our sub-hunting navy WW II-- Part 1*

*Pp 7-8 Preparations for 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the War of 1812. Centennial of RCN, Preliminary List of Events*

Escort Carrier  
 496'X69'X25'  
 Cruiser  
 555'X63'X17'  
 Tribal Class D  
 363'X36'X12'  
 River Class F  
 302'X37'X9'  
 Flower Class  
 Corvette  
 205'X33'X12'  
 Bangor CI  
 Minesweeper  
 180'X29'X8'

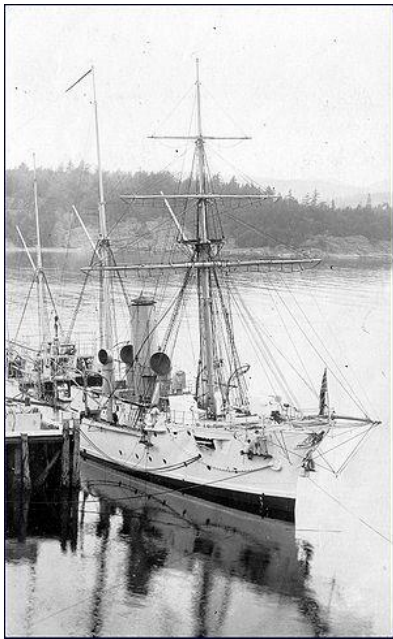
This chart comes from **Ready, Aye, Ready** by Jack Macbeth, published by Key-Porter Books in 1989.

### RELATIVE SIZE OF WARSHIPS



**MARINE SOUNDINGS** promotes the history of the Provincial Marine, most particularly in the War of 1812, and is available as part of the membership of the Provincial Marine. For members not on the web we mail their copies and send it to organizations at cost for \$ 6.00 CAD or US including postage and handling.  
**MARINE SOUNDINGS/FEBRUARY p3**

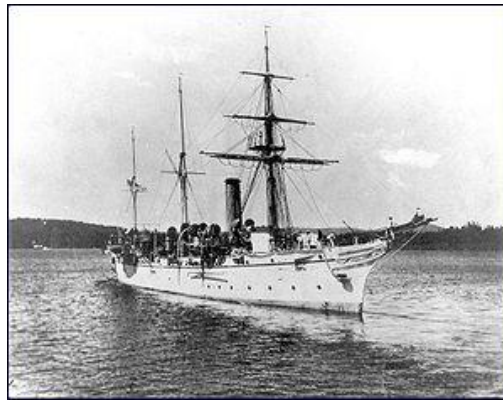
**EARLY RCN SHIPS--**  
**HMCS *Shearwater* was a another early ship of the Canadian navy. She saw service with the RCN through WW I.**



HMCS *Shearwater* was a British Condor Class sloop originally commissioned HMS *Shearwater* for the RN and launched 10 February 1900. By the 1910s she had become one of the last two remaining warships in the RN's Pacific Squadron based at Esquimalt, BC. The RN's Pacific Squadron was phased out in 1914 with the start of WW I. The sloop HMS *Shearwater* and her sister ship HMS *Algerine* were transferred by the British Admiralty to the RCN. They were

recommissioned on 8 September 1914--the outbreak of the War. However, with the outbreak of WW I, two of HMCS *Shearwater's* 4-inch guns were taken ashore and used in a shore battery to defend the Seymour Narrows. The crew of *Shearwater* was sent to Halifax to man the *Niobe*. Subsequently re-manned, *Shearwater* became the submarine tender for the two submarine HMCS *CC-1* and *CC-2*, which she escorted to Halifax, using the Panama Canal. HMCS *Shearwater* is now the name of a Canadian forces air base near Halifax.

Her sister ship HMCS *Algerine* is much less known.



