

# **H.M.C.S. WHITBY**

**K346**

*1943 - 1945*

Able Seaman J. D. SAVAS  
V-48744  
R.C.N.V.R.

The ship H.M.C.S. Whitby, was a Flower class Corvette with an extended foc'sle, and was built and Commissioned at Midland, Ontario, on June the 6th, 1944, she did not arrive at Halifax until August the 16th, owing to a layover en route at Shelbourne, Nova Scotia, for repairs. Following workups in Bermuda in September she sailed direct to St. Johns, arriving on September 30th, and was assigned OT E.G. C-4. She left St. Johns on October 5th for Londonderry to join the group, with which she was to serve for the balance of the war. Whitby left Londonderry for Canada in Mid June, 1945, and was paid off on July 16th and placed in reserve at Sorel. Quebec. She was sold in 1946 for merchant service and reportedly renamed Bengo.

I was a member of the original skeleton crew of 16 seamen, who were sent up to Midland from the holding depot at H.M.C.S Hochelaga in Longeil across the river from Montreal. It was a small depot which was mainly an Army Barracks, and we were there for about 3 weeks before we entrained to Toronto, and from there we changed trains to go to Midland. For me, I enjoyed it immensely, because after serving on the Sackville, which saw a lot of action, it was a breeze. Ironically, she was Commissioned on D. Day, the day that the Allied assault was launched in France.

The reason I say this is because when the Sackville went to Galveston, Texas for refit, they sent me back to Halifax for re-drafting, and. while I was there, they already had me assigned to go back to Newcastle England to be drafted aboard a new Crescent Class Destroyer. I said to hell with that, and went to the drafting office and raised a stink, I was really carrying on, complaining that I hadn't had proper leave for Two years, and that I had enough action on the Sackville, and it was time for some of these jetty bound bastards to go over there and prove their

worth. In the interim I found out that some of my mates on the Sackville were granted leave, which made me more angry. However, as luck would have it, a great big Six and half footer R.P.O, came out of the office to see what the hell was going on, Who the hell was it? Big Tim O'Leary the big six- and half-foot genial Irishman whom I met in H.M.C.S. Niobe in Greenock, and nicely bailed me out of a situation there. He was surprised to see me, and understood my situation. We had quite a conversation, as we had lots to talk about. In parting, he said to leave it to him, and go back to the Barracks, and he'd call me. Thats how I got my Leave, and the Jammy number of picking up a new ship in Canada, otherwise I'd have been over there in on the invasion, because thats where the Destroyer I was supposed to be drafted on, went. Little did I know at the time the Invasion was coming off.

After leave, at which time I went back to Fort William and seen my family for a few days, there was only my sister Vivian, my Mother and my Aunt Panayota left, as my sister Tess was working in Toronto at the time. I was glad to be back and sad to say it was the last time I was to see my Mother alive. It was a proud moment for my Mother, as I displayed my First Medal to her, the 1939-1943 Ribbon which was presented to our crew and myself in England and I went to Fryers Studio and had my picture taken to give to her. Apart from enjoying my family, there wasn't a hell of a lot to do as all my friends were all in the services, and it was difficult to renew friendships with others as they were all busy with the War Effort, and after all I had been away for two years, and things do change somewhat. So back to Halifax I went, and no sooner did I get back that I was on my way to the holding depot H.M.C.S. Hochelaga in Montreal.

As the new crew was being put together and assembled, I had a little time to enjoy Montreal, as I had never been there before. The French People were very friendly, and despite the language difference I got along with them quite well. The food in the Restaurants was out of this world, and compared to what I had been eating the last couple of years was a treat to say the least. The one thing that impressed me about Montreal, was the openness and the attitude of the people. there way of life, compared to the rest of Canada, was like the difference between night and day. During my stay there, I came upon another one of my strange experiences there. I happened to be pub crawling one night, and during the tour I wanted to experience one of the finer restaurants I had heard so much about, so I finally decided on this place downtown called the Diana Restaurant. It was located on the corner of St. Catherine and Peel Street. It looked pretty good and noticed that it was quite busy too, so I went in, sat down and ordered a Quart of beer to drink while I looked at the Menu prior to ordering. In the meantime, there was a

table full of Frenchmen sitting near me in their civvies, chatting away noisily in French, and giving me the looking over as if I didn't belong in the place, because I was in uniform. The menu was in French and I had a Helena time trying to find what to eat, but the waitress was terrific in helping me decide what to eat, and we hit it off beautifully, and was spending more time with me than she would normally spend with a customer, In the meantime these Frenchmen kept interrupting us, for whatever reason I don't know. Anyway, the waitress come back with my order and again we were having a helluva time together, and this time ignored these characters. As I was trying to eat my dinner they started on me, directing barbs and insults my way. I couldn't understand what they were saying, but I understood their body language, and that was enough for me. I hadn't said a word to them up to this time, so I decided enough was enough of this bullshit, and let them know it too. Well, that started it, when the first guy stood up I knocked him down with one shot, the second guy was trying to get up, and I gave him a shot and stretched him over the table, spilling all the drinks and breaking all the glasses, I was ready to go after the third guy when the manager and the bouncer came over to quell the disturbances. They took me aside, presumably to throw me out of the place, when the waitress came over, to my defense and explained to the Manager, that I wasn't to blame, and those characters were the cause of it all. Then the Manager took me aside to settle me down, he seemed to be a nice fellow and he looked like a Greek, so I took a chance and asked him if he spoke Greek, in the Greek Language? He said yes, and away we went conversing in the Greek language, at least I found someone I could communicate with in this environment. When he found out where I was from, he surprised me by asking me if my name was Savas? I said yes, then he said that he knew my brother Ted very well when he was stationed in Montreal, and knew my Mother and was related to her as he was from the same area in Greece. We established a good relationship from thereon. Before leaving Montreal, I went to see him, and he told me in parting that he was going to go and see my Mother in Fort William, which I found out in later years the Gentleman did go and see her, much to my Mother's surprise. His name was Peter Andros, and he was related to my Mother. My Mother's family name was Andreopoulos, and his was as well, but he had it Anglicized. The end result of the whole affair was that it never cost me a cent, and wouldn't let me pay for the fine dinner we had the following day.

The train trip from Montreal to Toronto, was another treat, at the expense of the Navy, and I was really beginning to enjoy this and taking full advantage of it, even though I had some misgivings, a bit of a guilty conscience because the Invasion was coming off and maybe I should be over there with my buddies and helping them eliminating the Germans.

After arriving in Toronto, we changed trains and went on to Midland where the Whitby was having the final touches completed and being fitted out ready for her journey through the Great Lakes to her operational base in Halifax. The Town of Midland was a nice little place and the people treated us very well, they couldn't do enough for us, and made our short stay there memorable. As a matter of fact, they were looking forward to meeting us, as they had the pleasure of witnessing the launching of the ship a month or so before our arrival.

