

H.M.C. Dockyard,  
Halifax, N. S.  
24th August, 1943.

SIR:

I have the honour to submit herewith Minutes of proceedings of Board of Inquiry held in accordance with your memorandum of 23rd August, 1943.

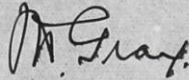
Also attached please find the following enclosures:

- (1) Findings of the Board.
- (2) Your memorandum of 23rd August, 1943, with attachments thereto.
- (3) Original shorthand notes of Writer, Earle G. Norman.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD.

CAPTAIN (D) HALIFAX,  
H.M.C. Dockyard,  
Halifax, N. S.

FINDINGS OF THE BOARD

Having heard the evidence of the witnesses and having inspected that part of the ship where Stoker Myles was last seen, it is the opinion of this Board:-

- That - H.M.C.S. "GODERICH" was on Escort duty off Sambro Light Vessel.
- That - Stoker Petty Officer Myles came on deck before going on watch.
- That - He was a fit and contented person.
- That - He was not wearing a life belt.
- That - It was not recorded on his Service Certificate that he could swim.
- That - He had been <sup>carrying</sup> ~~wearing~~ two in number lifebelts, it would appear that this rating was unable to swim.
- That - While standing in the starboard <sup>waste</sup> ~~waste~~ he was caught by a heavy sea and washed against the depth charge thrower and stunned and that the receding water dragged him overboard at 2351P, approximately, 14th August, 1943.
- That - He was not seen to go.
- That - The guard rails are in a satisfactory state of repair.
- That - The alarm was raised with <sup>commendable celerity</sup> ~~considerable solidarity~~.
- That - The ship was handled in a seamen like manner and all possible steps were taken for his immediate recovery.
- That - A life-buoy with flare <sup>attached</sup> was at hand but was not thrown overboard.
- That - It is considered had the buoy been thrown it would have helped to mark a position but would not necessarily have <sup>helped</sup> ~~helped~~ in the recovery of Stoker Petty Officer Myles.
- That - His loss was due to the ordinary perils of the sea.

This Board wishes to extend to the relatives of Stoker Petty Officer Myles, sympathy in their sad loss.

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*Kenneth W. Hall*  
 Skipper Lieutenant K. W. N. Hall, R.C.N.R. MEMBER

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*R. Jackson*  
 Lieutenant-Commander R. Jackson, R.C.N.V.R. MEMBER

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*F. H. Gray*  
 Lieutenant-Commander F. H. Gray, R.N.R. PRESIDENT



THE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF BOARD OF  
INQUIRY HELD ON BOARD H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"  
AT HALIFAX, AT 0930 ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF  
AUGUST, 1943.

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"To hold a full and careful investigation into  
"the circumstances attending the loss at sea  
"of Stoker Petty Officer Orville Ronald Myles,  
"Official Number A.2405 from H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"  
"on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1943.  
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PRESIDENT

Lieutenant-Commander F. H. Gray, R.N.R.

MEMBERS

Lieutenant-Commander R. Jackson, R.C.N.V.R.  
SKIPPER-Lieutenant K. W. N. Hall, R.C.N.V.

WITNESSES

Lieutenant James Charles Pratt,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Sub-Lieutenant James Campbell Findlay,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Marshall Garfield Byers, Officer's Steward,  
Official Number V-37318,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Gerrard Joseph Omer Begin, Able Seaman,  
Official Number V-43057,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Gordon Decker, Ordinary Seaman,  
Official Number V-51097,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

James Richard Wallace McIsaac, E.R.A.  
Official Number V-50055,  
Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve.

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Evidence of Lieutenant James Charles Pratt, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temp.), Commanding Officer of H.M.C.S. GODERICH.

NAME: Lieutenant James Charles Pratt.

Called and cautioned.

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1. Q. Are you Lieutenant James Charles Pratt, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (T.) Commanding Officer of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?