Commissioned: 1917 (CAN)  
 Launched: 1895 (UK)  
 Paid off : 1919  
 Displacement: 1050 tons  
 Length: 210.5 feet  
 Width: 32.5 feet  
 Draught: 11.5 feet  
 Speed: 12 knots

Crew: ?  
 Armament: 4 3 PDR

### Canada's 1st Submarines

**HMCS *CC-1*** was a CC class submarine used by the RCN. The ship was launched in 1913



in Seattle, Washington as the *Iquique* for Chile. This deal fell through and the boat, along with *CC-2*, was purchased in 1914 by British Columbia's Premier Sir Richard McBride for British Columbia. The move was highly controversial at the time. The Dominion Government of Canada later ratified the sale. The submarine entered into service for the RCN, with its near twin the *CC-2*, on 6 August 1914. The ships were assigned to the BC coast in the home port of Esquimalt and conducted training operations and patrols for three years. Often *CC-1* and *CC-2* were the only Canadian or British ships defending the west coast of Canada. For Britain had tasked the defense of British Columbia to her ally, the Imperial Japanese Navy. 1917 the two CC submarines were transferred to the East The

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3 ships transferred to the East Coast using the new Panama Canal. In transferring East, the two submarines and the *Shearwater* were the first Canadian Warships to transit the Panama Canal under the White Ensign. On arrival in Halifax, the two subs were to be sent to Europe. Deemed unsafe for ocean crossing, the submarines were held in Halifax as Training Assistance Boats. (In other words, other ships would practice hunting them.) Her veteran crew were highly valued but were not able to conduct any other operations than training. Unseaworthy, the ships were paid off, sold off and scrapped in the 1920s.

**Often RCN subs have been used to train our navy to detect submarines. As a trading nation, our sea links were vital. We were not likely to need subs for attack but have felt the need to know them and use them for training.**

**Merchant Navy's Sacrifice recognized by George V**



The Merchant Navy was very significant to the growth of

the British Empire, but it was not until WW I that its contribution was officially recognized. The Empire's merchant fleet grew over successive years to become the world's foremost merchant fleet, at one time

reaching 3/4 of the world's shipping. Canada was building and sailing a large percentage of these ships. During the WW I, the Merchant Service suffered heavy losses from German U-boat attacks. Unrestricted warfare put merchant seamen constantly at risk of attack from enemy ships. The tonnage lost to U-boats during the First World War was around 7,759,090 tons, and around 14,661 merchant seamen lost their lives. To honour the sacrifice made by merchant seamen during the First World War, George V granted the title "Merchant Navy" to the service. Many Canadians are proud of this honour even to

this day.

**This is the first of several articles to appear this year about our naval history.**

**Please submit** contributions in the form of photos or articles, links to other groups that might interest members.

*David May*  
President  
Provincial Marine Amherstburg  
[mrdavemay@sympatico.ca](mailto:mrdavemay@sympatico.ca)

Please contribute to our new website. Googling "Provincial Marine" will bring you to over one hundred items. To go to our newsletter directly use: [www.provincialmarine.org](http://www.provincialmarine.org)

**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MARINE SOUNDINGS**

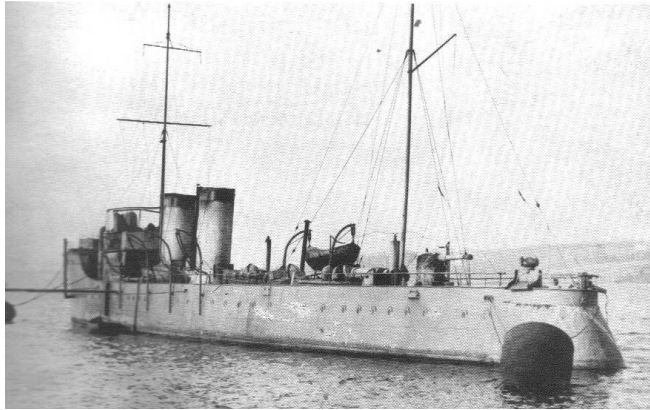
*George T. Marshall*

This November we celebrated 10 years of independent existence. Previously we had been the Boat crew of HMS Detroit Project. It was Carol Ferguson who asked me to start the MARINE SOUNDINGS. We very much wanted to differentiate ourselves from the Newsletter of Project HMS DETROIT. The Newsletter would be part of our Education Department and not just a photo sheet. I did not have a computer that would have handled the kind of photo montages that the SHIP'S LOG had in any case. So we started our newsletter a little more than ten years ago. We switched the dates of our quarterly just this past year to correspond better to a re-enactor's activities.



