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THE PRINCE SHIPS 1940-1945

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PART I: Acquisition and Arming of HMC Ships PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE ROBERT.  
Armed Merchant Cruiser Operations 1940-1943.

The Great War of 1914-1918 brought back an aspect of sea warfare that had not been seen on a large scale since the blockade of France in Napoleonic times. The destruction of enemy commerce, that largest and most important component of seapower, became a prime purpose of Germany in 1914, and to this end she developed the U-boat and the surface raider. This latter weapon is of particular interest in the history of ship design, for like commerce raiding itself, the surface raider was a full-fledged return to past principles. With the coming of iron ships, steam propulsion and technological advances in ordnance, the roles of warship and merchantman, once fundamentally similar and practically interchangeable, drifted apart. In general, steam meant speed and manoeuvrability for the man-of-war, power and endurance for the merchantman.

This disparity between the two was not as pronounced by the turn of the twentieth century as it had been fifty years earlier, however, for the continuing improvements in shipbuilding which had originally bred separation of types evolved two classes of merchant ship which could be converted for naval purposes. These were some cargo ships, and fast passenger liners. Cargo carriers, if they had uncommon endurance, could be handily armed as surface raiders and sent out on prolonged cruises prosecuting warfare against commerce far from any friendly base. Their appearance, inherited from peacetime occupations, gave them the positive advantage of a natural disguise--and one easily made greater by such tricks as telescopic funnels and masts. Many passenger liners were also vessels of great endurance, whose speed compared favourably with that of contemporary warships. They could become armed merchant cruisers, to either protect or destroy trade. World War I showed conclusively that both types were valuable assets to seapower, on both sides.

The lessons learned from the First War were not forgotten by the Admiralty, nor by the Germans. The development of military aircraft since the Great War would necessitate different tactics and armament, of course,

but the converted merchantman was expected to serve roughly the same purposes, in a future war, as it had in the previous one. In the event, Germany in World War II sent into the world's oceans nine converted cargo vessels as surface raiders, about one-third of the number planned, and the Royal Navy made no fewer than fifty liners into merchant cruisers.<sup>1.</sup> For its part, the Canadian Government converted three. Commissioned in the Royal Canadian Navy, these three were, for most of the war, Canada's only large warships. At the time, they were without precedent in the young fleet; looking back over more than a half-century of RCN history, they are still without peer; and this narrative is their history.

To meet any future requirements involving armed merchant cruisers or surface raiders, the Admiralty had listed the ships most suitable for conversion and had made arrangements with their owners whereby they would be turned over to the naval authorities on the outbreak of war. This policy echoed across the Atlantic. It was expected that the Royal Navy might wish to use facilities at Halifax, Montreal or Esquimalt for some of these conversions--machinery and manpower requirements had to be foreseen. As well, some Canadian officers pondered the clear advantage of getting warships in a similar fashion, for this country's navy, without having to build them. Here, the choice of suitable ships was limited; while many filled the specifications for size and endurance, few had the necessary speed. For those that did fit the bill, the RCN had no long-term, clearly defined policy of acquisition in case of hostilities. There was, however, an incipient tendency towards such a policy. The question came up in 1937, when Greece negotiated with Canadian National Steamships for that company's fast passenger liners PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE ROBERT. According to a memorandum dated 4 September, 1942, the Chief of Naval Staff opposed that sale on the grounds that the 6,900 ton Prince ships were potential armed merchant cruisers, and would be of value to Canada in the event of war.<sup>2.</sup> The sale foundered, partly on this objection, and partly because the terms did not particularly appeal to Canadian National Steamships. A new threat developed in 1938, when the company tried to sell

two of the Princes to Turkey. Two factors were responsible for the ensuing interest in the ships; the urging of CNS that they be retained, and the strong recommendations of the Honorary Naval Advisory Committee, composed of reserve officers and intended to give counsel on the strengthening of Canada's sea defences. Both parties submitted briefs to the Minister of National Defence urging that the Princes should not be sold out of Canada. It was argued that while they were uneconomical ships from the standpoint of their owners, the very speed which made them uneconomical was fundamental to naval needs. They could be employed as troop ships or armed with 6-inch guns for defence or offence against surface ships. The Chief of Naval Staff's memorandum of 13 December, 1938, stated that they ". . . could in an emergency be made very useful for service on the East or West Coast if we could obtain the armament for them".<sup>3</sup>

It is not known what action was taken on the matter, but it is a fact that the Princes were not sold out of Canada. An official of the Canadian National Steamship stated later that the company had been "prevented from selling them".

The Prince ships were built at Birkenhead in the United Kingdom by Cammell Laird for the Canadian National Steamships Company. They had been laid down in the prosperous years before the depression of the 1930's, and were commonly referred to as "Sir Henry Thornton's last extravagance". Their three funnels, three decks, cruiser sterns and accommodation for more than 300 passengers classed them as small luxury liners. When completed in 1930 they had cost \$2,000,000 each. They were identical in every respect and were designed for fast passenger service off the British Columbia coast. However, the decline in trade that followed made it impracticable for all three to be operated on the West Coast; PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY were sent back east for the Canada-West Indies service. The former had an interesting, if somewhat erratic career with Canadian National Steamships, making charter cruises as far away as Alaska. In 1932 she ran aground on the North-East Breaker at Bermuda and remained fast for six months. Her salvagers found that the cheapest course was to turn her back to Canadian

National Steamships, who subsequently got her off and refitted her for another four years' service. In 1937 she was laid up at Halifax.

The decline in trade also affected PRINCE HENRY, who was laid up alongside PRINCE DAVID at Halifax from 1937 to 1938 and then sold on a mortgage to the Clarke Steamships Company of Montreal. She was renamed the NORTH STAR and was put in service between Montreal and Botwood, Newfoundland, sailing chiefly as a tourist liner. She could not be sold without the approval of Canadian National Steamships, and consequently she was still available to the government in an emergency. These two Princes were the most prominent white elephants in the depression-shackled shipping trade. As for the PRINCE ROBERT, she proved both popular and profitable, and remained on the West Coast until the outbreak of war, ferrying tourists to and from Alaska. She was in better shape than her sister ships, having been well taken care of, but all three promised to be valuable auxiliaries, their engines were reportedly in good operating condition, and a speed of twenty-two knots made them among the fastest ships in Canadian registry.

When war broke out in September of 1939, the Naval Service lost no time in making arrangements for the conversion of the Princes. The only urgent problem was supplying armament for them, and on 9 September the Admiralty was asked if it would provide the necessary guns and anti-submarine equipment. The Admiralty had a supply of armed merchant cruiser equipment in storage at Esquimalt, and it was thought that the Princes could be supplied from this stockpile. In reply the Admiralty stated their agreement to the arming of two Princes, but did not think it wise to arm three when a larger and more powerful ship might become available and require the remaining equipment. The Naval Service then decided to convert PRINCE DAVID\* and PRINCE ROBERT, since these ships were owned outright by Canadian National Steamships and their requisition or hire would present few problems. It was still hoped to convert the NORTH STAR, ex-PRINCE HENRY, but her requisition depended on a change of mind at Whitehall.