A. Yes, Sir.

2. Q. You were inward bound at the time Stoker Petty Officer Myles was lost overboard?

A. Inward bound, yes, Sir.

3. Q. You were <sup>with me</sup> in a convoy?

A. Yes, Sir, we were just about <sup>a bare half mile</sup> ahead of the leading ship, ~~a bare half mile~~ from the Sambro Light Vessel.

4. Q. Just passed <sup>one mile</sup> Sambro Light Vessel?

A. Yes, Sir.

5. Q. What was the weather at the time?

A. The wind was about South Southwest, force six at 2300 and decreasing Sir.

*Chair me*

MAP PRODUCED AND EXAMINED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

6. Q. And a swell was running?

A. Yes, Sir. <sup>33</sup>.

LOG BOOK PRODUCED AND EXAMINED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

7. Q. This was about just before midnight?

A. Yes, Sir.

8. Q. Where were you at the time?

A. I was on the Bridge.

9. Q. And there was an Officer on watch with you?

A. Yes, Sir.

10. Q. Who informed you on the Bridge?

A. We were informed by telephone by the after look-out, Sir.

11. Q. That would be about how long after the man went overboard?

A. About three minutes.

12. Q. Was he seen to go over the side?

A. No, Sir.



## Evidence of Lieutenant James Charles Pratt, (Continued).

13. Q. Was he seen three minutes before?  
A. Yes, Sir.
14. Q. What action did you take when "Man Overboard" was reported?  
A. I went hard <sup>astwa</sup> ~~aport~~ 220 degrees and altered <sup>again</sup> ~~back~~ 150 degrees and went <sup>to run</sup> ~~back~~ along the ship's tracks.
15. Q. You steered a reciprocal course?  
A. Yes, Sir.
16. Q. Were you using search lights?  
A. We had no search lights, Sir, but we tried our signal projectors but they were not satisfactory. I called all the look-outs I could and had them keep a sharp lookout.
17. Q. There was nothing seen or heard?  
A. No, Sir.
18. Q. For about how long did you steer on that course?  
A. <sup>from Sambro L.V.</sup> Just about 1/4 mile - I had an R.D.F. bearing taken and it gave me a mile from Sambro Light Vessel, I was well clear of the convoy. <sup>during the first turn.</sup>
19. Q. What speed were you doing?  
A. About nine and a half knots.
20. Q. And your full speed is?  
A. About fifteen and a half.
21. Q. So there shouldn't have been much suction?  
A. No, Sir, I don't believe so particularly in that sea.
22. Q. He had been inside and had just been called?  
A. Yes, Sir.
23. Q. Is he a fit and content man?  
A. As far as I know yes, Sir.
24. Q. How long has he been in the service?  
A. Since the 8th of August, 1940.
25. Q. He ought to have been used to the motion of the ship by that time?  
A. Yes, Sir, and he was an N.R. rating.
26. Q. Was he a good worker?  
A. Yes, Sir.

Evidence of Lieutenant James Charles Pratt (Continued).

27. Q. Any worries?  
A. Not that I know, Sir.
28. Q. Was he in the best of health?  
A. I don't think he was in the best of health, Sir.
29. Q. What was his age?  
A. Thirty-nine.
30. Q. Do you consider the accident was avoidable in any way?  
A. I believe, Sir, that we would have had a very good chance of picking him up if he had worn his life-belt.
31. Q. You consider if he had had a service inflated life-belt on he would have stood a good chance of being picked up?  
A. Yes, Sir., and not only that but he had a vest <sup>type</sup> tight kapok life belt which he had laid down in the petty officer's mess at the time.
32. Q. He was wearing no life belt at the time, contrary to orders?  
A. Yes, Sir.
33. Q. Do you think it would have made a big difference?  
A. Yes, Sir.
34. Q. Even in view of the state of the weather?  
A. He would have had a fifty fifty chance, although the water was 54°.
35. Q. Was any life belt thrown to him?  
A. No, Sir.
36. Q. Was there none available?  
A. None Sir.
37. Q. Was there a buoy, with a light attached, near there?  
A. Yes, Sir, one with a calcium flare attached.
38. Q. Did nobody give the order to throw the buoy over? Could not the Depth Charge Sentry have thrown it over or had he no standing orders to throw it over?  
A. He had no orders Sir.
39. Q. Was he able to swim?  
A. I don't know Sir.

