

THE "LINDSAY LETTERS" REUNION- 1990

DECEMBER 1990

ISSUE #1

REUNION COMMITTEE

Ivan Chamberlain - Chairman, Len Atkins – Treasurer, Vince Callender, Bob Dixon, Jack Tarbutt

Jack Tice – Communicator

PROLOGUE

There is a Navy veteran in St. Catharines, who for several years thought about a reunion of his former shipmates of the H.M.C.S. Lindsay. He hesitated for some time but was finally pushed into it by his three brothers. During the winter of 89-90 he managed to locate 4-5 shipmates and formed a committee. Using 1945 addresses they started to search Canada for 90 shipmates. They searched from East Apple River, Nova Scotia to Gabriola Island, British Columbia. By August they confirmed that 29 were deceased, they also found 51 of which 40 were able to attend. Illness and other reasons prevent some from attending. The rest, as they say, is history.

SEPTEMBER 2

The scene is the lobby of the Howard Johnson Hotel, St. Catharines. Early in the forenoon committee members are frantically setting up tables for registration and decorating the hospitality room in anticipation. They are about to greet their buddies of 45 years ago. By noon a few people drift into the lobby. A few are recognizable; others took a second look to identify. In a matter of minutes the place is alive with warm greetings and animated conversation. More arrive in the afternoon and the scene shifts to the hospitality room. There is one crew member, known as the piano man, performing his magic on the keyboard. At first the wives seem a little quiet and hesitant, having only just met for the first time. This does not last for long, for you see they all have something in common. They are married to Navy men. As the day shortens up, it becomes obvious that the mood is one of brotherhood, togetherness, and joy. The curtain had been drawn back and the 45 years had disappeared. From B.C. to N.S. and all points in between, the crew was together. There is a good feeling in the air.

SEPTEMBER 3

Early risers all. In groups of 4-5-6, people were getting together for breakfast. Later they spent time comparing notes on such things as children and grandchildren - an exhausting subject. The afternoon was given over to a barbecue and pool party. The weather was perfect. It was here that the chairman's three brothers and their wives along with his own wife demonstrated the complete family support. It was such a good time and a fine party, it was difficult to leave. Back at the hotel, the hospitality room was very much alive. Many congregated around the piano man and sang some dear old Navy tunes. Others mulled over old snapshots and poured over the memorabilia spread out on tables. A few drifted to the lounge - but amazingly, everyone retired about 11-11:30 p.m. Something to do with age no doubt.

SEPTEMBER 4

Following breakfast, all boarded a tour bus for a trip to Niagara Falls. This was a highlight for many, who had never seen this part of Canada. A trip up the Skylon Tower and a trip, on the "Maid of the Mist" added to the thrills.

Luncheon was provided by the R.C.N.A. (Royal Canadian Naval Association) at the Falls Legion, and a sumptuous one it was. In the afternoon a further tour along the Niagara frontier, included the Whirlpool Rapids, the Adam Beck power plant and the floral displays. Upon arriving back at the hotel, it was learned that the Captain's wife and son had arrived from Victoria. It was a great pleasure to meet and welcome such a fine lady. A special Chinese buffet was laid on for supper. This was a favourite for all and proved to be a successful gathering. Later at the hotel, the conversations were heavy with nostalgia, and talk of other times and missing shipmates. Again at a relatively early hour - most drifted off to retire and prepare for Day IV.

SEPTEMBER 5

Again an early departure by tour bus. Today it was the Welland Canal. This brought back memories (for most) of November 1943. It was at that time that this crew brought their brand new ship through the locks, on their way to the North Atlantic. Everyone was amazed at the sight of a large upper lake bulk carrier, as it proceeded through a lock. Lunch was provided by the Legion at Port Dalhousie, site of the first lock of the first Welland Canal. The present canal is the fourth. Back at the hotel in the early afternoon, everyone prepared to dress up for the official reunion dinner. This was both a happy and a solemn affair. Happy because they were all together, enjoying the company of dear friends and solemn, inasmuch as a special tribute was paid to the departed and missing shipmates. Dancing followed and of course the inevitable late night conversations in small groups in the ever popular hospitality room. Day V was just around the corner.

SEPTEMBER 6

Another early start by bus. A tour of a large vineyard was scheduled. This was an interesting tour. The size of the farm, the magnitude of the operation and the many products produced, astounded everyone. This was followed by a tour of the largest winery in Canada, "Brights". It was shown how the grapes are processed and the wine bottled and shipped. A wine tasting with cheese completed the afternoon. Upon returning to the hotel, everyone was a little worn from the pace of the week, and they drifted off in groups for dinner and later to the hospitality room. The committee were busy packing the decorations, preparing for the trip to Lindsay, the following morning. Everyone retired earlier than usual.

SEPTEMBER 8

Everyone was on deck, lashed and stowed for a 0800 departure. A convoy of about 18 cars and vans moved out for Lindsay. Arriving about 11:00 a.m. at their motel, the group prepared to go to lunch at the OK restaurant. The afternoon was free to tour the lovely town on the Scugog River. By 6:00 p.m. all were gathered at the Lindsay Legion, where a formal dinner was tendered by the town. Several guests and dignitaries were present, in addition to the mayor and town council. The mayor expressed the town's gratitude to the crew of the Lindsay who served proudly in the name of the town. All retired to the motel at an early hour. Voices were muted as each said good night knowing that on the morrow it would be good-bye.