The launching of the ship, according to an article which appeared in the Whitby Times in Feb the 4th, 1984, some 40 years later, which described the ceremony in detail, was a memorable occasion as a delegation from the Town of Whitby were also in attendance. The launching took place on September the 18th 1943, a date on which the Department of Munitions and Supply had set aside a day of Declaration when 12 new Corvettes as well as the Whitby, were also launched. The commemorative day was called 'The Ships for Victory Day'.

A Mrs., John S. Leitch, who was the wife of a Midland shipping official performed the ritual, {the usual champagne treatment}, and the blessing was given by the Rev. A.E.W. Ingram the rector of St. Mark's Anglican church at Midland. The delegation from Whitby included the Mayor the Councilors and many others which are listed in the article I will be attaching to this document at a later time in this story. The people from Whitby were delighted to attend this affair as they were honored to have a ship named after the Town of Whitby, and have representation in the Battle of the Atlantic in World War 11. This resulted in later years for the town to salvage the ships bell before she was dismantled, and present it too the royal Canadian Legion branch 112 in Whitby where it presently serves as part of the podium. They also included a lot of memorabilia collected from different sources, and installed them in the Whitby Historical Building as well. The article created a lot of interest, even though there were a few inaccuracies.

The Commissioning of the H.M.C.S. Whitby, was a very prestigious affair, the ceremony completes with the Local Band, all the dedications, speeches, even the Jesuit priest from the nearby Jesuit Mission, which was near Midland, was in attendance to bless the ship. As well as all the Townspeople and the construction workers associated with the building of the Ship. There was quite a gathering to say the least. It was very Official, strictly Naval protocol and having never attending an affair like this before was something I shall never forget. Ironic as hell, the day that we Commissioned the Ship was June the 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and it was the day the Allied Forces landed an invasion force on the Coast of France.

When we finally set sail on the journey from Midland, we entered Georgian Bay and then to Lake Huron for the downward trip to the Lower Lakes, and being summer the weather was beautiful, the sun was shining ever so brightly, and we were all getting suntanned, as we were all shirtless, and the lakes were like the sailors used to say "flatter than pea on a platter". What a pleasure it was, like a cruise, compared to the blistery North Atlantic. The downward trip through the Lower Lakes was pleasurable as we sailed through the St. Clair River, into Lake St. Clair and then on to the Detroit River passing under the famed Ambassador Bridge which linked The Port of Windsor in Canada with the City of Detroit in the United States. We didn't have an opportunity to visit either City as there were no berthing piers for us, and there were no previous arrangements by the powers to be for us to do so, nevertheless, we sailed through Lake Erie on our way to the Welland Canal, however we did manage to stop at a little town of Port Stanley, on the North Shore of Lake Erie to oil up, and again we were deprived of a little shore leave. When we finally made our way to the Locks, we had to hove to for quite a while, waiting to enter the Locks which led us into Lake Ontario. The reasoning was the fact that it was in the busiest time of the year for all the Lake freighters which were busy carrying grain or coal and large cargo to their ultimate destinations. The size of these freighters dwarfed us, and as they passed us, they looked at this little Corvette, with a little wonderment. Entering the Canal Locks, was certainly an experience and showed us an example of the powers of Water and Engineering technology. As we finally entered Lake Ontario, the weather was still holding up beautifully and remained in the same condition as we entered the Port of Toronto. where we finally berthed.

We were at last granted shore leave, we managed to have a few days in the City, where I had the opportunity to visit my cousin Peter Yoanidis, his wife Mickey and their son Bobby, They owned and operated a Restaurant called the Mayfair Grill on the corner of Bay and Adelaide. While we were berthed in Toronto, we provisioned ship and brought on a few supplies., we had an unexpected visit from a reporter and a cameraman from the Toronto Daily Star, who were doing a feature article for the newspaper. I thought it was a bit of a lark, but lo and behold the next day here was this article, along with several pictures of myself and a couple of shipmates pulling on a hawser on the focs'le of the ship, as well as several shots of different areas of the ship, that had been taken aboard the ship the previous day. Geez, we thought we were something after seeing the paper, we were front page, believe it or not, and it sure lifted our spirits anyway. The following day, because of the article, and the fact that the Allied Forces had landed in Europe a few days previous caused a throng of people to come down to see the ship, and the Captain

was in his glory as he allowed a few of the spectators to come aboard the ship to take a look about her. There was no question, she was a good-looking ship with her beautiful camouflage colors of pale grey and sky Blue, and the people who viewed her were very impressed. I also was gratified, when my cousin came down as well, and he felt very proud of me. This experience also changed my attitude and feeling about the ship, from that day on. I had a special feeling for this ship, as I attended her Christening and Commissioning, and she was my baby, and I made no bones in letting people know about it, and I carried this same feeling about her during her entire life. It was strange, because after serving on the Sackville, I never had the same attachment as I had for H.M.C.S. WHITBY. because when I boarded the Sackville, the situation was a lot different I was immediately in action, and duties had to be carried out, and one had no time to think about any thing else other than protecting the Convoys and ourselves from the U-Boats After the wonderful time we had in Toronto, it was time for us to sail our way down to a prearranged affair along the shore line of Lake Ontario to the Town of Whitby, where they had some sort of Celebration planned for us, as we carried the name of the Town in her Memory. When we arrived there, the town people were disappointed as the water in the channel was not deep enough for us to dock at the pier, and we had to anchor out a mile or so. which made it difficult for most of the people to visit the ship. Nevertheless, quite a few of the citizens did come out to visit the ship and they also assisted in ferrying us back and forth to the ship. They had a parade arranged with the band from H.M.C.S, York from Toronto, leading the Local Sea Cadets and ourselves down the main Street. After the parade, they had a luncheon for us with all the notables present, where they presented us with a few gifts, cigarettes and such, I can't remember, it's been so long, but they treated us very well, and were very proud of us. The local mernt's presented us with a washing machine, some electrical appliances, and a full sound system, with a number of records and tons of reading material. To say we scored was an understatement, because these gifts were priceless, and as time went on, they proved invaluable. What a change for me, after the rugged and primitive time I endured on the Sackville.

We finally left Whitby, and sailed a few hundred miles on Lake Ontario, where we entered the St. Lawrence River towards Montreal, where we berthed and again had an opportunity to spend another few days in the Great City. This time was pretty eventful, as Montreal was in the midst of some riots, as there was a lot of hatred and resentment going on between the French-Canadian Civilians and the Armed Forces, due to the fact that the Conscription issue was in the forefront at the time. There were riots going on in Dominion Square, and in Verdun. I stayed the hell away from that scene and managed to enjoy myself, mainly because I had

befriended a buddy by the name of Paul Dupuis, a shipmate of mine of the original crew, who was from Outremont, who could speak French fluently and knew the City well. If it wasn't for him, who knows what would have happened.