SERVICE CERTIFICATE OF DECEASED PRODUCED AND EXAMINED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

No record found on Service Certificate as to his ability to swim.



Evidence of Lieutenant James Charles Pratt (Continued).

40. Q. Have these ships been in the habit of taking a lot of sea over the quarter-deck?  
A. Yes, Sir. On several other occasions the ship has shipped similar seas.
41. Q. Would you give me a rough resume of just what happened?  
A. I believe, Sir, from my own investigation this rating must have injured himself with the depth throwers.
42. Q. Just a moment, The sea was on the port quarter and the Steward was on the Starboard side and then she rolled. *Byers* Myles and the Depth Charge Sentry were also near him. A solid sea came onboard and swept all three of them onto the deck and Byers managed to hold on to the guard-rail and scramble ~~on~~ onboard. The Depth Charge Sentry grabbed the lashing on the Thrower. Myles wasn't seen?  
A. Yes, Sir.
43. Q. There is every chance then that he was washed up against the Throwers and stunned?  
A. Yes, Sir, in as much as Beyers was bruised by bumping up against it.
44. Q. What was the visibility that night?  
A. At the time of the accident the visibility was fairly good?
45. Q. Raining?  
A. It had been raining previously, Sir, and it rained after but not at the time of the accident.
46. Q. You say your ten inch projectors are not good enough?  
A. Yes, Sir, we have an inferior type.
47. Q. You did try them though?  
A. Yes, Sir.
48. Q. You have ~~not~~ <sup>MS</sup> been supplied with ~~these extra~~ <sup>the new type MS</sup> life-belts?  
A. Not yet, we have made many attempts to obtain the new life belt but have not received them yet.
49. Q. When was Myles to go on watch?  
A. On the middle watch.

WITNESS WITHDREW AND ELECTED TO REMAIN.



Evidence of Marshall Garfield Byers, Officer's Steward, Official Number V-37318, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH".

NAME: Marshall Garfield Byers, Officer's Steward.

Called and cautioned.

50. Q. Are you Marshall Garfield Byers, Officer's Steward, Official Number V-37318, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?
- A. Yes, Sir.
51. Q. Where were you standing at the time you were talking to Myles?
- A. Right by the depth charges, Sir, just abaft the starboard breaker.
52. Q. Will you tell me in your own words just what happened?
- A. I was called to go on watch at twenty to twelve by the Bos'n mate. I went to the Heads and as I was coming out I saw Petty Officer Myles coming out of the wash room. He spoke to me and I spoke to him, and then I went out through the starboard companionway. I think he came out the same way.
53. Q. You're not sure?
- A. No I can't say for sure.
54. Q. But the next time you saw him he was outside by the Depth charges?
- A. Yes, Sir.
55. Q. The ship was moving around considerably at the time?
- A. Rolling considerably, Sir.
56. Q. Were you talking with Petty Officer Myles very long outside?
- A. We were talking for about two or three minutes when the ship took a roll to starboard and the impact threw me against the rail.
57. Q. A solid sea came on board?
- A. Well the ship rolled first and the impact threw me against the guard rail.
58. Q. What about Myles?
- A. I couldn't say Sir. While in that position a sea came on board from the starboard breaker, Sir, swept me off my feet and the water covered my head. I was knocked against the depth charge thrower. I was brought up in a sitting position holding on to the guard rail.
59. Q. You didn't realize Myles was gone?
- A. No, Sir. I was shocked and exhausted and I managed to get through the wardroom flat and was about up to the ship's office when Seaman Torpedoman said where is Petty Officer Myles and I said I didn't know and to report to the bridge immediately.



Evidence of Marshall Garfield Byers, O.S. (Continued).