SEPTEMBER 9

No doubt the most emotional, part of the week - how to say good-bye? It was said in many forms. A hug, a firm handshake - a kiss - and yes more than a few tears. Would they ever get together again? Highly unlikely! Certainly some would be visiting with others during their travels. As a group, however, this crew knew in their hearts, that this was the last they would ever be together.

EPILOGUE

Letters started to arrive to the committee within days. Shipmates had indeed enjoyed the week. Some expressions in these notes were "better than could be expected", "wouldn't have missed it for the world", "how did you do it?" The committee had a meeting - like a post mortem. The adrenalin was still flowing, however - bills had to be paid - borrowed equipment returned and many little things settled. They were a happy group, however, and all the credit would have to be directed to the chairman. He had pulled us together and pulled off a reunion, successful beyond his dreams.

If you enjoyed the week, please - let the chairman know, if you haven't already done so.

NEWS-N-NOTES

At the outset of our reunion planning, the committee each contributed \$25.00 to a general fund, knowing full well that it would require seed money. Some letters went out to shipmates in the earlier mailings requesting the same contribution. Unfortunately, as time went on, not everyone was asked. Many did respond by mail, others contributed at the reunion and one or two since that time. If anyone missed (and only you would know) it would be nice of you to do so now.

This is the first of what is hoped to be a semi-annual newsletter. Only you can make it a success, by writing to our chairman, keeping him informed on such matters as your health, family events, holiday trips and of course - grandchildren. It is also thought that the newsletter will continue the bonding of our togetherness.

Everyone will be kept up to date with a shipmate mailing list. To that end, you will be able to contact each other. For starters, how about dropping a line to some of our sick/disabled buddies, who could not attend. As known at present, the following would like to hear from you.

1. Roger Dupont - Montreal
2. Grant Hartwick (re Rose) - Lacombe
3. Les Leek (re Laura) - Owen Sound
4. Chester Miller - Dalhousie
5. Murray Nicholson - St. John's
6. Henry Williams - Toronto

Many thanks to all who sent in cards and letters of appreciation to the committee. It was truly a labour of love and worth every effort. Let's hear from you.

NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE REUNION COMMITTEE

First, let us thank all those shipmates and wives for the glowing tributes that you have sent us relative to the organizing of our past reunion. Without your participation, it would not have been possible. Some of you are inquiring as to when and where the next one might take place. We are putting the same question to you. Thank you all for your accolades.

Bob and Helen Casement are spending the winter months down south in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Jim and Ruth (Gussy) are also taking in the sun in Mesa, Arizona but will be home in Maple Ridge B.C. for a month during Christmas. Jim had surgery on his sinuses and Gussy said he had a rough time due to the loss of blood but is now on the road to recovery and looking forward to some golf.

Helen Simpson said Jim's condition has deteriorated and she was waiting for a vacancy in a nursing home when one became available.

Vern Nordin found out he has lung cancer on his return home from the reunion and is determined to beat this thing. All the very best Vern and our thoughts and prayers are with you every inch of the way.

Jack Tarbutt has to go in for a heart bypass on January 4, 1991 and with his spirit, he will be up and bouncing around in no time. Good luck Jack.

Ivan Chamberlain has cancer of the prostate and only learned of it after a regular physical by an urologist. Not because he had any symptoms. So he is hoping that he caught it in time. He should know by December 13 what the plan of attack is going to be regarding the problem.

Gerald and Aline Barney were on their way south in a motor home until the police caught up with them. They told them that Gerald's mother was not expected to live. With that they drove day and night to get home only stopping for cat naps. They got home in time and his mother passed away on November 19. Our sincerest condolences to Gerry.

Steve (Sarky) Sorochan and Bernie have moved into their new home in Nanaimo B.C. and are still hard at work getting things settled. He has not had time to edit the video as yet but we are all looking forward to seeing it I am sure.

Rocco and Elsie Leonzio finally returned home after visiting our eastern provinces and other stops along the way. Rocky went moose hunting so Elsie says and he got one but it was so old it died of heart failure but the good news is that he also brought home a feed of pickerel.

Bernie Churchill and Marion are contemplating a trip to England in May of 91. Have a good time you two and we know you will enjoy yourselves.

Wally and Dotty Muloin may see a few of us that have planned to attend the Naval reunion in Thunder Bay next May if he gets his eye problem fixed up in time. The doctors are going to look into the matter early in the New Year but the time and date have not been established as yet. Certainly hope you can make it Wally.

Art and Ronnie Moger are now wintering in New Smyrna Beach, Florida and should be home around the middle of April. Have a ball you folks.

Talked by phone to Les and Laura Leek on November 22 and Laura is still not feeling too well. She has been in and out of the hospital since the reunion but is still having the same problems she had at that time. Keep your chin up Laura and we are all praying for your return to health.

The following have not been heard from with regards to the order form. If you do not wish to order anything, drop me a line or call so that I can complete this chore and get everyone's order off to them.

Jim Dickson, Bob Leshien, Jim Vietch, Flo Thomson, Hampton Penny, John Burke, Norm Cox, Alec Cameron, John Golton, Jim Pedlar, Phil Pettit, Chester Miller, Murray Nicholson, Norm Sidorchuk, Grant Hartwick, Henry Williams.

Thanks for your co-operation - Ivan Chamberlain.

We still have a few "1" shirts left and they are on sale at \$5.00. State size required. For those of you who may recognize the sign off . —/. — .

Please write to Ivan.

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