Our next stop, after leaving Montreal, was to Quebec City, where the fun really began. It was time to find out and question the abilities of the Captain and the Officers. Their talents up to now and their navigational abilities were limited as most of the Navigation was performed by the various pilots we had assigned to us on our trip down the lakes. The tides in Quebec were enormous, and the first couple of attempts in docking by the Captain proved disastrous, he crashed in to a couple of docks and removed a few timbers, plus putting a couple of dents in the bow of the ship. He finally made it. It was time for a few repairs after the incident, and it gave us an opportunity to visit the quaint City of Quebec, where I enjoyed myself as I had never been there before, with my buddy Paul we really did the town over, especially in Lower Quebec, where we really quaffed a few quarts in the olde Louis IV Bistro. I had it made with my interpreter.

Speaking of the tides, is something I'll never forget as long as I live. After leaving the ship one afternoon on liberty {leave} as usual, I spent the afternoon and most of the evenings doing some pub crawling and believe me this time I really hung one on, so much so that I had a helluva time finding my way back to the ship, when I finally got down to the pier, at least I knew where that was, I couldn't find the ship, where the hell was it? Did it leave without me? I wandered around for about an hour looking for the ship, until another sailor happened by and told me the fact of life. When I left the ship earlier, I walked down the gangplank, little did I realize that the tides rose and fell about 20 ft. so when I went looking for the ship, the ship was down 20 ft, and one had to walk down the gangplank to the ship. No wonder I couldn't find her, she was so low in the water I couldn't recognize her, Being and feeling stupid is one thing, but being drunk as hell only added to my dilemma.

After oiling up and provisioning in Quebec, again it was time to be on our way, down the St. Lawrence to the good old City of Halifax, where we would undergo a few repairs, and come under the command of the powers to be, the Canadian Naval Command, where we were to receive further orders and instructions as to where our next destination was. While there we finally received the rest of the crew to fill out the full complement of the ship. The new shipmates were a blessing in disguise as our chores and duties from the time of the Commissioning of the ship were doubled, and the workload eased a lot, as the ship finally had a full complement of seaman and established a proper routine of watches to carry out the

many duties associated with the operation on shipboard. As Luck would have it, after a few days in Halifax, where the ship came under rigid final inspection. We were called in to the stores where we were outfitted with the traditional white uniforms and summer gear for the next assignment where we were instructed to leave for Bermuda with another couple of Corvettes, which were newly Commissioned and ready for Sea duty like ourselves. This was great for me, a change of clothes was something I appreciated, as I had been wearing the Navy blue for over two years and was tiring of it, and to be able to say that I had a wardrobe of summer and winter gear was big time. As a matter of fact, the white sox were great, compared to the black sox I had been wearing the last couple of years which were so salty that I had them trained to stand up by themselves. We were also in the company of some seasoned Corvettes, who were on the famed Triangle Run who were experienced in the Southern waters, and accompanied us in the event that we ran into some action, as the German U-Boats were quite active in the area. It was a helluva good ideas on the Navy's part, because the new recruits we were blessed with on board couldn't tie their own shoelaces, and if we ran into any action, they wouldn't know which end of the gun to use. The Navy was finally recruiting from the bottom of the barrel, as the supply of men in Canada was getting shorter and shorter, and the only alternative left was to get more Wrens {Women's Naval Division} into the services, so they could replace some of these Navy type, who were shore bound and in administrative jobs to get out of active sea duty, and send them out to sea.

We had spent the better part of. a couple of months in Canada, which I enjoyed tremendously, and now with a new ship and a new crew we were on our way to Bermuda, where it was Naval protocol to initiate all ships in WUPS, being workups, a procedure where we performed Naval tactics and simulated war exercises. It took us about three days to reach Bermuda, and every day it became hotter and hotter, the metal decks got so hot that the seaboots we wore had to be discarded and changed for leather boots, as the rubber just about melted on our feet. remember correctly, it was sometime in August, the hottest time of the year down there and the heat was unbearable, and for a snowbird like myself I had never experienced anything like it. We had no air-conditioning, and the only relief we could get was to get out of the rays of the sun.

Too add to our workload on board the ship, we had to contend with the flying fish, which were constantly flying and landing on the rear deck, and with the heat of the deck would die immediately, we had a helluva time shoveling the dead fish off. The stench was unbearable. This condition prevailed until we finally arrived in



Somers Isle which was the Naval Headquarters for the Canadian Fleet, and the base of the Operations.

During our exercises, which consisted partly of simulated attacks on the lone submarine that was part of the exercise force there, we would, at the end of the day look forward to going for a swim, where we also had exercises in the water about survival tactics, and at least cool off a little. The only trouble with that, was the fact that there were a helluva lot of sharks in the water, and that necessitated the lowering of the whaler in the ocean with a few seamen in the boat with Sten guns to ward off the sharks and protect us. Another ploy we used at the time was to throw butter boxes over the side to occupy the sharks while we went for a little dip. For some reason or another they seemed to enjoy chewing up the butter boxes. Trying to sleep was another problem, the heat was so intense in the lower mess deck that we were forced to hang our hammocks on the foc'sle with ends tied to the 4 Inch gun cage, over and above the steel decks, which during the course of the day with the sun beating down on it became extremely hot. One thing about sleeping on the deck, it was no trouble in the morning, we'd just jump over the side of the ship, and have a dip in the ocean. It was a helluva good way of waking up. The salty water of the ocean, didn't appeal too much to me, as I felt as if I fell into a pickle barrel and swallowed some brine. For a fresh water lad from Fort William who swam in the fresh water rivers in the North, it sure was a change. One thing about the sea, the bouncy was enjoyable, and I floated around like a duck, didn't even have to hold my breath.

While we were in Bermuda, which was without a doubt a most beautiful place, we had the pleasure of going ashore on the liberty ship, provided by the Navy, as there were no harbor facilities there and we had to anchor in the Bay of Somers Isle. There were no cars on the island and the transportation there was by horse and carriage, which was unique in a way. The food in the little cafes was excellent, and it was the first time that I experienced eating Bar-B-Qued Chicken which was a big thing there. The beer there was no hell, because the main drink on the island was Rum, and you knocked it down with lime juice or water. The houses there were mostly constructed with white plaster and looked pretty good in contrast with the green grass on the island. There were a few stately mansions in different parts of the island, which were owned by the British Nobility, and were out of bounds for most people including ourselves, but we could see them from a distance and they were just beautiful. One of the pleasures we enjoyed, was attending an outdoor theatre there, and being served drinks and drinking them while watching a movie. Pretty good stuff for a local yokle.