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\*An interesting event of PRINCE DAVID's career, before conversion, is described in a footnote on page 117 below.

After repeated requests from the Naval Service, this change of mind was made, and the equipment for the third Prince was made available on 8 January, 1940. There followed a long and strenuous dispute with Canadian National Steamships and the Clarke Company over the price to be paid for the three ships; for it had been decided that outright purchase rather than hire would be more feasible. Negotiations continued throughout the winter of 1940, and it was not until spring that the Prince ships were transferred to the Naval Service. In the second week of February, 1940, Burrard Dry Dock Company began work on the PRINCE ROBERT and Halifax Shipyards took over the PRINCE DAVID. Due to purchase and contract difficulties, the NORTH STAR, now renamed PRINCE HENRY, was not put in dockyard hands until the second week of May. The contract went to Canadian Vickers Limited of Montreal. PRINCE DAVID cost \$739,663., PRINCE ROBERT \$738,310., and PRINCE HENRY \$638,223.86.<sup>3b</sup>

Long before negotiations for the purchase of the ships were completed, the naval authorities had inspected the liners, assessed their condition, and drawn up specific plans for their conversion. It was soon seen that the latter task would not be simple; the dockyards would have their hands full. The engines and hulls of all three were basically sound, and PRINCE ROBERT, which had had no accidents, and had been run constantly but carefully, was to present no problems; but the other ships were badly in need of repair. PRINCE DAVID was suffering from neglect, which showed itself in a very foul hull, rotten deck planking, and bulkheads that were rusted thin. But PRINCE HENRY, said the Director of Shipbuilding, "showed every evidence of having been run to death". Holes in the deck plating, crystallized valves and decrepit auxiliary engines augured an expensive refit as well as conversion.<sup>4.</sup>

The conversion entailed considerable structural alterations in all three of the former liners. In essence, they were to be cut down to the bare hulls and fitted with the superstructure of light cruisers. The promenade and boat decks were to be removed and the bridge houses were to be moved further aft to make room for two gun mountings. Cutting away of the third deck at the stern would accommodate the aftermost gun. The lowering of the wheelhouse and

the construction of a superstructure for anti-aircraft armament completed the most obvious changes. Being light ships, the Princes had to be stiffened with deck and hull plating, and the magazines, steering compartments and guns protected against splinters. Great changes had to be made internally, of course, to accommodate the crews and provide storage space. Watertight compartments nearly doubled the number of internal subdivisions.

As predicted, the conversion of PRINCE ROBERT presented few difficulties. Shipyards on the West Coast were not so pressed for labour and materials as those on the East Coast, where skilled labour was being drained for urgent repairs on the "four-stackers" transferred to the RN and the RCN by the United States. The RCN needed the PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY badly, but nothing could be done to accelerate their completion except the cancelling of non-essential alterations. It had been hoped to complete them by the end of October, 1940. Work was still being done on PRINCE HENRY at Montreal during the last week of November, and in order to get her to Halifax before the close of navigation, her completion was feverishly rushed. At length she commissioned in the RCN on 4 December, 1940, sailing for Halifax the following day. Inevitably she suffered from hasty work, and was in need of repair when she reached Halifax on 11 December.<sup>5.</sup> After lengthy repairs to her hull, PRINCE DAVID followed her sister ship into the RCN on 28 December, 1940.

As completed, the three Prince ships were nearly identical, modifications of a minor nature being due to the shortage of equipment or to the necessarily hastened pace of the conversion. The armament described in the following specifications<sup>6.</sup> was not complete at the end of the conversions, but was provided as it became available. PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID received their Colt machine guns in January, 1941, while PRINCE ROBERT's arrived several months later.

Standard displacement.....	7000 tons
Length extreme.....	385'
Breadth extreme.....	57'
Draught.....	20' 10"
Machinery.....	Steam turbine, two shafts
Full speed at deep draught.....	21.5 knots
Designed speed.....	22 knots
Endurance at 15 knots.....	7500 miles
Fuel stowage.....	1641.7 tons of oil
Armament.....	4-6" Mark VII 2-3" Mark I 2 Lewis guns 4-.5" twin Colt machine guns
Depth charge release gears	2
Number of charges	8
Complement	22 officers 219 men

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT commissioned on 31 July, 1940, four months before her sister ships, and served as a prototype for them. Her sea trials were expected to result in minor modifications for all three. This proved to be the case. Due to last-minute fittings, PRINCE ROBERT was not ready for trials until August.

She left Vancouver for Esquimalt on the 6th. On the 13th she departed the latter port for three days of trials, berthed again at Vancouver on the 16th. This shuttling between the city and the naval base continued through August, repairs and adjustments being made each time she reached Vancouver. The conversion and sea trials were thus carried out simultaneously, each affecting the other. It was realized that this was not an ideal arrangement, but the intensity of the war in the Atlantic created an almost desperate need for new ships, and in 1940 it was impossible and impractical to follow the more leisurely schedules of peacetime. Orders were given that only those defects impairing fighting efficiency were to be remedied. Thus the extension of ROBERT's bilge keels to lessen her pronounced rolling was postponed indefinitely. She completed her trials

satisfactorily during the first week of September, attaining a speed of 21.5 knots without a trace of vibration. She was found, however, to be four feet down at the stern, which required an adjustment of ballast. During full calibre firing practice, the blast from "B" gun had the disconcerting effect of blowing in the windows of the wheelhouse and charthouse, as well as their doors and wooden frames. Consequently she had to have her bridge stiffened by the contractors in North Vancouver. The lesson was well taken at Montreal and Halifax, where PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID had their aftermost guns moved forward slightly, the corners of their bridge houses cut off to minimize blast damage, and the windows of their wheelhouses replaced with portlights.

Meanwhile the rapidly developing tactical situation in the sea war against Nazi Germany was dictating the role that the three Prince ships would play. It must be remembered that the forebodings which led to the acquisition of the Princes were hypothetical. The ships were an attempt to prepare in some measure for what was likely to come. In the fall of 1940 it had not been decided definitely on what duties the Prince ships would embark when they were commissioned, for the war in the Atlantic was developing almost too quickly for ships to be given long-term programmes. The one thing that emerged with clarity in 1940 was the pressing need for more ships, ships for escort work, ships for patrols, ships for protection against surface raiders. As yet the German U-boats were concentrating in the Western Approaches of the United Kingdom, for Germany had begun the war with only fifty-seven submarines, but already there were indications that they would be working their way westward. How far westward they could go with impunity would depend partly on the number of escorts available to counteract them. The fact that they could not be stopped was accepted, but it was hoped that they could be controlled and subjected to severe punishment until more escorts, and incidentally more Allies, were available.

