



## **PRINCE CHARLES PAYS UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO ANNAPOLIS**

During a port visit to the RN dockyard at Rosyth, Scotland, in June 1974 aboard HMCS ANNAPOLIS, I had the opportunity to invite Prince Charles to the ship for a drink – on a dare from the coxswain, CPO Guy Joudrey.

HMCS ANNAPOLIS was the flagship of NATO's Standing Naval Force Atlantic and was in the Eastern Atlantic with several other ships for a six-months deployment in April - September 1974.

H.R.H. Lieutenant the Prince of Wales, as he was then known, was serving as communications officer in HMS JUPITER, a frigate which was berthed across the jetty from us. One day, the coxswain asked me to write a letter of invitation for his signature to Lieut. Windsor (we didn't know his official title) asking him to join us for a noonhour "wet."

The letter was written, signed by CPO Joudrey and taken over by me to Prince Charles. When I arrived at the brow of the frigate, I was asked by the quartermaster what my business was. I gave the reason and soon heard the pipe: "Inspector Mackay is requested to the quarterdeck."

"Who's this?" I wondered. There soon appeared a short, stocky, serious man in dark business suit, who looked at me, asked my business again, and took me down to his mess (2-4D) and asked if I would like a beer. I said I would and

received a pint of *Courage Sparkling*, the RN's strong lager, which encouraged a friendly chat for a half-hour or so. I learned he was Charles's bodyguard, from Scotland Yard, with a "double-O" designation (like James Bond's legendary 007, lethal-force designation). He asked questions about me and my family and why I wanted to invite Charles over for a drink. I showed him the letter and he became "all-business." He left, saying he would come back for me in a few minutes (it was dinnertime) and I stayed to chat with a few of the petty officers who were also in the mess at the time, relishing their accounts of Insp. Mackay's weapons-cleaning in the mess, his personal stories of life at the "Yard" and with Charles.

Moments later, Insp. Mackay returned and we both went to the wardroom flats where I was told "Stand there and come to attention when he comes out." I heard some chat in the wardroom and, soon, out came Prince Charles, a tanned, handsome, young man, looking every bit like his pictures, with Insp. Mackay in tow.

"Yes?" he asked. "Good afternoon, sir; I'm Petty Officer Magwood from HMCS ANNAPOLIS and I would like to invite you over for a drink," I said, handing him the letter.

He read it, smiled (probably at the wrong name appearing on the letter) and handed it back, saying, "I'm sorry, I can't today, but would Wednesday be all right?" I said that would be fine and could he make a note to that effect on the letter, which he did.

(*Approx. 1230 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>. C.*) he wrote. I still have a photocopy of the invitation taped to the back of a photo of him leaving ANNAPOLIS July 24, 1974, with Insp. Mackay looking at the photographer very seriously after ordering "No Photos."

Also in the picture are the officer of the day, Commander Jan Drent, the captain of ANNAPOLIS, and CPO Joudrey with a handful of curious seamen in the background.

On the appointed day, Charles and his bodyguard appeared at the brow of the ANNAPOLIS and were escorted by the cox'n to Three Mess where he spent a memorable 2½ hours – enjoyed not only by the 50 chiefs and petty officers and Charles who exchanged stories about their families and respective navies with laughter, candour and abandon. He was asked several times how his parents are ("they're well," he said) and he regaled us with a story of a contest he sponsored among helicopter crews in HMS HERMES who would fly surreptitiously (as if a noisy, 10-ton *Sea King* could do that) over Balmoral Castle to take photographs of his mum walking her Corgis with her hair in curlers.

The prize was a case of "Champers" (champagne) and, according to Charles, there were pictures taken with the powerful cameras aboard the choppers. Charles had three double brandies and soda during his stay and, I was told later, was a bit tipsy on return to his ship.

In 1982, I sent a copy of the picture of Charles leaving the ship (not of his mother) as well as a magazine article I wrote to Buckingham Palace, via Government House, Ottawa, and received a reply from the Hon. Edward Adeane, which says:

The Prince of Wales has asked me to send you his very warm thanks for your letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September and for the splendid photograph taken on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1974. His Royal Highness has the happiest possible memories of his visit to HMCS Annapolis and is most grateful for this memento of the event and for the copy of the article which appeared in Sentinel.

Years later, I learned from an officer serving in ANNAPOLIS that the captain, who was the former Canadian Forces Attache in Moscow, excoriated members of the wardroom and the entertainment officer for not inviting the Prince of Wales over first. "He went into Three Mess!" Cdr. Drent was said to have exclaimed, as though Charles had entered a den of iniquity. "He should have come here (the wardroom) first!" Prince Charles, the model of decorum, went where he was invited: to the chiefs' and petty officers' lounge and completely avoided the wardroom – a *coup* for the lower deck – and one of my most memorable events as a junior PO.

That is my one, close and personal connection to the Royal family and it is today one of the most treasured moments of my military service.

Peter Magwood  
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