

## CHAPTER TEN --THE NEW WORLD

I joined HMCS CRESCENT on the 12th of April 1961, the morning after our arrival in Halifax. I was only on board for an hour or two before I was told that I was to be Second Officer-of-the-Day that day -- which meant that I had to stay on board that night. While I can understand the senior watchkeeper wanting me to be in the watch bill as soon as possible, I felt it was a bit much on my first day on board. Within a couple of days, we were off to sea for a week, so Shirley and I had little chance to get settled in.

As we left Halifax harbour for the first time, I asked a petty officer who was on the focsle with me, what the huge brick building was that I could see on the Dartmouth side of the harbour. With a straight-face he informed me that it was the Naval Officers College.

I subsequently found out that it was the Nova Scotia Hospital -- a mental institution!

After staying in a hotel for a couple of days, Shirley found a furnished housekeeping apartment. We decided we could use that as our base until we found permanent accommodation.

When I returned from sea Shirley had already achieved a considerable amount. She had no transportation, other than buses, which seemed to run very infrequently. Nevertheless, she had found an apartment -- better than we had ever seen before. She had also opened a bank account and arranged for a loan so that we could buy a car.

Our disenchantment with the first couple of weeks in this new country was somewhat countered by the people in Halifax. Bus drivers would wait for you. They would explain where to get off, where to transfer, and even attracting the attention of the driver of the bus that you were transferring to, so that he would wait for you.

We found Halagonians to be very friendly and helpful in any way they could.

Having been raised in another culture, it was very difficult to adapt to a new one. Even now, over thirty years after coming to Canada, I cannot honestly say that I feel totally Canadian. My culture and my way of thinking is British, and I doubt if it will ever be anything else. That has its advantages, because it allows me to see the best and the worst in both Britain and Canada, and I am not blindly nationalistic to one or the other.

Luckily for us, Shirley had taken driving lessons while we were living in Portsmouth. We were only here for a very short time before it became apparent that North America was a place that thought of

a car as part of your personal belongings. We found it strange that nobody could tell us what bus to catch, until we realized that people who used a bus, only knew the number of the bus they caught to go to work. They certainly didn't know the number of any other bus route. This was mainly because, other than going to work on a bus, they never used one -- they used their cars.

The Loans Officer at the bank amazed us. It was obvious that we could not exist very long without a car, so we found a dealer who gave us a price of \$1395 on a new Austin Mini. The bank wanted to give us just about any amount we wanted. They couldn't believe that we only wanted a \$1400 loan, whereas we couldn't believe that this man, who had never seen us before wanted to give us money, with no checking of references, or anything like that! It was a different approach from banking in the UK at that time.

We picked up our new fire-engine red Mini, and parked it outside our apartment so that we could see it. It was our pride and joy. We treated it like a baby, even to the extent that we would get upset when it rained on it!

Another thing we found strange was when we went to buy a chest of drawers. We wanted to pay cash for it, because that's the way we were brought up. You bought something if you had the money. If not, then you didn't buy it. The salesman recommended to us that as we had no credit rating, we should buy it over time. In that way we would establish a credit rating. He was correct of course, but all this was so new and strange to us.

I liked the officers in CRESCENT. Of the ten or so officers in the wardroom, we had three Masters' Certificates and one Mate's ticket. That was more Master's tickets than the average merchant ship. Of course, this was because those officers had taken the same route to Canada as I had. I wasn't so keen on the Captain. He was known as "Ricochet Red," due to his propensity for bouncing his ship off the jetty when he was coming alongside!

During our first summer in Halifax we went on a camping holiday to New England in our new car. We drove 3200 miles, which of course to us was a tremendous distance. In North America, that was not considered a long trip, but it was to us. We went as far as St. Catharines, Ontario, where Shirley's cousin and her husband lived. Camping was a new experience for me. Of course, the whole thing was totally new for us. Our trip to New England gave us hope that everything on this continent was not like Halifax.

Halifax, as a city, didn't appeal to us, but we liked the people. There were some lovely spots outside Halifax, such as Chester, which was about forty-five miles from Halifax. We did a lot of exploring during that period. One thing we particularly liked was that in the summer, it was summer. Not like Britain, where the summer weather

was always so changeable.

I remained in CRESCENT until July 1963. I particularly enjoyed the job I was given as Navigator, because this was my forte. As Navigator, you did it all. The Captain relied upon you totally. If he lost confidence in you, your days as Navigator were over. We made a couple of deployments to the UK and Europe, which were interesting and challenging professionally. It also meant that I managed to see Shirley's parents and my mother.

The best part about my time in CRESCENT had nothing to do with the ship. It had to do with somebody called Lindsey. Lindsey Clare was born on the 11th of April 1963, and the world became a better place. We adopted her shortly thereafter. She was a chubby baby with bracelets around her wrists and ankles, caused by her chubbiness.

Lindsey was a lovely baby with huge eyes, which is still her most striking feature. She was also a very placid baby.

At about the same time, I was offered a permanent commission in the Royal Canadian Navy, which I accepted, although my seniority was adjusted as a confirmed Lieutenant to April 1964. I was now a 31-year old Lieutenant with no seniority. Officers coming through the normal entry system could expect to become Lieutenants at about 23 years of age.

Shortly after Lindsey was born I was sent on a ten-month course, called the Junior Officers Leadership Training Course (JOLT). As I had spent a considerable amount of time at sea in CRESCENT, I welcomed the break.

In many ways the course was similar to the course I had done with the RNR in Portsmouth. It covered many of the same subjects, except that they were Canadianized. On the last day of the course I was the Guard Officer for the final inspection. So there I was, with the full pomp and ceremony of commanding a ninety-six-man guard, and the band playing, "Hearts of Oak." The Screaming Skull was right -- I did feel as though I was ten feet tall! I loved it.

It was while I was on that course that I started thinking about submarines again. I had heard that it was possible to pass the compression chamber test one day, and fail it a day or so later, if you had any sinus problems, or a cold. So I felt that I had nothing to lose if I applied for submarine training again.

I had the usual medical examination, and then on to the dreaded pot, as the compression chamber was called. This time I had no problems clearing my ears right down to one hundred feet. It was a very satisfying feeling. I then had to take a battery of psychological tests, followed by an interview with a psychologist.

As quite a few officers were applying for submarines, there was a lot of competition. Also I was now 31 years of age -- which was

the age of many submarine commanding officers.

The JOLT course completed in March 1964, at which time I was appointed to HMCS INCH ARRAN, a River Class frigate, built just after the Second World War. We felt that this was a good time for Shirley to make a long overdue visit to the UK, particularly now she could show off our new daughter to her family and friends.

In April, Shirley went off to the UK with Lindsey, and I went to join HMCS INCH ARRAN in Sorel, Quebec, where she was finishing a refit. We arrived back in Halifax in June, at which time we commenced work-ups to get the ship, and the ship's company, into an operational state. In the midst of work-ups I received a message, posting me to the United States Submarine School, in New London, Connecticut, to commence submarine training. I could hardly contain myself. At last, twelve years after I first became interested in submarines I was getting my wish.

Then the doubts set in. What happened if I failed the course -- because it was technically oriented, and I was no engineer? What would happen if I passed the course, but then found out I didn't like submarines? What happens if I failed the Escape Training? There were so many doubts. Anyway I was committed now, and I would just get on with it.

I think the biggest joy for me was writing to Shirley and telling her that she didn't have to come back to Halifax. Instead she would be returning to the United States.