There were a lot of tattoo shops, and a few of the boys went in and got themselves etched. I didn't bother because it didn't turn me on. Having a dog tag was enough identification for me. What I had done, which in the end caused me a helluva lot of grief and pain, was going into a shop to have my ear pierced so I could hang a gold ring on it. It was a naval tradition, for sailors to have their ear pierced, when they were in southern waters, or when they crossed the equator. So, I took it upon myself and had it done by an old Negro woman, who also sold me the ring. Telling me it was contraband Gold and was giving it to me at a good price. A few of the boys also had their ear pierced as well. Nevertheless, they didn't have the problem I was to endure, because after a few days, with all the sweat and the heat down south my ear swelled up to the size of a watermelon, and the pain was excruciating. The Tiffy (Medic on board) had to cut the ring off and apply sulfa on my ear and gave me a shot of something, together with a lot of aspirins. I suffered in pain for at least a week, so much for that escapade. I felt that it would have been better to be shot.

While in Bermuda, we had an opportunity for the first time, to have some recreation in the form of Baseball. At the same time, we were there, some American Naval Ships were also there engaging in similar exercises, so it was arranged by the powers to be that a Fastball game be played between the Canadians and the Americans. We had no baseball equipment at all, but the Americans who had every conceivable bit of Athletic equipment supplied all the gloves and bats. Loaning them to us before the game so we could get in a little practice. Without any equipment, the Americans perceived us as a bunch of hicks who didn't know a baseball from a football. Little did they know, that we also played the game when we were young. We had a chap by the name of Kinch, from Vancouver who was a Leading Seaman on board our ship, and he was quite a disciplinarian, strictly navy all the way, and during the practice, took complete charge of the team, and asked us what positions we liked to play. We chose our positions, then I had told him I caught at one time. He said you're the catcher. Then we started batting practice with him pitching. Well, believe me I never saw any thing like that before in my life. He was throwing the ball windmill fashion at the batters, no one could hit it let alone see it. I had a hell of a time catching it and my catching hand was starting to swell. So, I told him to slow it down, and save it for the game. In the meantime, this matelot, by the name of Gordie Fentie, a farmer from Leduc Alberta heard me complaining, and said to me, I can catch any thing that son of a bitch can throw, He didn't particularly like Kinch anyway, and he sure as hell surprised me, he caught him well. The game started the next day, here were the Yanks, complete with uniforms and numbers, looking like real Major Leaguers, and us in dirty old dungarees looking like real hicks.

The Yanks were the home team, so we had the first inning up, having no previous lineup, Kinch decided that we would go to bat in the order of playing positions. The first guy up was Fentie, the catcher and on the first pitch he drove that ball over the left Fielders head for a home run. They were stunned. The second batter up was our pitcher Kinch, he took a couple of looks for balls, and on the next one drove it a country mile for another home run. Their pitcher settled down and struck out three in a row to end the inning. They came up to bat, resplendent in their uniforms. and Kinch started throwing, One. two three, down away they went. as the innings went on. They never got a hit the entire game except for a bunt, and a couple of walks that Kinch gave away to make the game interesting. I managed to get a hit and a couple of walks, Fentie hit another home run and the game ended 3 Zip for us. Those Yanks were speechless, Kinch struck out about 15 batters. We were elated, and congratulated one another, Kinch received our admiration and from that day on we held a lot of respect for him. It was later that he disclosed to us that he had played semi-professional baseball for a team in Portland Oregon before the War. After the game. the Americans were pretty good about it all, and being hospitable brought along their American Beer and invited us to share it with them. Having American Beer was an absolute treat because what they served as beer in Bermuda one would have difficulty determining it from Horse piss.

After completing our Workups and exercises in Bermuda, we finally left the Island and headed North in the Atlantic to rendezvous with an escort group they were forming to finally begin Convoy Duty, or some other assignment we might be relegated to perform. It didn't take us long to change our dress from the summer whites to the Normal blue dress, as the further north we went, the colder it got and we were getting closer into the dreary winter months and the ravages of the bitter North Atlantic which never ever warmed up.

Soon after being assigned to an escort Group, much to our astonishment we discovered that we were at the bottom of the totem pole as far as seniority was concerned, in the operations pertaining to Convoy duty, the reason being that our Captain didn't have the seniority of rank as compared to the other Captains in the escort group. This situation didn't go to well amongst the crew, and as time went on we finally realized that it was partially due to the incompetence of our Captain and the crew lost a bit of confidence in him. But in order to overcome this situation, the other officers and the crew, picked up the slack and became, more diligent in their duties and made the best of the situation. The reason that I'm relating this situation, is because it led to some assignments which were perilous and dangerous. On most occasions, in the forming of the Convoy cover, we were

delegated to the (Coffin Corner) meaning we were at the rear of the Convoy protecting the Merchant ships and some of the stragglers who often times had navigational problems. By being in this position, we were more subject to attack by the U-Boats as they generally attacked from the rear.

On another occasion after arriving in Londonderry Ireland, looking forward to a few days leave, we were notified that we were to ship out immediately and head up to the North Coast of Scotland. After a couple of days and sighting the Scotch Coast, we were ordered to be on the lookout for one of our own U-Boats, and we hove to for a couple of hours, finally we spotted him and then we were instructed to accompany him. This was all news to us, and the crew was a little on the restless side as it was a little different from our customary convoy runs, and were a little cheesed off at being browned off for this job nevertheless, this was delegated to us and we picked up the slack and made the best of it. The trip took us the better part of two days and we journeyed up the northernmost part of Scotland and presumably taking the submarine into hostile waters in order for her to do her job. in tracking down enemy ships, as there was the odd German Destroyer on the prowl as some of their home bases were in German occupied Norway. Finally, the submarine signaled us through the aid of the Aldis Lamp that our assistance was no longer needed and through the entire journey we remained in radio silence, this was the eerie part of the whole affair. As we turned around for the return trip the crew again became a little restless especially the new recruits because they were accustomed to seeing the odd ship around. Being alone, put us in a very vulnerable position, as there were a lot of submarines hovering around the coasts of Scotland and Ireland where the Allied activity was. We finally made it back to Londonderry and rejoined our group who during the course of our Seven-day adventure enjoyed the pleasure of a leave on shore that we missed because of our Junior rank and our assignment.