September 1940

The problem of protecting merchant cargoes on the seas was further complicated by the arrival of the armed merchant raider. By August of 1940 six disguised German raiders, comprising the so-called "first wave", were at large in the Pacific, South Atlantic and Indian Oceans.<sup>7</sup> When PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID were commissioned in December, the first ship of the "second wave" had already put to sea. Allied resources were further strained by the appearance of the commerce-raiding warship. On 5 November, 1940, while PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID were still in dockyard hands at Montreal and Halifax, the armed merchant cruiser HMS JERVIS BAY, escorting HX-84<sup>\*</sup> across the Atlantic, met glory and destruction when she steamed into the path of the pocket-battleship ADMIRAL SCHEER. Heading southward after this encounter the ADMIRAL SCHEER created a diversion for the heavy cruiser ADMIRAL HIPPER, which broke into the Atlantic in mid-December to join the depredations.

The raider activity in the outer oceans depended for its success on well-organized systems of supply. The ability to range far from shore bases without returning to replenish and refuel was essential to give the raider that mobility which enabled it to disrupt commerce and evade enemy warships. Refuelling and storing could be effected by transfer from a prize, but captured ships were never a dependable source, and to meet the needs of her raiders Germany maintained a system of raider supply ships. On the principle that use of the sea depends on control of bases, the Allies soon began to seek out these supply ships--which were, in essence, mobile bases--and almost immediately succeeded in making the raiders' task more difficult.

The same principles of sea warfare made it necessary that the enemy should be deprived of his commerce wherever possible. The war had already deprived Germany of most of her trade with North and South America, so that she was largely living off her own industrial resources and those of occupied countries. When "the balloon went up" in Europe in the fall of 1939, many German merchantmen were caught in neutral ports, and had to run the Allied blockade, which naturally followed, as best they could.

<sup>\*</sup>HX - the fast convoys from North America (Halifax, later New York) to the United Kingdom.

This situation was most serious to those ships berthed on the west coasts of the United States and the South American republics, for the great distance from Germany made it difficult to avoid interception. Many of them remained where they were for over a year, waiting for an opportunity to leave port or for definite instructions from Germany. They presented something more than a prize for Allied warships, for there was always the chance that they would be ordered to serve as supply ships for raiders in the Pacific and the South Atlantic. Whether a blockade runner would head for Germany or proceed to a rendezvous with an enemy warship could not be foreseen in advance, and depended on instructions received from Germany before sailing.

There were several German merchantmen caught in this predicament at the Mexican west-coast port of Manzanillo. On some occasions they had shown signs of restlessness, but had not made any determined effort to break out by the fall of 1940. Among them was WESER, a 9,472 ton freighter. She was a fairly new ship, equipped with diesel engines of advanced design, and consequently under constant watch by Allied agents. In early September, 1940, she was ordered to Japan, whose then-neutrality favoured the Axis powers. In the Pacific, she was to rendezvous with ORION, a German raider whose voyage of vandalism was to extend to the epic length of 510 days, 112,000 miles, and who was badly in need of every supply.<sup>8</sup> New signs of activity began to appear in the Mexican port, making it apparent that WESER was about to terminate her long idleness. She was never idle again, but her future journeys would benefit her homeland's enemies.

Still WESER's chances were good, for Allied ships in the Pacific and everywhere else were thinly spread to a fine and brittle veneer. There were cracks, and they showed. In fact, the main danger of interception to WESER was from PRINCE ROBERT, then conducting trials and experiencing the inevitable shipyard defects some 2200 miles distant. Actually the Canadian ship, though far from fully efficient, was quite capable of making an attempt to capture the WESER, and was specifically allocated to this task

\*At Ailinglapalap in the Marshalls.

as soon as it was learned that the German ship was preparing to sail. Canadian naval intelligence connived with the management of the Vancouver Sun to have the merchant cruiser's defects deliberately exaggerated in the editions sold in Seattle, where Nazi agents watched. PRINCE ROBERT, Commander C. T. Beard, RCN, sailed from Vancouver on 11 September, spent a day at Esquimalt provisioning and acquiring extra crew members, and went to sea on the 12th.

"On the day the Robert headed under forced draft for Manzanillo, the Sun reported that she had yet to begin her shakedown trials, would not be ready to leave port for at least another week."<sup>9</sup>

The ruse worked! and German spies duly forwarded the tidings of PRINCE ROBERT's delay, the while she boiled a frothy wake southwards. As her Commanding Officer put it, she was "in a very unready state" so far as training was concerned, but more than ready to try anything required of her. In her willingness to cope, and in lack of adequate preparation, PRINCE ROBERT paid faithful homage to the example of HMCS RAINBOW. The first Canadian warship in western waters, RAINBOW's fabled voyages of 1914-16, on missions similar to the one now begun, had met some small success,\* which PRINCE ROBERT hoped to emulate, and surpass.

PRINCE ROBERT's Commanding Officer hoped that her southward voyage would be undetected by any shipping, whether friendly or neutral, but this proved impossible due to fog along the coast, which meant that a given ship, when met, would be too close to avoid detection. In this manner the Philippines Motor Ship DONA AURORA, 5011 tons, was met on 14 September. The Commanding Officer went aboard and took off her Italian engineer as a prisoner. Three days later a merchant ship was sighted, and PRINCE ROBERT, maintaining course and speed in order not to frighten the stranger, asked for her name and destination. The ship was the British S.S. HOPERIDGE of 5222 tons, bound for Vancouver. Seeing this as an opportunity to send the prisoner and confidential letters back to port, Captain Beard sent a boat away. Unfortunately this action thoroughly alarmed HOPERIDGE's master, who made a signal that he was being attacked by a raider and threw his confidential books overboard. When the difficulty was straightened out, it was found that HOPERIDGE was actually proceeding to San Pedro, so boat, prisoner and mail

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\* See Appendix "A".

had to be sent back to PRINCE ROBERT. The consequent boat exercise, however, proved beneficial to the inexperienced Canadian crew.

After two days of rough weather, PRINCE ROBERT arrived off Manzanillo on the 18th and began her vigil. Her tactics consisted of patrolling about thirty miles off the harbour entrance in daytime, and steaming close to the entrance during the nights, when it was deemed most likely that the WESER would sail. The ship was darkened during the night patrols, and action stations were exercised frequently.

The night of 25 September began much as the previous seven, with PRINCE ROBERT closing the land after dark and patrolling the harbour mouth at 10 knots. What indicated that this night would not be as monotonous as the others was the sighting at 2308 of a large black object which moved out of the harbour and headed straight for sea. PRINCE ROBERT, then nearing the southern end of her run, turned toward shore to put herself in the shadow of the high land near the lighthouse. When the suspicious ship continued on her seaward course, PRINCE ROBERT moved to place herself between the harbour entrance and the stranger, which was then cut off from a landward retreat. Course was then altered outwards for a few minutes to obtain a silhouette of the ship. In the light of the rising moon she was identified as the WESER.