60. Q. How long would have elapsed?  
A. About three minutes, Sir.
61. Q. So he went out to tell the after look out to call the Bridge, which the after look-out did?  
A. Yes.
62. Q. At the time did you notice if Stoker Petty Officer Myles was wearing a life belt?  
A. I didn't notice, Sir.
63. Q. So far as you know he was a quiet, healthy, fit type of man?  
A. Yes, Sir.
64. Q. You were definitely off balance when the sea hit you?  
A. That's right, Sir.
65. Q. Was Myles standing forward of you or aft?  
A. He was standing aft of me, Sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW.

Evidence of Gerrard Joseph Omer Begin, Able Seaman, (S.T.) Official Number V-43057, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH".

NAME: Gerrard Joseph Omer Begin, A.B. (S.T.)

Called and cautioned.

66. Q. Are you Gerrard Joseph Omer Begin, Able Seaman, (S.T.) Official Number V-43057, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?  
A. Yes, Sir.
67. Q. Will you tell me in your own words just what happened when Myles was lost starting from the time you saw him on deck?  
A. I was standing talking to him about St. John, N. B.
68. Q. You were standing right there joking with Petty Officer Myles?  
A. Yes, Sir.
69. Q. And you saw the waves come over the starboard breaker <sup>of food</sup>?  
A. Yes, Sir.
70. Q. And you thought you yelled, "look-out", but you're not certain?  
A. Yes.

Evidence of Gerrard Joseph Omer Begin, A.B. (Continued).

71. Q. And the ship had rolled?  
A. Yes, Sir.
72. Q. And was Myles leaning against the rails?  
A. I can say that Sir, the waves came very fast and I grabbed the lashing on the thrower.
73. Q. Did you see the wave hit myles?  
A. I didn't see it hit Myles Sir, the water was all over us.
74. Q. When the water had receded did you see Myles then?  
A. No, Sir.
75. Q. And then you went inside to look for him?  
A. Before that I checked on the quarter deck and around the rails and there was no sign of him. I went inside and Steward Byers told me to tell the sentry on the platform to call the bridge and tell them there was a man overboard.
76. Q. When the water first cleared away did you think both had been washed overboard?  
A. Yes, Sir.
77. Q. How did you think they had been washed over?  
A. I can't say, Sir.
78. Q. After the water hit you did it knock you off your feet?  
A. No, it pushed me up against the Throwers, and I grabbed the lashings.
79. Q. Were you behind the other two. There was Byers, then Myles and you were standing next?  
A. Yes, Sir.
80. Q. Could you offer any suggestion as to how Myles went over the side?  
A. He might have bumped his head on the oil drums just behind the Throwers.
81. Q. What makes you think he went behind the Throwers?  
A. Because when I went back there was still water there.
82. Q. Don't you think he might have been washed against the Throwers, stunned and washed over there?  
A. Yes, it's possible, Sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW.



Evidence of Sub-Lieutenant James Campbell Findlay, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH".

NAME: Sub-Lieutenant James Campbell Findlay.

Called and cautioned.

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83. Q. Are you Sub-Lieutenant James Campbell Findlay, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?
- A. Yes, Sir.
84. Q. I understand you were Officer of the Watch at the time of the accident?
- A. Yes, Sir.
85. Q. The weather was rough and the ship was rolling?
- A. Yes, Sir, very rough and rolling considerably.
86. Q. The Commanding Officer was on the Bridge during this time too?
- A. He was Sir.
87. Q. And therefore in charge of the ship?
- A. Yes, Sir.
88. Q. "Man overboard" alarm I understand was reported to the Bridge?
- A. Yes, Sir, I informed the Commanding Officer and then I doubled back to the pom pom platform to check up with the aft look out and make sure it was not a false alarm.
89. Q. You didn't, either yourself, or <sup>order</sup> anybody else throw a life ~~buoy~~ <sup>belt</sup> over the side?
- A. No, Sir, after hearing about the accident from the men I learned it had occurred some three minutes previous.
90. Q. You went aft to confirm the fact that a man was overboard?
- A. Yes, Sir.
91. Q. And in the meantime the Captain had taken action?
- A. Yes, Sir.
92. Q. Did you hear or see anything?
- A. No, Sir.
93. Q. As far as you know nobody had reported having seen or heard anything?
- A. No, Sir, as far as I know nobody heard anything. I saw an egg crate floating in the water and confirmed it to be such.