Getting back to the relationship with the Captain reminds me of the time that he nearly killed me because of his incompetence. In one of our many exercises, we often had to top off our oil supply, which necessitated us to hook up behind a tanker and pull her supply line aboard to fuel up. This was a tricky situation, because once we hooked up the Captain would have to coordinate the speed of our ship with the tankers speed. I happened to be on the crew guiding the support line for the fuel line on the Capstan. I was slowly feeding the line on the Capstan, and the next thing I knew, I was thrown about six feet on the deck and the line was spinning like hell around the Capstan, and all I could see in my stunned moment was these gloves of mine spinning around with the wire, I was numbed and hesitated before I looked for my hands, which were behind me thinking that they

were gone. I pulled my arms around and there were my hands all intact. The rest of the crew helped me up and Christ I was mad, I looked up at the Captain on the bridge and I started calling him a stupid crazy lunatic and told him he couldn't steer a goddam rowboat. He was so embarrassed he didn't say a thing, let me tell you from then on, I was on his ass at every opportunity and took many liberties with him, so much so that I treated him more like a crew member than an Officer and spoke to him in the same manner as I would speak to my buddies on board ship.

Apart from the above incident, I felt that I was a very lucky guy, as up until that time, all through the war and the action I was involved in, I had never suffered any serious injury to speak of. The one time I can recall, where I received a serious burn on my back, occurred when we were doing some gun drills on board ship. It was one of those drills, where everyone on board ship, regardless of their normal duties, had to be instructed and trained in the operation of the 4- inch gun, in the event that the regular gun crew were disabled in action, and the rest of the crew would be able take over. On this occasion, my position on the gun's crew was the No. 3 man, and my duty was to provide the Cordite for the shell which was installed in the breach of the gun, and after the firing of the Gun, I was to retrieve the shell and toss it over the side. This particular time, the No. 2 man, who was passing the spent shell to me, didn't look what he was doing, and placed the hot shell right on my back. The pain was so bad, I just about went crazy, I ran like hell, looking for the Tiffy (Medic), I found him, and he immediately doused my back with some sort of liquid, applied some sulfa, and gave me a shot in the arm. It was very painful, and suffered for a few days, but nevertheless it was not disabling, and I eventually got over it.

As time went on, it became more of usual routine to fuel up at sea, for some reason or another, which caused a little excitement now and then, because of the previous experiences they had especially in my case. On another occasion, while oiling up, I happened to be on the Port Bridge with the Captain, who was giving orders to the Wheelhouse regarding engine speed and direction through the voice pipe, then all of a sudden the Captain turned to me, and casually said that he had to go and have a piss, not missing a beat, I told him to piss over the side, he said he couldn't do that because the crew would see him, I said so what, then he said to me, go get a coffee can from the Galley. I said to hell with you tell the Quartermaster over the voice pipe to go down and get one, I can't leave my station. This conversation became so childish, that even now thinking about it, showed how idiotic this whole situation was and I still relish telling the tale over and over again to the delight of old veterans. Anyway, to continue the story, the crew member on the order of the Quartermaster came running up with this coffee can to the Captain

who no sooner receiving it, went down on his knees and proceeded to piss in the can. After relieving himself, he turned to me and said take it down to the crapper and dump it. I said no way, dump it over the side. He said I can't do that, it'll spray all over the lower deck, Finally, after knowing where he stood with me, he called the Quartermaster, who delegated another crew member to come up and dispose of it. This situation showed how my relationship with the Captain had become, and the crew had many a laugh about it and couldn't get over it.

My relationship with the crew on the whole was pretty good, I had a lot of respect for them despite their inexperience, they had a lot of guts and I gave them a lot of credit and I was always encouraging them and treated them as old salts, and because of this they in turn showed a lot of respect for me and were always seeking my companionship and advice. During the time that we received a full complement of seamen when we were in Halifax, I was in for a bit of a surprise, as there were Four seaman who came on board that came from my home town of Fort William, If I remember correctly there was Joe Hill, Allan Pattison, Louis Tocheri, and another chap I can't remember his name. We weren't that close when we were younger but we knew of one another back then and attended the Vocational school there in Fort William. We had a lot in common to talk about and it made the circumstances much better for us and we took advantage of our relationship, especially it was good times when we received our mail and took the opportunity to exchange all the news from home. As I related above about the guts these guys had. I have to tell the experience of Louis Tocheri, who was a Radar Operator, on board, he suffered terribly from seasickness, but despite this he would still carry on his duties regardless, so much so that when he went to serve his watch, he would take his spew pail with him on watch, and carry on his watch intermittently spewing and working. He was pale as a ghost when he finished his watch, but nevertheless never complained about it. That was what the old salts called Intestinal Fortitude (Guts). Coincidentally in later years I married his cousin Anna my present wife. I had the opportunity on one of my visits to Fort William, now Thunder Bay, in 1996 to look him up and did so where we reminisced a little, He's still as hardnosed as he was then and looked well, as for the others I didn't know where they are and he didn't know as well.

As I said before, I got along well with everyone, with one exception. This chaps name was Midge Amyot, another able seaman on board who was from some part of Quebec had some sort of reputation of a Middleweight Boxing Champion in Quebec. For some reason or another he had a dislike for me, whether it was my popularity with the crew or my face, I don't know, but we just didn't hit it off at all. I had a couple of run ins with him and in one of my confrontations he pissed me

off because I was trying to stay out of his way and let him be the Champion of whatever, so I leveled with him, and told him anytime he wanted to try me on for size to just name the place and time and I would accommodate him. This startled him a bit, and I never heard any more about it. I thought that was the end of it but no, he had other motives in mind. During our layovers in Harbour, it was Naval Custom once in awhile to have some Commodore or higher up, come aboard ship and have a customary inspection of our ship, and it was often random and sometimes we wouldn't be prepared. Then all hell would break loose and we would work like hell to shape up. This meant getting our ship cleaned up and dressing up in our number ones (best uniforms). Well, when I went to my locker to retrieve my very best, lo and behold my locker was broken into and my uniform, the only one I had, was tied up in knots, there was no way I was going to line up for inspection with my uniform in that shape, so I took the easy way out and hid in the hammock locker during the entire inspection. They didn't miss me, because they didn't have a roll call during all the commotion, and everyone was shit scared for some reason or another. I wasn't worried because I was too angry about my uniform and who would pull this caper. The only one I suspected was this guy Midge Amyot, I didn't say a hell of a lot about it to anyone even though some of them wondered where I was during the inspection. From then my suspicions kept mounting, because every time I encountered him, he had a bit of a smirk on his face, this confirmed it for me, and I said to myself, I'll get this little French bastard somehow sometime if it takes me a lifetime. So away I went just biding my time. This occasion arrived, when we hit St. Johns Newfoundland, and lucky me, when we arrived it was usual routine for someone to go to Dockside to get the Mail, and as luck would have it, the Champion became the Mailman. This was my opportunity, I went to Amyot's locker broke it open and took all his gear including his hat and went onto the pier where there was a couple of old barrels for waste, such as paper and stuff, started a fire, got it going well and burnt all his gear one by one. When he got back with the Mail, he was the most shocked man you ever want to see. He seen his locker was ransacked, and his clothing was missing. The only one who saw me do it was my buddy Paul (Frenchy) Dupuis. He wondered what the hell I was doing, having a bar-b-q. or setting the dock on fire. I took him aside and told him the whole story and asked him to keep it between us. He laughed like hell about it. Every time I encountered Amyot, I gave him the same treatment he gave me, the usual smirk on my face, the same way he smirked. He knew I burnt his clothes, so what, he knew that I knew he screwed up my uniform. From then on, I had no trouble with him.