So far the drama resembled the classic struggle of a wolf and its prey, the cutting out of the quarry, the silent stalk and the blocking of any attempt to double back, all accomplished without alarming the victim. Now the human element in the drama appeared, and PRINCE ROBERT's searchlight beam stabbed through the night and transfixed the WESER's bridge. A command to stop was complied with immediately; WESER's Master, under the impression that ROBERT was a Mexican gunboat stopping him for running without lights, shouted back in Spanish. PRINCE ROBERT's cutter was filled with an armed boarding party, specially trained for this eventuality, and lowered immediately. The German ship was warned that all guns would open fire if she attempted to escape or scuttle herself, and a starshell was fired over-

head to punctuate the order. An armed party under Lieutenant-Commander G. B. Hope then took over the German merchantman, while Commander Beard triple-checked that the capture was being made legally outside Mexican territorial waters. The log reads:

"2345 Prize crew away in no. 1 cutter. Posn checked with Manzanillo Lt. brg. 023 dist  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mi. Sounding by echo sounding machine 165 fms. Position of WESER at time of interception and boarding Lat 18 59 N Long 104 23 W. Above position checked by Lcdr. Macduff and Lt. Macdonnell."

The prize crew found evidence of WESER's absolute surprise, for the scuttling system, although ready for instant use, had not been activated. Forty-three prisoners-of-war, including Captain Biet, were transferred to PRINCE ROBERT; thirteen Germans volunteered to remain in their ship and work the diesels, with which the Canadians were not familiar, on the long voyage back to Esquimalt. The Treasury Board at Ottawa eventually approved a payment of \$244.80 for their labour,<sup>10</sup> which must have persuaded these Germans to believe the old adage, "With enemies like that, who wants friends?"

During the passage, messages of congratulations were received from the Prime Minister, from the Honourable Angus L. Macdonald and from Admiralty.<sup>11</sup> On Friday, 4 October, WESER was herded into Esquimalt ahead of PRINCE ROBERT, displaying a cowed Swastika meekly subservient to the Canadian Ensign at her masthead. The captor, and her prize, found an enthusiastic crowd gathered. Since the seizure had been accomplished within sight of shore, secrecy was held to be impossible, and Headquarters had decided to give naval recruiting a fillip by allowing the press to ballyhoo the incident.<sup>12</sup> There was little enough for the Allies to cheer about in 1940--but PRINCE ROBERT's expedition provided a storybook combination of sound planning, cloak and dagger, and efficient maritime enterprise. As PRINCE ROBERT had been, for ten years, no stranger to Pacific Coast waters, and since her prize was the first large enemy vessel ever taken

PRINCE ROBERT takes WESER in prize

by an RCN ship on the high seas,\* it is little wonder that she became for Westerners indisputably the debutante of Canada's fast-growing fleet--a title well earned by the triumph of her coming-out. (For the greater part of the war, ratings on leave from NADEN or the Esquimalt ships were wont to put up for the week-end at a Victoria hostel operated for their benefit and called for the Navy's best-known and most-loved--PRINCE ROBERT House!)<sup>13</sup>. As for the prize: her cargo was sold for \$43,000., the crew were interned in Alberta after interrogation, and WESER herself made several runs to the United Kingdom as the SS VANCOUVER ISLAND before being sunk by a U-boat in October, 1941--when NSHQ collected over \$300,000 on the insurance.<sup>14</sup>.

PRINCE ROBERT's success on her first cruise naturally led naval authorities to consider her continued employment in the same type of operation. Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies,\*\* was still short of ships with which to block South American ports, and he requested that she be allocated to this task as a regular duty. Naval Staff agreed, and a programme was worked out for visits to Puntarenas,\*\*\* Callao, Antofagasta, Coquimbo, Valparaiso, Talcahuano and Puerto Montt. Some half dozen Italian and German ships were showing signs of moving, while about fifty others were still berthed in South American ports. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary oiler BISHOPDALE was to be put under PRINCE ROBERT's orders to provide fuel.

PRINCE ROBERT remained in Esquimalt only long enough to make good the defects that were uncompleted before she had sailed to intercept WESER. She sailed again on 10 October, under Commander F.G. Hart, RCN, and her first instruction was to watch for S.S. PRAHOVA, a German-owned ship which had sailed from Talcahuano on 27 September. PRINCE ROBERT made a thorough search off the coast of Lower California, but without success. It later developed that PRAHOVA had slipped into San Pedro, California on 23 October. PRINCE

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\*Appendix "A" lists the enemy merchant vessels which have been taken in prize by RCN ships.

\*\*Vice-Admiral Sir C. E. Kennedy-Purvis, KCB, RN.

\*\*\*Costa Rica (latitude 10° N), not Punta Arenas, Chile (53° S). No Canadian warship has ever been that far south!

ROBERT then continued on to Puntarenas, and to Callao, Peru. She paid calls at these ports, gathering information on the enemy merchant ships in harbour, estimating their condition and their likelihood of sailing. Leaving Callao on 28 October, she set course for Antofagasta, Chile, only to learn en route that the German merchantman OSORNO was considered ready to sail from Talcahuano. Course was therefore altered toward the latter place, and PRINCE ROBERT maintained a patrol off Talcahuano from 1 to 12 November. No breakout being detected, the new auxiliary cruiser entered the port to pay official calls. It was then found that OSORNO was not at that time in a condition to sail. As a ruse, ROBERT proceeded north along the Chilean coast and called at Valparaiso, thence returning for a six-day patrol off Talcahuano from 18 to 24 November. There followed a leave period at Antofagasta and a call at Callao to check enemy shipping. A rendezvous with BISHOPDALE was arranged but cancelled when it was reported that the HERMONTHIS was planning to leave Callao on 2 December.

A patrol off Callao was maintained until 14 December, when a visit to the port revealed that HERMONTHIS was not ready to sail. It was not until 30 January, 1941, that the monotony of the constant patrolling off the Chilean coast was broken again. While PRINCE ROBERT had been watching the approaches of Callao in December, the S.S. PORTLAND, reported to be carrying some twenty fugitives from the GRAF SPEE, had sneaked down the coast from Coquimbo and docked in Talcahuano.<sup>15</sup> After Christmas the Canadian ship maintained a month-long patrol off the port, broken only by brief meetings with BISHOPDALE for refuelling.