Evidence of Sub-Lieutenant James Campbell Findlay, (Continued).

94. Q. But you're sure it was an egg crate?

A. Yes, Sir, I'm positive.

95. Q. Is there anything else you can add?

A. No, Sir.

Evidence of Gordon Decker, Ordinary Seaman, Official Number V-51097, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH".

NAME: Gordon Decker, Ord. Sman.

Called and cautioned.

96. Q. Are you Gordon Decker, Ordinary Seaman, Official Number V-51097, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?

A. Yes, Sir.

97. Q. You had the first watch on the night of the 14th of August?

A. Yes, Sir.

98. Q. And where were you?

A. I was after lock-out.

99. Q. At about a quarter to twelve the ship lurched violently?

A. Yes, Sir.

100. Q. Do you know whether that sea came onboard then?

A. Yes, Sir. It was about four feet high.

101. Q. During or just prior to this time could you see three hands standing down on the quarter deck?

A. No, Sir.

102. Q. But shortly after it was reported to you that there was a man overboard and you were told to inform the Bridge, which you did immediately?

A. Yes, Sir. I saw Byers come out from under the starboard throwers.

104. Q. You didn't see the others?

A. No, Sir.

105. Q. During this time did you see or hear anything?

A. No, Sir.



Evidence of Gordon Decker, Ord. Smn. (Continued).

106. Q. When it was reported to you that there was a man overboard, did it occur to you to throw a lifebelt overboard?
- A. No, Sir.
107. Q. Did you have one handy?
- A. Yes, Sir, but it was too late to throw one over when it was reported.
108. Q. Were you thrown off balance by the roll of the ship?
- A. Yes, Sir. I was thrown slightly off balance.
109. Q. When you were told to notify the bridge and tell them a man was overboard, just how long do you think it was after the ship lurched?
- A. Just long enough after to go into the wardroom flat and check.
110. Q. That would be about two minutes?
- A. Yes, Sir.
111. Q. Did the Bridge answer the telephone immediately?
- A. Yes, Sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW.

Evidence of James Richard Wallace McIsaac, E.R.A., Official Number V-50055, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH".

NAME: James Richard Wallace McIsaac, E.R.A.

Called and cautioned.

112. Q. Are you James Richard Wallace McIsaac, E.R.A. Official Number V-50055, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, of H.M.C.S. "GODERICH"?
- A. Yes, Sir.
113. Q. Did you see Myles during the First Watch just before he went on watch?
- A. Just about twenty or quarter to twelve, Sir.
114. Q. Where was he then?
- A. Inside the main alleyway by the petty officer's mess.
115. Q. I understand you saw his life belts?
- A. Yes, Sir. 779
116. Q. He was in the habit of carrying two lifebelts?
- A. Yes, Sir.

Evidence of James Richard Wallace McIsaac, (Continued).

117. Q. Was he particularly nervous?

A. I don't know, Sir.

118. Q. Could he swim?

A. I can't say, Sir.

119. Q. You saw both his life belts?

A. He kept the jacket type lifebelt with his "mick" and he carried the issue lifebelt with him.

120. Q. As a mess-mate was he cheerful?

A. Yes, he was very cheerful, Sir.

121. Q. Quite a contented happy kind of chap?

A. Yes, Sir.

122. Q. Did you see both of his life jackets after he went out?

A. Yes, Sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW.

BOARD ADJOURNED AT 1120

*Kenneth W. Hall*

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Skipper Lieutenant K. W. N. Hall, R.C.N.R.

MEMBER

*R. Jackson*

-----  
Lieutenant-Commander R. Jackson, R.C.N.V.R.,

MEMBER

*F. H. Gray*

-----  
Lieutenant-Commander F. H. Gray, R.N.R.

PRESIDENT