As the War progressed, and we continued on Convoy duty, there wasn't any action to speak of, as the German U-Boats were reluctant as hell to attack the

Convoys, seeing that our Convoys were being better protected with the addition of more and better equipped Ships, such as the new Frigates. which were a lot faster and better armed than the old Flower Class Corvettes. As well the Army and Air Force, along with our American Allies, were doing a helluva job in Europe, after the Invasion and the war was progressing well towards conquering the Germans. The German U-Boat Commanders, were aware of the situation, and knew the end was near, and apart from the diehards, who on occasion would take the opportunity for some sneak attacks, would try us on for size.

On occasion, we were continually being brownd off for some frivolous forays, whether it was because of our Captain, or because we were Junior in rank, I don't know. This one time, after leaving Londonderry, we were instructed to leave our escort group, and proceed to the Isle of Man, which was off the coast of Scotland. After arriving and sighting the Isle of Man, all we did for about three days, was circle the island. It was boring as hell, and what the hell we were doing there still remains a mystery to me. Everyone was puzzled as hell. My thoughts were that the Fleet Officer, wanted to get rid of our Captain for a few days, and sent him on a Wild Goose chase. Nevertheless, we rejoined our Escort Group about 5 days later, who were on there way back to Londonderry. We traveled alone and thank God, we made it without incident, as without any escorts we were just a sitting duck for the U-Boats.

After we arrived in Londonderry, we provisioned ship (took on supplies such as Food, and replenished our armament), took a few days ashore, and got ready for another Convoy trip. This time, we shipped off with our group and set off to the West Coast of Scotland, where we were to rendezvous with our Convoy of Merchant ship. As we were on our way the weather started turning bad, and as the days went by the weather became worse. We finally arrived where the Convoy was being assembled and formatted, but it was short lived as the weather became of hurricane conditions and it was only a matter of time when all the ships including the Escorts started losing contact with one another. It just so happened that once we were on our way, Radio silence was in effect, and the only means of communication was the use of the Aldis Lamp Signal device, which because of the stormy conditions was useless, as the rains limited the use and prevented any communication with the other ships. The conditions worsened, and we were bouncing up and down like a cork in a bathtub. The waves were so high that at times we'd be looking at a skyscraping office tower, then we'd be looking from a mountain perch at the Grand Canyon down below. The helmsman had a helluva time trying to keep the ship on course, The lookouts were drenched on watch, the waves were coming over the focs'sle and blanketing the ship entirely. It was a good



thing that the crew had the presence of mind to batten down the hatches and secure all the armament anticipating the weather. The Seaman's quarters as well as any other quarters were in a helluva mess. There was dishes, pots and pans, flying all over the place and no matter where you looked there was tons of seawater. The Captain, realizing the seriousness of the situation finally decided that the only way we could survive was to head to the Coastline of Scotland and find some harbour or cove to take refuge from the storm. It was fortunate that we were not too far away from the Coast, and the Navigator charted a course to a place called Loch Ewe, which we were fortunate to find and had a splendid little harbour. We finally made it after about 5 hours and dropped anchor to hove to.

It was quite sheltered there and apart from some choppy waters. It wasn't too bad, and the Captain decided to lower the whaler and row towards the little town that was visible on the shore line, figuring that maybe there was a pub, or a shop there. So, we loaded the boat with a few ratings including myself, and we made it to shore. There were a few people there to greet us, and once there, we heard them jabbering away in an unfamiliar language, wondering what the hell was going on, nobody knew. Then it dawned on me, they were speaking Gaelic, so I told the Jimmy that I knew how to greet them in their language. He said I was full of shit. So, I greeted them in Gaelic, and they responded with a smile on their faces, and they proceeded to talk to me. I managed to communicate somewhat with them, and I could understand what they were saying. with what little Gaelic I knew. This was just a little fishing village, with a few dozen families there, no pubs or shops. They knew why we were there, taking refuge from the storm. They didn't have to be rocket scientists to determine that. We had no other reason to stay there any longer, so the Jimmy decided we would go back to the ship. In parting they were good enough to give us some fresh fish, which we took back with us. On our way back, the Jimmy said to me, I thought you were Greek? I said I was, then he said, how the hell did you know their language. So, I educated him, I told him that I grew up in Fort William, where there was a lot of Scottish people, and I grew up and went to school with them, got to know their language their customs, and their songs, ate their Haggis on Robbie Burns Day, and had even taken some Bagpipe Lessons. Some of my dearest friends were of Scottish Descent. Was he surprised? he was speechless.

After a few days when the storm finally abated, we pulled up anchor and shipped off from Loch Ewe to rejoin our group. Through the Wireless Code with Whitehall in London, we finally, after a few days located the Convoy and the rest of our escort group and proceeded to complete our journey to St. Johns Newfoundland, and end our assignment.

During my time on the Sackville, whenever I had an opportunity to go on leave, I always managed on about every third trip to make it down to London and the south part of England to enjoy my leave, and never gave it a thought to go back to Scotland, to some of my old haunts while I was stationed there. So, seeing that the war was nearing its end, while on the Whitby, I made it a point to take my leaves and revisit Scotland. While I was stationed in H.M.C.S. Niobe the Naval base there I had an opportunity to visit a few of the Cities around Glasgow and Greenock, and there I happened to meet a few Scotch Lassies. One of the Lassies I met at the dance hall in Glasgow, took a shine to me, and we hit it off pretty good. We spent quite a bit of time with each other, and she had often taken me to her home in Springhill (just outside of Greenock) where I met her parents, who were just wonderful people, and treated me one time to a beautiful Chicken dinner, which I hadn't had for a helluva long time. Her Father was raising a few chickens in his backyard, which because of the shortages during the war Chickens were difficult to get. The usual fare during the War in the United Kingdom, was Fish and Chips, Mutton, and all the tea you can drink and after a period of time, you kind of got sick of it all. When we went on leave, the usual routine was to provide us with food stamps, so I would save mine and give them to her Father, and he really appreciated that.