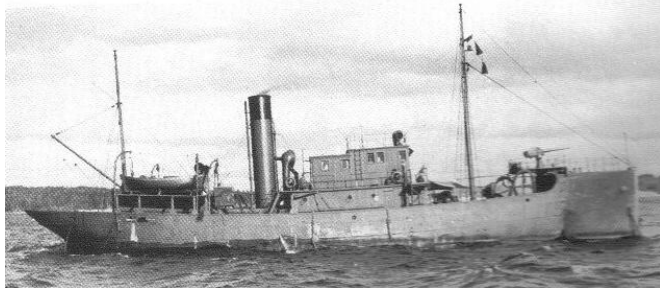


**MARINE SOUNDINGS of the Provincial Marine**  
**Windsor Charity Bingos, Hbc, Trillium Corporation, ECFDC**



**HMCS GRILSE 1915**

With its British handovers wearing out, Canada purchased HMCS Grilse from the Americans in 1915. It was a converted private yacht which patrolled the East Coast and the Caribbean looking for U-boats. After the War it was returned and finished its life as a rich man's yacht. Looking at the stern we see a four inch gun. And she had more at her bow. She appears to have the looks and speed of a warship.

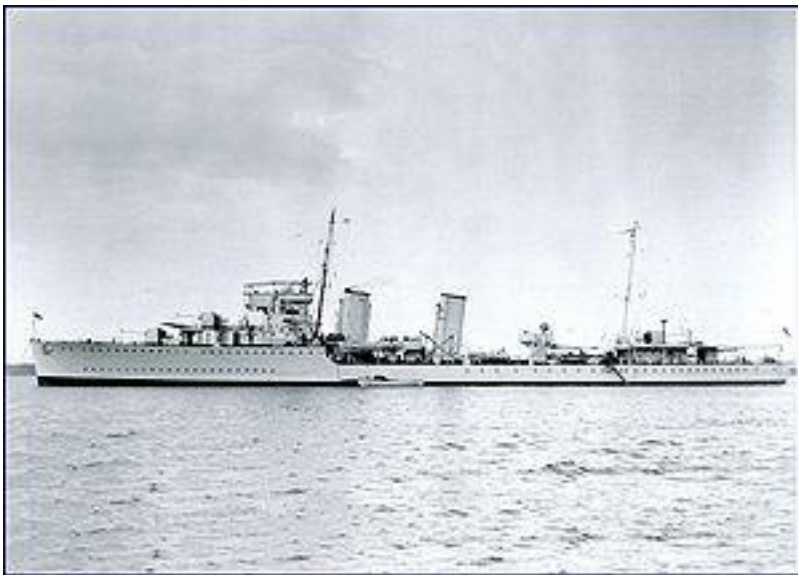


**BETWEEN THE WARS**

With the end of the Great War, Canada attempted to get along with very few ships indeed. HMCS Arleux was handed over to the department of Marine and Fisheries. However, in 1930 it was recommissioned as Gate Vessel 16 at Halifax. Between the Wars, Canada's materiel strength drifted lower. By 1925, our navy had only 70 officers and 446 men. Arthur

Meighen, leader of the Opposition, scathingly referred to our navy as "Canada's five trawler navy!" We only escaped complete extinction because Britain sent more castoffs.

It was only in 1931, that Canada purchased two new ships expressly built for our navy—the destroyers Skeena and Saguenay. Britain also gave us 4 ex-RN destroyers. As the clouds of war gathered in Europe, all six sailed for manoeuvres in the Caribbean. The 1939 defense budget reflects the importance given to it. Of the monies allocated to defense, \$29.8 million went to the RCAF, \$21 million went to the army and \$8 million went to the RCN



**HMCS Saguenay (D79)** was a River class destroyer that served in the RCN from 1931-1945. She was similar to the RN's A class and initially wore the pennant D79, changed in 1940 to I79. She was built in Hampshire and commissioned into the RCN on 21 May 1931 at Portsmouth, England. *Saguenay* and her sister Skeena D59 were the first ships specifically built for the RCN. Her first two commanding officers went on to become two of the most important Admirals of the Battle of the Atlantic. She arrived in Halifax, on 3 July 1931. This ends our coverage of the early days of the RCN. We certainly were a reluctant naval power. We're talking government here, not the Canadian public.