Word was finally received in the early hours of 30 January that the PORTLAND had sailed. PRINCE ROBERT, who was at that time about fifty miles northwest of Talcahuano, immediately commenced a curve search that would enable her to intercept the enemy merchantman. Soon this plan was abandoned, intelligence being received that PORTLAND was bound for Puerto Montt, a small port in the Gulf of Ancud some 300 miles to the south. Proceeding at full speed, PRINCE ROBERT arrived at the Canal Chacao early the following morning, and transited the Canal into the Gulf. The PORTLAND

was not in the Gulf, however, and surmising that she had preceded the merchantman, the Canadian ship lay in wait at the inner entrance to the Canal.

PORTLAND never showed up, much to the disappointment of PRINCE ROBERT's crew, who were beginning to feel the strain of the constant sea patrols. Apparently the intelligence concerning PORTLAND's destination was in error, for Admiralty later received an unconfirmed report that the German ship had rounded the Horn, refuelled from a tanker in the South Atlantic, and arrived in Spain on 4 April.

A respite in the form of a change of pace was in store for the armed merchant cruiser. Arrangements had been made in the middle of January for PRINCE ROBERT to be relieved on the South American patrol by the British cruiser DIOMEDE\* until such time as PRINCE HENRY, then slated for work-ups off Bermuda, would be available for these duties. DIOMEDE took over from PRINCE ROBERT at sea on 6 February, the latter proceeding to Valparaiso to take on provisions and fuel. Two days later the Canadian ship sailed for Suva, Fiji Islands, to commence a cycle of trans-Pacific troop convoys.

The armed merchant cruiser completed her first turn of duty as an escort before NSHQ had decided on a definite policy regarding her employment. Her services had been requested by the New Zealand Naval Board, which had every reason to be worried about the safety of shipping under its protection since the German raiders ORION and KOMET had sunk two ships in New Zealand waters in November, 1940, and gotten away leaving no other trace. Naval authorities at Wellington decided to escort two classes of vessels at least part-way across the Pacific: refrigerator ships with food for Britain; and liners on the run to Vancouver, which at this time were carrying large numbers of men to Canada for the Commonwealth Air Training Plan.<sup>16</sup>

Canadian help was requested, for there were too few RNZN warships to provide escort north of the Union Islands. NSHQ suggested that PRINCE ROBERT be detailed for one such trip while the problem of her future employment was

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\*Six 6-inch guns, 29 knots.

being discussed, and C-in-C America and West Indies agreed to the proposal. It was suspected that the Marshalls harboured a secret raider base. PRINCE ROBERT's task would consist of getting her convoy safely past these islands.

While policy was still being debated, PRINCE ROBERT was provisioning and acquiring a new coat of paint at Suva, where she had arrived on 27 February after an uneventful passage from Valparaiso. SS AWATEA, 13,000 tons, escorted by HMNZS MONOWAI,\* arrived on Sunday, 2 March, and was turned over to PRINCE ROBERT the following day. Nothing of interest took place on the voyage to Esquimalt, the only obstacle being a persistent head wind that reduced the convoy's speed. The two ships arrived off Esquimalt on 16 March, and were met by the recently-commissioned HMC Corvette AGASSIZ. PRINCE ROBERT then went into dockyard hands for a short refit.

PRINCE ROBERT's absence from the South American patrol did not mean that the policy of blockading enemy shipping had been abandoned by the Royal Canadian Navy. HMS DIOMEDE, who took over from her, was only an interim replacement, and it was expected that one of the other two Canadian merchant cruisers would, upon commissioning, assume the blockading duty. PRINCE HENRY had been taken over from Vickers on 4 December, 1940, still uncompleted, and sailed to Halifax for final alterations. Steaming slowly down the St. Lawrence behind an icebreaker, she suffered numerous minor defects, but she was badly needed in as short a time as possible, and the risks were accepted. Her arrival at Halifax on the 11th was the signal for renewed dockyard activity, and by the middle of January, 1941, her armament, superstructure and stores were complete. With her at Halifax was her sister ship PRINCE DAVID, which had been completed about the same time and was commissioned on 28 December after an unexpectedly lengthy conversion. Last-minute alterations on both ships occupied the remainder of December and the first few days of January; then PRINCE DAVID bumped her sister leaving the jetty and caused an extra day's delay.<sup>17.</sup> On 12 January they left Halifax

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\*Armed Merchant Cruiser, 11,000 tons, 8-6" guns.

together for work-ups off Bermuda. The crews of both ships were given a good introduction to the quick rolling characteristic of the Princes during the stormy three-day passage to Hamilton Harbour. Here PRINCE DAVID took on stores as they became available, and acquired a new coat of paint. Both ships spent five arduous weeks working-up in the waters off Bermuda. The role that the cruisers were intended to fulfill was amply underlined by the heavy boat work and gunnery practices. This latter phase of the training was intensive; for all the sisters shared PRINCE ROBERT's congenital difficulties with the six-inch guns, the quick rolling making it difficult for the layers to keep on target, while the age of the guns themselves made it necessary to devote more care to the armament than was feasible in a hectic engagement.

On 19 February, 1941, PRINCE HENRY, Captain R. I. Agnew, OBE, RCN, left Bermuda and proceeded southward to Jamaica. On arriving at Kingston on the 23rd she refuelled, and arrangements were made for an exercise programme with the "Caledon" Class cruiser HMS CARADOC. This programme, carried out on the following day, consisted of range and inclination exercises and a "throw-off" shoot. PRINCE HENRY parted company at 1402 the same day and proceeded to Manzanillo. The Panama Canal was transited on the 26th without incident, but on arriving at Balboa it was found that sundry minor but important stores could not be purchased from the United States Navy storehouse due to technicalities in the American Neutrality Enforcement Act. PRINCE HENRY's Commanding Officer called on the Rear-Admiral of the District, who brushed aside the legal complications and ordered the required items on the principle that the Lend Lease Bill, then under consideration by the American government, was as good as passed (it was signed into effect two weeks later, 11 March).<sup>18.</sup>

After loading stores, PRINCE HENRY sailed out into the South Pacific to take her place as PRINCE ROBERT's successor on the offshore patrol of South American harbours. Rendezvous was made with DIOMEDE at sea on 1 March, and the opportunity was taken to refuel from the R.F.A. oiler SAN ADOLPHO, who was accompanying the British ship. Course was then set for Callao, Peru,

PRINCE ROBERT's former stamping ground. In these waters PRINCE HENRY also, as had the other Prince, would have the oiler BISHOPDALE at her beck. The Callao patrol was maintained until 11 March, the ship keeping about fifty miles offshore and proceeding slowly in hope of intercepting any enemy shipping that might dare to sail. Then she was ordered northward to watch the waters off Puntarenas (Costa Rica) in the Gulf of Nicoya. C-in-C America and West Indies had reason to believe that the Italian merchantman FELLA was preparing to make a break into the Pacific. Such was not the case, and after five days of offshore patrol in the Gulf, the Canadian ship returned to Callao.

