



Class of 65 Newsletter

Edition 57-Feb 2013



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Editor's Corner

With everyone deep into winter hibernation, we don't have a lot to share with you this month. **Roger Chiasson** has come through with some more personal naval reminiscences and **Jim Carruthers** provides some information on a naval oddity from World War II.

But first some sad news received from **Charlie Emond** and repeated here:

C'est avec tristesse que nous vous annonçons le décès de Susan Walker, conjointe de Peter, après plusieurs difficiles années de maladie. Les obsèques auront lieu à 14h00, samedi le 2 mars 2013 à l'église "St John's United", 98 rue Aurora, (Beaconsfield) Montréal non loin du Boul. St-Jean entre les autoroutes 20 et 40. Consultez www.stjohnsunitedchurch.ca pour les directions.

Peter vous invite à participer aux funérailles et échanger durant la collation qui suivra; mais si vous n'êtes pas en mesure d'assister, il vous demande de faire une courte prière pour la paix dans ce monde, ce qui était une cause chère au cœur de Susan.

Vous pouvez aussi rejoindre Peter au: Peter.Walker@voith.com ou par téléphone au 514-697-5461

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Peter Walker's wife, Susan after a lengthy illness. The funeral will be at 2:00 pm on Saturday, 2 March 2013 at St. John's United Church at 98 Aurora

(Beaconsfield) Montreal, off St-Jean Blvd between Hwy 20 & 40.
Directions at www.stjohnsunitedchurch.ca.

Peter would love to see you for the service and coffee and cake afterwards; if you can't be there, then Peter asks that you please say a little prayer for world peace as this was a cause dear to Susan's heart.

Peter can also be reached by email at: Peter.Walker@voith.com or by phone at 514-697-5461

On a happier note, I received the following from **Fraser Holman**, "Thinking of you from Florida where we are enduring sunny temperatures in the 70s. The Hilliards, Holmans, Houghtons and McQuinns had lunch together today at the Tommy Bahama restaurant. Photo proof attached for your newsletter if you like. The Colfers had not yet arrived but will join in shortly."



We also the following upbeat update from **Ben Besner**, "I am downeast for the New Year. I have sons (and grandkids) in St John, NB and Charlottetown, PEI, and I own a house on the Atlantic in southwest NS, so we do a maritime sojourn every now and then. Down east for about 10 days this time around.

I'll be home Jan 7 or 8, back at work. I am the Hartzell Aerospace on-site Tech Rep at Bombardier, working on the design of Bombardier's new C-Series jetliner- having a blast!"

Excitement on the Bridge

By 6606 Roger Chiasson



Just prior to being awarded my bridge watch-keeping ticket, I had a somewhat harrowing experience on the bridge. HMCS Columbia, my first ship, had just finished a brief port visit to St. Lucia, in the Caribbean, and HMCS Gatineau, a sister ship, was completing a similar visit to another nearby island. While we were entering Castries, St. Lucia, since I was not on watch, I decided to take in the scenery by "goofing" on the upper deck. It was a beautiful, warm, breezy day in the Caribbean, but there was a fairly heavy swell. As we were approaching the harbour, I noticed a large number of fishing dories, each with two men, in fairly close proximity to our track. The dories would disappear from sight as they sank into a trough, but would then pop up, clearly visible as they bobbed on the peaks of the swells. I thought no more of this unusual situation until days later, when leaving harbour.

Because our departure from Castries would be as a "private ship", at least until we met up with HMCS Gatineau, the Captain decided to give us our own watch on the bridge, without a qualified OOW to oversee us. This was considered a low-risk approach to building our confidence for that fateful day when we would have to face the bridge as the OOW under normal "bedlam" conditions. After we cleared harbour, L.T. Taylor took over the

watch until noon, at which time I was to relieve him.

As per normal procedure, on my way to the bridge I stopped in the operations room to check if there were any radar contacts I should be aware of. The radar plotter on duty pointed out that, except for the radar picture of St. Lucia that we were leaving, the coast was clear of any other traffic. I proceeded to the bridge to commence the turnover of the watch. Part of a routine turnover is to review the navigational position. This required that I and L.T. face aft, away from the direction in which we were steaming, with our heads down over the chart table. I felt quite uncomfortable while we were doing this, because I recalled the images of bobbing fishing dories when we were approaching Castries. I therefore kept turning forward every few seconds to make sure that we were not heading into danger, or, better still, that we were not endangering anyone.

On the second or third check, I spotted a fishing dory with two men, barely more than 50 metres directly ahead, pop out of the swell! One of the men was pulling the starter cord on their outboard engine to try to get out of the way, but it didn't look like it was cooperating, and there was no time for them to take evasive action. It was our job (and, legally, our duty) to avoid a collision. Also, it was unlikely that the two men in the dory would survive being run over by a Naval destroyer. This was clearly an emergency, and my first test as an OOW under pressure. I immediately grabbed the microphone (our means of communication to the wheelhouse, where the helmsman was stationed), and yelled "starboard 45", which meant that the two rudders were immediately placed 45 degrees to the left. Thankfully, Naval ships are highly maneuverable, and we started to turn almost immediately.

I was relieved to see that the dory was going to pass down our port side. I rushed out to the port wing of the bridge, and looked down as the dory passed, just a few feet from the ship, with one of the men staring up at me and swinging his fist in anger. I couldn't blame him, but I was quite proud of the fact that I had averted a crisis. Then I got another sinking feeling (no pun intended). We still had 45 degrees of rudder on, and the ship was turning quite rapidly to starboard. At this rate, although we had

miraculously averted a head-on collision, our stern was about to overturn the dory! I immediately ordered "wheel amidships, port 45". The helmsman, who could sense the emergency at hand from the tone of my voice, and the unusual conning orders, responded quickly, and the dory passed our stern untouched.

By this time, the Captain, who had heard the conning orders and had sensed the ship's movement, arrived on the bridge, followed shortly thereafter by the navigator, whose cabin was near the wheelhouse, and who had heard the commotion. I apologized for failing to alert the Captain, and explained the circumstances. Of course, I was congratulated for my quick action, and things returned to normal. I'm sure the Captain was grateful that he didn't have to explain a collision at sea while he was in his cabin and he had an unqualified Sub Lieutenant on the bridge.

The moral of the story is that time "goofing" on the upper deck is not always wasted.

Iceberg Ship Habbakuk

Jim Carruthers forwarded the following extract on a story about this amazing idea.

It is 1942 - Hitler's U-Boats are ravaging merchant ships that Britain depends on for its survival. Enter a plan, for a gigantic warship, to help the Allies win the Battle of the Atlantic. It will be built in Canada and made from ... ice!

In late spring of 1940, nine and a half months after the war against Hitler began in Europe, the writing was on the wall: France had fallen to the Germans and Britain was now on its own in the fight against Nazi Germany.

On June 18th 1940, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, stood in the House of Commons, and spoke of what would come next. That summer, the Battle of Britain began. It was fought entirely in the air, the RAF - Britain's Royal Air Force - against the German Luftwaffe. In the midst of this, "Project Habbakuk" was born. A wild, some say crazy idea, for

a gigantic warship the British could deploy in the Atlantic: an Aircraft Carrier, built of ice.



Closing Notes

That's it for another month. As you emerge from your hibernation dens, I hope the Spring air revives your creative juices with topics of interest for inclusion in next month's newsletter.