# MARINE SOUNDINGS

## The Provincial Marine Newsletter

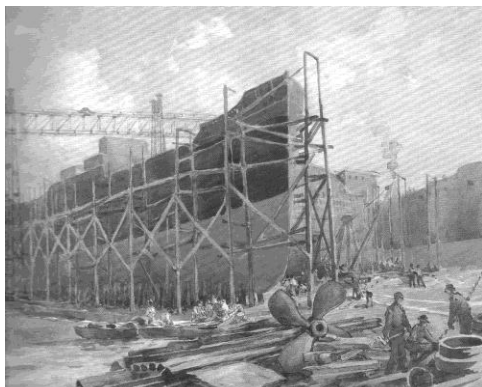
### LAUNCHING A CORVETTE IN COLLINGWOOD



Canada had long had a role in building ships for the British Empire; as such we got into building boilers and early steam engines, though rarely of the most up to date designs. With the coming of the steel ship and the conversion to steam, our percentage of vessels dropped precipitously, but we did not lose the capacity to build ships. With WWII, we got back into building ships in a big way. Since we were mostly building smaller ships, Great Lakes builders as well as ones on the East Coast and Quebec were given work. The picture at the left shows a typical launch **sideways** instead of down a long sloping launch way, which imposes some of the greatest stresses that a ship will ever encounter. Ship building in WWII still followed the traditional method of rib and frames with plating put on afterwards. A typical shipyard on the Great Lakes is seen in picture 2. (taken from **Ready, Aye, Ready**) The corvette being launched is probably the Collingwood

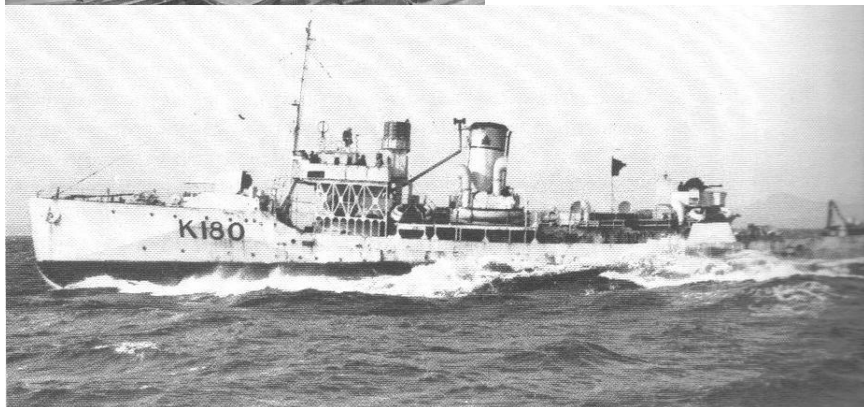
The **Collingwood K 180** was the first corvette to enter service in the RCN in November, 1940. She was named after the city where she was launched and saw considerable service during the war. Halifax has the last remaining corvette maintained as a museum as part of the museum of the Atlantic. The corvettes were about 205 feet long and 33 feet wide at their broadest. The men slept in their mess with hammocks

which were stored during the day to give room for eating and make and mend, reading and training. They were a small ship given much to rolling, pitching and yawing. It was hard to avoid spray, and you had to use your ingenuity to keep warm and dry.



These ships were rushed into the war often only partly finished. Older sailors often spoke of insulation on high pressure pipes being inadequate or missing. Howard Porter told our group about his ship coming to a dead stop in the middle of the ocean. He had no pipe thread-cutting device and had to use a hack saw cutting the thread accurately by hand. You can imagine the relief when the pipes went together. Cutting thread is very difficult to do by hand in any circumstance, never mind at sea in a ship dead in the water. To get a sense of the horrors and privations one might watch **Victory at Sea**, the famous 26-episode series created by

NBC with Leonard Graves and Winston Churchill contributing. The book **The Victory at Sea** by William Sowden Sims is a worthwhile read. 364 pages. Also **The Cruel Sea** by N. Monserrat which gives a better view for us Canadians.





## Provincial Marine

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



### A Celebration of a good Year

At our March meeting we had a meeting and then a little party to celebrate the successes of our preparations for the Centennial of the Royal Canadian Navy and the coming Bi-Centennial of the War of 1812.

You may recall that we were paired with the Navy in providing a three part display for the Centennial of the RCN. The days of the Provincial Marine would be represented by our jolly boat, an accurate reproduction of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century boat. We would provide sailors and/or mannequins in appropriate dress. Part 2 would represent 1910 with us providing our whaleboat properly painted up in naval colours. The navy would subsidize our acquiring reproduction uniforms of the period. Part 3 would be provided by the modern RCN with an inflatable boat and camouflaged sailors.