PRINCE HENRY's preoccupation with Callao was due to four German merchant vessels lingering there. Some or all of them, (MUENCHEN, LEIPZIG, MONSERRATE and PRINCE ROBERT's erstwhile quarry HERMONTHIS), were expected to make a dash for the open sea in the near future. PRINCE HENRY paid an official call at Callao on 24 March, anchoring only two cables from the line of four German ships. They were all vessels of the Nazi era, and all very much alike. HERMONTHIS, the oldest, which PRINCE HENRY would just fail to salvage for the Allies, had been built in 1935; all four were about 5,000 tons, smart-looking ships, equipped to handle both passenger and freight cargo. After a round of courtesy calls in the Peruvian city, and some discreet investigation of the enemy ships from a distance, the cruiser put to sea once more. She would, however, see some of these German vessels again soon, when they put to sea for the first time in over a year, and their last.

PRINCE HENRY had only been back at her patrol area for five days when word was received from C-in-C that something most definitely was up at Callao. All four Germans were fully fuelled, and in other respects prepared for a break-away. Their preparations included being "'wired' for immediate firing and demolition" in case of interception by the Allies. Captain Agnew believed that the ships' destination was Japan, and that they would therefore attempt to leave port through the northern exit of the harbour. PRINCE HENRY accordingly took up patrol in this area. On the night of 30 March she closed the entrance to within twenty-five miles, returning to a position farther out when daylight came.

At 1915 on the evening of 31 March the ship received news that HERMONTHIS and MUENCHEN had asked for permission from the port authorities to sail. PRINCE HENRY put on eighteen knots, and commenced a wide curve search. Starting at a point twenty-five miles off Callao, and assuming an enemy speed of eleven knots, the Canadian passed successively through the various positions an escapee would occupy steering any westerly or north-westerly course. At dawn on the 1st of April the ship went to action stations and swung back to the southward. Captain Agnew had changed his mind about "the probable speed of advance of the enemy and decided that for the daylight search [he] would allow ten knots";\* the search curve was adjusted accordingly, and the Prince soon pulled an April Fool on the fleeing merchantmen.

At 0622, twenty minutes after altering course, PRINCE HENRY's lookouts sighted a ship hull down distant about fifteen miles. The cruiser swung towards; the stranger swung away. PRINCE HENRY, with twice the speed, soon enlarged the dot on the horizon, and identified it as one of the Germans from Callao. MUENCHEN altered right away, and it became a stern chase. "Stop instantly or I will open fire" was made on the signal-lamp, for fifteen minutes. Then at 0700, at a range of six miles, PRINCE HENRY fired a warning shot into the water ahead of her quarry. Immediately the Germans set fire to their ship and took to the boats.

"By 0705 the ship was covered by a dense black pall of smoke with vivid fire in the superstructure and on all the hatchcovers. The first boat was observed to be down at this time and three boats were seen by 0715."

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\* Thus splitting the difference between his previous estimate of the Germans' capability, and that supplied by local Allied intelligence in Chile. On 24 March "the supplementary information obtained from the Intelligence Officers was . . . that owing to fouling it was probable that maximum speed of ships would be nine knots. My own observations did not confirm this opinion concerning speed. All ships had been careened at anchor [heeled over by shifting cargo, ballast and fuel, to expose, on one side at a time, as much of the hull below the waterline as possible], scrubbed and waterlines painted. I was of the opinion that all four ships would probably obtain eleven knots speed in a break-away." After catching the MUENCHEN, Captain Agnew came back to trust his original judgment, and sought HERMONTHIS "allowing a speed of advance of eleven knots, as the speed of MUENCHEN must have been about that." Nor did his evaluations or the navigator's tracks fail, in either pursuit.

At 0730 PRINCE HENRY closed to within four hundred yards of the flaming MUENCHEN, upwind. Forced to a quick decision, the Canadian commander opted, correctly, to find and seize the other German merchantman before attempting the unlikely salvage of this first one.\*\* The search to the southwestward was therefore continued, while the three lifeboats, two under sail, pressed eastward for neutral Peru and had already gained about two miles.

After five hours, the choice was vindicated. HERMONTHIS was no sooner sighted at 1225, hull down, than she burst into flames and swung out her boats, but turned away and continued steaming, fanning the blaze. At 1300 she stopped and lowered two boats. One sailed away in the direction of shore. The other, with the master embarked, had pulled a half-mile clear by 1343, when PRINCE HENRY came up to it and sent away a boarding party. The German boat's crew were ordered to return to their abandoned vessel; from about 1400 they, with the Canadian boarders, fought the blaze they had set. But the arson had been well executed, and the inferno predominated.

When, soon, the fire was reported out of control, PRINCE HENRY came alongside HERMONTHIS' starboard side, to help out and to prop up a twenty-degree list. This difficult operation took over an hour.

"PRINCE HENRY laid alongside by 1540, and hoses rigged . . .  
. . . taking a bad pounding; efforts to turn ships stern to sea  
unavailing."

Until 1800, while ten hoses and a large stock of manila lines were lost, the two ships ground together in a rising wind and swell. Hot work! in the smoke, flames, and cinders!\* The fire in HERMONTHIS raged unchecked despite the volumes of water poured into her, and spread to the oil cake

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\*Very reminiscent of ASSINIBOINE's struggle, exactly a year previous, helping HMS DUNEDIN (cruiser) salvage the burning German merchantman HANNOVER. While the larger Allied ship towed the prize away from the neutral waters off eastern Haiti, ASSINIBOINE steamed close alongside for a full day or more, fighting and conquering the fires. With sabotaged steering, HANNOVER yawed dangerously along. On the sixth day (13 March, 1940) the two Allies overcame HANNOVER's erratic steering in the close confines of Kingston, Jamaica, by securing one on either side of the German and rushing her along between them into port at six knots.

\*\*The other two German merchantmen that had also lain long at Callao, LEIPZIG and MONSERRATE, made a run for it on the same day as MUENCHEN and HERMONTHIS, but "were turned back by a Peruvian warchip, and set themselves on fire."  
("Sea War", II, paragraph 373)

HERMONTHIS also forced to scuttle

stowed in Holds Nos. 4 and 5, while her list increased ten degrees. It became obvious that the German would be a total loss, and that the severe beating PRINCE HENRY was taking was no longer justified by reasonable hope of salvage. PRINCE HENRY cast off, and at 1816 the boarding party, bringing their prisoners, reembarked from the German sea-boat.

A search was now made for the boat that had gotten away. It was overtaken fifteen miles off, and the occupants seized. PRINCE HENRY easily returned to her prize, at 2015, guided by the glow of flames and a red-hot hull. It was decided to sink her, and after thirty-three rounds of common and High Explosive ammunition had been expended HERMONTHIS slid beneath the waves, sizzling and steaming, at 0341 on Wednesday, 2 April, in position 12° 13' South, 80° 10' West. She had made only one hundred ten miles out of Callao--but that was better than the other fugitive, MEUNCHEN, had accomplished.