As the war was nearing its end, we were on, perhaps our last Convoy Escort journeys, when as we were ready to disperse the Merchantmen to their destinations off the Coast of Ireland, we received the news that the war was over. We were all overjoyed and filled with emotion. For some reason or another, the word spread the next day that it wasn't over. We were all mystified, what the hell was going on anyway? As it was, there was some confusion in Communication, so again we were finally assured that the War was over. This called for Splicing the Main Brace, (a Royal Navy tradition of an extra tot of Rum for everyone, indicating a Victory). After the Tots, everyone was in a joyous mood, happy as hell to have survived the whole affair, and words couldn't be found to express our feelings.

Our enthusiasm was short lived, because the next day we received orders, (again being browned off) to turn about and seek out the German Submarines who were to surrender. It was only a matter of a day or so when we encountered a U-Boat. As we approached it, it displayed a white flag on its mast on the Conning Tower indicating its surrender. We were at Action Stations, during this time, because we didn't know what the hell to expect, this was new to us, and we weren't about to take any chances with them. We pulled about 100 feet or so alongside of him, and our Captain on the Hailer issued their Captain or Ober lieutenant some instructions.

What they were, perhaps Naval protocol, and he complied. The sea was pretty calm, and it happened to be a beautiful day, so much so, that the German Submariners were all on the deck of the sub, and through our binoculars, we could see that they were in a pretty good mood, and I guess they were as happy as we were to know that the War was at an end. After a couple of days passed, we encountered another U-Boat, and again we went through the same procedure. Now we had two of them, and we were instructed by Wireless that we were all to steer a course to Londonderry Ireland. The weather was still holding out pretty good, it was about June and the weather was getting better. Nevertheless, we weren't taking any chances, and we remained on Action Stations the whole time. As I was saying, they, the submariners were all lined up on the deck of the U-Boat, seeming to enjoy themselves. and this particular day I was on the Port Lookout quarters by the Oerlikon, when all of a sudden, I see this Swastika on the mast of the Conning Tower, instead of the white surrender flag. I don't know what possessed me, but I wheeled around grabbed the Oerlikon, engaged it and started firing it. I was raking the water beside the U-Boat, when they started to go down into the Conning Tower just like a bunch of rats. Well, all hell broke loose, the Captain was hollering at me wondering what the hell I was up to. I yelled back at him and told him that he must be blind. He finally realized what was going on, and immediately got on the hailer again and instructed them to take that Swastika down and replace it with the white flag or we'd blow him out of the water. The Captain, later came up to me, and said I should have got the Gunner to do the job, I told him to go fuck himself, the war is over, and I'm still going to protect my ass, and he can do what he likes about it. That was the end of that. The crew got a big bang out of that.

When we arrived at the estuary of the Foyle River on our way to Londonderry with the two U-Boats, we waited a while for the Pilot to navigate us up the Foyle, when we got there, I was surprised as hell to see about 30 odd subs peered up on the shoreline of the jetties. They were lined up three abreast of one another. Christ, I said to myself, If I had known there were that many subs around the Coast of Ireland, I'd have become a Free Stater myself. Everyone of the crew were astounded to see what was before them. These submarines were all operating off the Coast of Ireland and that was where they were doing a lot of damage to the Convoys, as they hugged the Coastlines to avoid detection. This maneuver made it quite difficult for our Sonar to detect as the sound emissions from the Asdic kept bouncing off the Coastline and was the many reasons for the disregards from all the Sonar Contacts, and caused a lot of confusion in our operations.

After we had berthed the Submarines in their allotted spaces, and the Germans were taken away by the Naval Authorities, we thought that was the end of our

assignment, but the Naval Authorities had other ideas. The next day after we had tied up, we were notified that we would have to assemble a boarding party, to board the submarines to check them out, apparently, the powers to be were looking for the breach of their fast action turret gun, which we were to understand was one of their newer weapons. Another reason was that they thought that perhaps they may be booby trapped to blow them up while in harbor. Nevertheless, a boarding party was selected by the First Lieutenant (the Jimmy), seeing that there wasn't any Volunteers because it was a bit of a risky operation. It just so happened that I was selected along with my French buddy Dupuis and a couple of other seaman. We weren't too happy about it, but orders were orders, and away we went. We grabbed a couple of rifles, what for I don't know, and a couple of lamps and proceeded to board one of the subs. We checked the Gun out, and we found the breach of the Gun was gone, apparently, they had removed it and dumped it in the ocean prior to their surrender. Down the Conning Tower we went into the belly of the Sub. The smell was unbearable, it was a combination of diesel fumes, crap, musty odors. and cedar, of which some of the cabinets were made of, apparently to prevent insects and vermin. As far as we were concerned, we didn't see anything of importance, and not being familiar with Submarines, didn't know what the hell we were looking for anyways. We didn't see anything that resembled a bomb.

The only thing that we were leery of was the Cabinets in the Officers quarters. We didn't want to open them, in case they were booby trapped, so we elected to kick them open. As I kicked the first cabinet I heard the shattering of glass, so after inspecting the cabinet, I was surprised as hell to see a couple of bottles, that looked as though they had booze in them. Frenchy turned to me, and said don't do any more kicking. It looks like Champagne. Sure, as hell, he read the Labels they were all in French, and seeing that he could read the stuff, told me that this was Vintage French. We slowly opened another cabinet, and here there was another couple of bottles. We decided to sample them, we opened one up with a pop It was just beautiful, and having never ever tasted the stuff before I drank it like ginger Ale, lots of zing to it We proceeded to knock off the whole bottle, In the meantime, we were down there for a good hour, drinking away, We were out of our minds after the Champagne kicked in, and everyone up top were wondering if we had the biscuit, and kept hollering at us to see if we were alright. We finally decided to go back up, drunk as hell, but not forgetting to take a couple of bottles back up with us. I had the one bottle tucked in my tunic and Frenchy had the other tucked in his tunic. We scrambled up the ladder in the Conning tower, and there to greet us was the Jimmy. He was stunned to say the least. He noticed the bulge in my tunic, and said to me to hand it over. I said to hell with you, If I can't have it nobody can have it, so I pitched it over the side.