Because of budget cuts and the recession the Navy cut back on its contribution. Our group decided to carry on. These reproduction uniforms

would be as accurate as we could make them right down to the hand-sewn badges, which apart from being hand-made are uncannily like our own to this very day. I couldn't see any difference from those on the men's uniforms I saw as an officer cadet in the 1960s.

David and Peter seem as proud as punch in their new 1910 uniforms. Making the hats proved the greatest challenge. How to make them



stiff like a proper pusser rating's cap? Well, as you can see their efforts were rewarded.

Our members have also been active in promoting a statue celebrating the sailors who fought so valiantly during the Battle of Lake Erie. What we suggested was a generic celebration of the gun crews of our ships. Peter made up an image that suggested what such a statue would look like. Later members of our group will pose for the sculptor and this will help with the realism of the piece. What is often forgot is that though this battle was lost, the British continued to contest the occupation of South Western Ontario by building new ships and sending forays against the enemy. In Lake Ontario the battle was a tie, and on the High Seas, although there were some spectacular successes for the Americans, the overwhelming fact was a constant heavy blockade that ruined American

trade and was disasterous for the prosperity of the new country. The statue properly celebrates the role of the Navy in protecting our new land. We celebrated then the acceptance of the idea and a Trillium down payment so that the artist can start work

### Commissariat Preparations for 2012 by Jennie Lajoie

Much of this winter has been spent making significant changes in the Commissariat. The sale of the river crossing clothing to the Black Historical Museum not only brought in extra funds, but freed up some much needed storage space. At this point all the clothing as been found, laundered and repaired if necessary. We have currently 17 dresses , approximately 20 pants and 28 shirts, all of which are period correct for the Marine. We have a good supply of mop hats, aprons, petticoats, white stockings and bandanas. We have approximately 15 capes and a few more river crossing costumes which have been offered for sale to the Homecoming Committee. The Black History Museum remains interested in purchasing our dressy hats.

Notable changes include moving the birch bark canoe into the larger room (on the north east side). Sitting in the south west was drying it out. We also have a postman's or clerk's desk, a pine cupboard and an old breakfront as well as a new table that was custom made to look old.

All the walls were cleaned, floors polished and the wood work and windows were washed.

Our beautiful little building saw a lot of visitors this winter. Here we greeted a lot of guests Fridays and Saturdays during the River Light Festival and we hosted the Trillium Grant celebration and the Questors who financed the clothing purchase by the museum.

# Our Preliminary list of 1812 Events

**Marine Soundings is sponsored by**

**Essex CFDC, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Windsor Charity Bingos, and Hbc**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Details</u> ( <i>list compiled by Ken Fisher</i> )
April	24 <sup>th</sup> 30 <sup>th</sup>	NCO School Longwoods (London)	at Fort George Education Day
May	1-2 8 22-23 28-30	Longwoods Fanshaw Backus Mill Maidstone	1812 Battle Education Day Education Day 28 <sup>th</sup> with monologue by David Morris, May 29 <sup>th</sup> 30 Shamus the story teller, voyageur Jean Baptiste Dumont, David Morris and battles
June	4-6 5 11-13 12-13 18-20	Stony Creek Barrie Kingston Fort Henry Port Dover	1812 Battle 1812 Battle School of the Sailor 1812 Event 1812 Battle
July	3-4 10-18 10-11 16-18 23-24 30-31-Aug 1 30-31-Aug 1 30-31-Aug 1	Fort Niagara Amherst boat trip Chrysler's Farm Fort la Presentation Wasaga Fort George Sacket's Harbour Fort Malden	French and Indian Wars a boat trip 1812 Battle French and Indian Wars 1812 Battle Revolutionary War Grand Tactical Time Line
August	7-8	Fort Erie	
September	4-5 11-12 17-18	Fairfield Backus Mill Fort willow	(St Thomas) 1812 battle 9 mile portage
October	2-3 30	Fanshaw Cambridge	1812 Battle Fusiliers Open House
<b>November</b>			
December	4	Hamilton	Suttler Sale

This is only a preliminary list. If you know of other events please submit to [gtmar@allstream.net](mailto:gtmar@allstream.net)  
Our events co-ordinator is [martyb17@hotmail.com](mailto:martyb17@hotmail.com)