Or might MEUNCHEN's men, when the Canadian cruiser had steamed away leaving them in their boats on the water, have returned to their ship, doused the fire, and gotten her underway? Perhaps--for when PRINCE HENRY returned to the derelict's estimated position at 0800 the 2nd, twenty-four hours after the first encounter, nothing was to be seen of the MUENCHEN, or signs of her sinking. PRINCE HENRY began a square search to the northward, twenty miles to a side, and at noon sighted a ship on the horizon. It was the Peruvian cruiser ALMIRANTE GRAU, who when closed signalled that she had sunk the empty hulk of MUENCHEN by gunfire at 0955 that morning.

The Canadian immediately swung around south on her fifth, and final search of the mission, pursuing MUENCHEN's escaped ship's boats. At 1520, however, C-in-C America and West Indies ordered her to Antofagasta, so Captain Agnew sent the oiler BISHOPDALE into the coastal waters north of Callao to tag the fugitives, while PRINCE HENRY carried on with the new task. On 4 April BISHOPDALE found the German boats, and picked up those

of MUENCHEN's crew who had not managed to pull themselves within the neutral sanctuary of Peru's territorial waters.

This was PRINCE HENRY's outstanding operation of the war's first half. Like PRINCE ROBERT, unlike the other sister, she came to glory early. Her blockade of Callao may be reckoned a more successful action even than PRINCE ROBERT's capture of WESER the Fall before in that there were two quarries, and each had fled out of sight of land before pursuit, and each had to be separately located at the same time. Though HERMONTHIS and MUENCHEN were smaller than WESER, their combined cargoes were greater, and their total ages were less. Being modern, and being two, they contributed at least twice as much to the transport element of German seapower. And PRINCE HENRY's action seems to owe less to extraneous circumstance and the good luck of opposing an inefficient foe; overcomes many more, and more difficult, obstacles; depends more plainly on solid and sustained skills, navigation the chiefest. The main aim of these Pacific patrols was to interfere with enemy traffic (although bringing home a prize was always the feather in the cap which caught public attention, and a nice by-product). Keeping this purpose uppermost, with sound judgment, good seamanship and high enterprise, Captain Agnew's crew professionally tracked their targets, and step by step, methodically

". . . with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbed pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy"<sup>19</sup>.

ran them both to water, and seized their crews, but for a few who washed ashore.

- On 4 April PRINCE HENRY was ordered to establish a patrol off Coquimbo, on the Chilean coast. Authorities at Callao had informed C-in-C America and West Indies that the Norddeutscher Company ships BOGOTA and QUITO had applied for clearance from Coquimbo, and might attempt to break out on the 14th or 15th. For two weeks PRINCE HENRY patrolled in the area, but the ships made no effort to sail. On the 19th she was directed to Antofagasta to watch and beset that port for awhile, in hope of intercepting another enemy merchantman, the RHAKOTIS; but after ten days of uneventful

patrol, the Canadian was recalled and directed to proceed home to Esquimalt. Her South American tour, marked by months of monotony and the occasional excitement, was now at an end, at least for the time being. She left southern waters on 29 April and secured alongside No.2 berth at HMC Dockyard on 9 May, 1941. The passage was used for frequent exercises of boat and gun crews, so that by the time Esquimalt was reached the ship's company was still at a good level of efficiency.

While PRINCE HENRY was patrolling off the west coast of South America, her second sister ship, PRINCE DAVID, was equally busy with a different type of commitment on the east coast of the continent. HMCS PRINCE DAVID, Commander W. B. Armit, RCNR, began her operational naval career while her work-ups were not finished, illustrating the great need for all available ships in almost any given theatre. The training period at Hamilton Harbour was interrupted by convoy duty and patrols. On 11 February she left Bermuda with the fourteen ships of convoy BHX 109, which was sailing north to meet HX 109 some five hundred miles east of Halifax.\* At this period in the war, there was little danger from submarines so far west or so near American territorial waters; and the Prince ships were never intended as ideal anti-submarine vessels. PRINCE DAVID's task was to protect the convoy, laden with Admiralty fuel, sugar and aviation spirits, from commerce-raiding warships and disguised raiders, both of whom were known to be operating in the South Atlantic. PRINCE DAVID was thus the first of the Canadian Armed Merchant Cruisers to undertake the role hypothetically proposed for them at the war's beginning.

PRINCE DAVID turned over her convoy to the ocean escort on 16 February and turned back for Bermuda, the passage being used to complete the training of gun crews and boarding parties. Arriving at Bermuda again, and picking her way cautiously--not cautiously enough!--along the two-mile

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\* BHX--Bermuda to Halifax convoys. These joined with HX convoys bound from Halifax to the United Kingdom.

dredged length of Dundonald Channel just after dark, she ran aground. Shades of 1932! when as a civilian ship PRINCE DAVID had spent six months drearily washed by the same tides twice a day before finally getting free. That had been at the other end of the islands, near St. David's Head--which, however, was not called after our subject's misfortunes. This time she was off with only "slight indentations forward"<sup>20</sup> by 0530 next morning. She was docked, and necessary minor repairs were completed by 3 March, when she sailed with the nine ships of convoy BHX 113.

PRINCE DAVID left the convoy 8 March, and next day returning, was ordered to proceed to 26°N, 41°W. An enemy surface unit had been reported from this position. While the sighting was never confirmed by subsequent encounters, it was highly probable that the ship was the German disguised raider THOR, which had sunk one British and one Swedish vessel in approximately that area. PRINCE DAVID searched from the 11th to the 16th and returned to Bermuda without having found a trace of the enemy vessel. It is interesting to speculate that she thus escaped the fate soon to befall another Allied armed merchant cruiser.

The ship now laid over at Bermuda for ten days while a change of command was effected. C-in-C America and West Indies messaged CNS on the 19th of March that Commander Armit had been admitted to hospital:

"Much regret this as he has done so well in working the ship up and is so very keen on his work. In view of inexperience of second in command can you send a relief by air to Bermuda to take command of ship?"<sup>21</sup>.

STADACONA's Executive Officer, Commander K. F. Adams, RCN, was rushed out from Halifax,\* and on 26 March he took PRINCE DAVID to sea again to see if she could put a crimp in enemy raider activity in mid-Atlantic. She took a watch to the southward, gun crews waiting expectantly. Nothing was sighted; the ships put into Port of Spain for oil and water. Entering harbour she passed HMS VOLTAIRE, steaming into the Atlantic to establish

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\*In December, 1941, he was appointed from the ship back to STADACONA, in command.

her own patrol, to rendezvous with fate, and to provide a horrible example of what happens when the means is insufficient for the ends it is made to pursue. The Canadian cruiser was probably the last friendly ship to see the 13,000 ton Britisher.