As the war had wound down, our leaves to London and Glasgow were a lot merrier because the bombing raids and the V-Bombs were absent and the people were confident that the war was at its end and Victory celebrations were starting to take place in many cities and the people were happier and quite relieved about it all. On my last leave in London, I managed to participate in one of the affairs. There was a huge dance hall in a place in London called Hammersmith that I managed to attend a dance one evening. I had never been to the place before, and I was amazed at the size of the place. There must have been at least a couple of thousand servicemen in attendance and having a ball, dancing up a storm. The band was terrific, and I was surprised at the calibre of music they played. The reason I like relating this story, is that it came at a time when some of the cockiness I had developed in the past came to an abrupt end. Before coming to the dance, it was always a common occurrence to get a little oiled up, so that I would be in a pretty good mood. Nevertheless, at the dance I was looking for a partner to twirl around with, and I spotted this great big WAC. (the British equivalent of the Woman's Army Corps). So, I asked her for a dance, and away we went. She was about Six foot something tall, and when we danced. I being only about Five foot and a half, my head seemed to nestle right into her bosom. We were a sight believe me, and she was lugging me around like a rag doll. When we finished the first set, we got into a bit of a conversation, so I said to her, your face is a little familiar, I know you from someplace. She said to me you never seen me before in your life. So, I replied cockily, that I've got a good memory for faces, and I couldn't forget yours. With that she just wheeled around and decked me with one punch I opened my mouth and said the wrong thing, I just took off, embarrassed as hell, because there was a helluva lot of people looking on.

After spending a few days in Londonderry, with the wars end, and having time to celebrate, things were in a bit of limbo as to what our next assignment was to be. It was during this time that I had received some disheartening news. The Captain of the ship had instructed my Leading Seaman of the white watch to inform me that I was to precede to see the Captain in his cabin. Not knowing what it was all about and anxious to find out, as I had said before my relations with him were a little bit strained, to say the least, I went. I sat down and he proceeded to tell me that he had some sad news for me. He told me that he had received news from Naval headquarters in Canada to notify me that my Mother had passed away. I was heartbroken, and stunned, as I loved my Mother very much. He tried to comfort me as best he could, but I was too upset about it and left his cabin. It took me about two days before I regained my composure and to think as to what I would do next. I finally asked him if it was possible to get back home, he said he'd see what he

could do. After a few days I approached him again, and he told me that because of the end of the War, it was practically impossible, because the mass movement of troops back to Canada had begun, and priorities being what they were, I didn't have a hope in hell of getting back. As a matter of fact, he said that all of our ships were detailed to assist in taking back some troops, and we had to stay in Port until we received our assignments.

With the comforting news of the War's end, all the talk on shipboard had changed to a somewhat lighter vein in discussions, and everyone was starting to get anxious wondering what the next move on the Navy's part would be in establishing when we would be returning home. We languished in Londonderry for quite a few days, and with the winding down of our usual wartime routine, we managed to get more shore leave. At other times we would be happy for it, because we had a different attitude about it then, we'd be making merry and getting soused as we thought it would be our last trip. This was different and we started looking at Londonderry in a different light. The usual pub crawling and our unusual behavior wasn't the same, it didn't seem to turn us on anymore and we were anxious as hell to get out of this place.

At long last the news arrived that we were ready to set sail for home, the reason for the delay was that we had to wait until they had supervised the arranging of accommodating other Naval personnel on board our ship for the journey back to Canada. Being such a small ship, we couldn't accommodate too many as we didn't have the room nor the facilities. How many came on board I can't remember. Nevertheless, we set sail with the rest of the escorts who also had a full complement of returning naval servicemen as well.

It was and uneventful trip, as there was no U-Boats to worry about. We didn't have to worry about radio silence, there was all kinds of information being transmitted, between all the ships, no worry about lights out or smoking on deck at night. Lookout duty was at a minimum, and the duties on board were minimized, as we had additional personnel. It was kind of a happy trip, and the weather was reasonable because it was late summer and we were steering a more southerly course, compared to the usual Northern routes which we took all through the War.

After 6 or 7 days we finally arrived in St. John's Newfoundland. It was very good time in comparison to the long and arduous trip with the merchantmen we had to escort across the ocean with their cargo in the past during the War, which took an average of 12 to 14 days, as the merchant ships only averaged about 4 or 5 knots. We discharged our passengers, (the naval servicemen) there, then we oiled

up and finally received our orders to sail for Sydney, Nova Scotia, along with rest of the escort vessels, where the H.M.C.S. Whitby and others were to be decommissioned and their fate was to be decided.

On our way to Sydney, the situation became very strange amongst the crew. It was eerie in a sense. Here we were a group of men who were together for the better part of a year, and who had established a bit of a camaraderie and friendship, spending many good times together now looking forward to a sad parting, along with the fact that our home would be taken away. After arriving in Sydney, the scene became more awry, as there was more Corvettes gathered there who were also awaiting their fate. I felt like I was taking the ship to a graveyard. What a sad situation, here they were, the " cheap nasty navy " that Sir Winston Churchill called the Royal Canadian Navy Corvettes, that battled U-Boats and the pounding of the North Atlantic, to protect the merchantmen and their cargos.

At Sydney, as we disembarked the Whitby for the last time, we were instructed to take all our personal belonging off the ship and report to the main concourse building, where we were to receive our final pay and train tickets to our destinations, wherever they were, to be honorably discharged. This was our last get together, and a few of us went to the nearest bar to drink a few pints and exchange future addresses so that we would be able to keep in touch with one another. Looking back now after all those years it became very difficult to communicate with any of my fellow shipmates, as their residences continually changed, and to be honest I can only boast that I managed to know the whereabouts of only about Four former shipmates.

It seems that as I am progressively writing this history of my time in the Navy, I keep reminiscing of the lighter and more humorous times and events that I experienced, and writing of them. To explain this, is that during my time, as well as all the others who served in the war, whenever we got together, whether it was in the bars, or whatever social events we attended, we never ever discussed or mentioned the hostilities or action that we encountered. All we ever talked about, was who was running afoul of the system, and the troubles that they got into because of their stupidities, and we always made light of the situations, and the stories were countless, especially of those and myself after our leaves. When you figure that every sailor had his own haunts and cities to explore, where they did their own thing. This was the frame of mind that everyone resorted to, and believe me, if it wasn't for that reasoning, we would have all succumbed to all sorts of mental disabilities and possibly hospitalized, or discharged from the Navy for LOIF (Lack of intestinal fortitude), no guts. The other attitude that was prevalent,

was the fact that your last leave, perhaps may have been your last leave, and to hell with it all, you never knew if you were the next casualty, and we were going to live it up come hell or high water. We were young and maybe didn't know any better., Even after the wars end when we were all discharged and settling back to civilian life once again, the talk in the Legion Halls and the different Veteran's organizations always centered on the humorous side. It was only after many, many years as we grew older, that the serious aspect of the war started to bother us a bit, The stories started being written, movies started being shown about the War, the Holocaust, and all the tragedies, Remembrance Days, you name it. This all comes back and the memories start to haunt us, and because we get older and more mellow the more effect it has upon us.

**Aye Aye Matey**