On 1 April PRINCE DAVID left Trinidad to establish a patrol off the Para River, where two enemy merchant ships, the German NORDERNEY and the Italian MONBALDO, had been making preparations to sail. Proceeding towards the patrol area at midnight 5/6 April, she was abruptly ordered to steer 025° at best possible speed and search along HMS VOLTAIRE's track. C-in-C America and West Indies, had heard a German radio communique stating that VOLTAIRE had been sunk by an auxiliary cruiser on the previous day.<sup>22</sup> DAVID increased to 20 knots and headed for VOLTAIRE's estimated position at the time of the alleged sinking. On the 7th, in 14° 31'N., 40° 32'W., the Canadian entered a large, thick oil patch. Small bits of charred wood, cloth and newspapers were found, and sharks were seen; there was little doubt that a ship had gone down in the vicinity. This was also the opinion of the Admiralty, who assumed that VOLTAIRE had been sunk in action with the enemy. It was not until two years later that VOLTAIRE's fate was definitely confirmed. She had come upon the disguised raider THOR, and was outclassed by her smaller, faster and better-armed adversary, whose first salvo, fired from two miles outside VOLTAIRE's gun range, destroyed one of the latter's gun mountings, demolished the bridge, and put the wireless room out of action.\* Then the engine room was hit. The suddenness of the raider's onslaught is shown by the fact that VOLTAIRE made no message. One of the largest AMC's, she fought valiantly against her tiny assailant, scoring several hits, but after two hours of continuous shelling HMS VOLTAIRE began to sink. The raider, which had previously fought successful actions with two other British merchant cruisers, rescued 197 officers and men.<sup>23</sup>

VOLTAIRE's sudden disappearance and the mysterious circumstances surrounding it could hardly fail to impress the men of PRINCE DAVID with

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\* THOR--ex-SS SANTA CRUZ, 3144 tons, six-5.9" guns, 18 knots. VOLTAIRE--13,300 tons, eight-6" guns range 7 miles, 14.5 knots.

the danger of their role, and its importance in the war at sea. Their task was the same as that of their British comrades--the protection of trade routes--and they shared the same hazards. While the Prince ships were faster than their British counterparts, indeed, faster than the average disguised raider, and faster than THOR, they were undeniably out-classed in firepower: PRINCE DAVID's 6-inch guns would be a poor match for the enemy's 5.9-inch calibre armament, with superior German director gear; reasonable doubt concerning the result of an engagement between them could be entertained only in conditions that put a little extra speed at a high premium. Regrettable though the casualties among the armed merchant cruisers may have been, however, there was no room for self-recriminations in 1941. Non-aggressive countries have almost invariably gone to war unprepared, and the Allies had been forced to "make do" with the equipment and ships at their disposal:

The policy of fitting slow and vulnerable liners with a few obsolete weapons and sending them out to act as trade route cruisers . . . suffered the inevitable nemesis. But our shortage of cruisers had been so acute that the Admiralty could not find any more effective means of increasing their numbers, and the necessary modern guns and equipment to give the converted liners even a reasonable chance of engaging a German raider successfully simply did not exist in 1939.<sup>24</sup>

PRINCE DAVID was now ordered on a different mission. While still in the area where VOLTAIRE had sunk, she was directed to establish a patrol to the east and north of Martinique, to intercept a French merchant ship. It was almost a year since France had fallen, and the Nazi-dominated Vichy government had partially restored French merchant shipping to the point where it could be of substantial aid to Germany. The Admiralty wished at this time to test American reaction by intercepting a French merchantman that had loaded in a United States port. Actually the Americans had virtually chosen sides already, for Vichy ships in American ports were being deliberately held by a welter of red tape, frequent searching by armed guards and legal proceedings over cargo; but the more drastic action contemplated by Admiralty needed a "test case". The ship eventually selected for interception was SHEHERAZADE, 13,500 tons, which clandestinely left New Orleans without notifying American port authorities on 16 May, over a month after PRINCE

DAVID and other ships, under C-in-C, America and West Indies, had begun their patrol. During the interlude the Canadian and HMS CARADOC\* took turns patrolling off Martinique. On May 16, the day SHEHERAZADE left New Orleans, PRINCE DAVID was at Bermuda, where she had just returned from patrol. The following day she was ordered to sea again, this time in conjunction with the 6-inch cruiser HMS DIOMEDE. The latter ship was in a more favourable position, however, and when PRINCE DAVID sighted SHEHERAZADE on the 21st, DIOMEDE had been in contact with the merchantman for two hours. Consequently PRINCE DAVID was ordered to return to Bermuda, and the task of bringing the French ship into Trinidad was left to HMS DIOMEDE.<sup>25</sup>

After a week alongside at Bermuda, PRINCE DAVID was detailed to take Commander-in-Chief, America and West Indies, to St. John's for an operational visit. The cruiser left on 29 May, flying the C-in-C's flag, but was immediately recalled by an urgent signal from Admiralty stating that PRINZ EUGEN was known to be in the Atlantic. The German cruiser was located in Brest on 4 June, however, and on the 6th Vice-Admiral Purvis embarked again. PRINCE DAVID arrived at Halifax on the 10th of June, where she remained for six days, the visit to St. John's having been cancelled. Following her return to Bermuda on 19 June, she was detailed to escort convoy BHX 135. After an uneventful turn of duty with this convoy, she resumed the French Antilles patrol, taking over from HMS DESPATCH (cruiser) on 4 July. With the exception of a four-day voyage with BHX 137 from 5-8 July, PRINCE DAVID maintained this patrol until 8 August when she put into Curacao. Two days later she left for Halifax again as escort to the large troopship DOMINION MONARCH (27,000 tons).

On 24 August, eight days after reaching Halifax with her charge, PRINCE DAVID was ordered south to rendezvous with HMS CIRCASSIA, an 11,000 ton AMC. Their task was to establish a patrol to intercept enemy raiders and supply ships, which were thought to be operating in the central Atlantic at this period. At dawn on the 27th, before the rendezvous with CIRCASSIA had been effected, PRINCE DAVID sighted an unknown vessel in

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\*Cruiser, five 6-inch guns, 29 knots.

34° 30'N., 51° 47'W., approximately 650 miles east of Bermuda. The vessel, which was seen stern on in poor visibility at a range of 12,000 yards, was reported by PRINCE DAVID to be an enemy heavy cruiser, steering south-east at 25 knots. She did not reply correctly to PRINCE DAVID's challenge, and disappeared from sight after 50 minutes.<sup>26.</sup>

The identity of the strange ship remains a mystery. Admiralty considered that she might have been the THOR, but actually this raider had returned safely to Brest. Considering the disposition of German disguised raiders at this period, it seems unlikely that DAVID's ship was one of this breed; she was most certainly not a heavy cruiser. Four days later a British vessel sighted a German-type merchant ship near the equator, steering almost the same course as the one sighted by DAVID; from the description given, the vessel might have been the U-boat supply ship PYTHON, which was definitely heading for the South Atlantic in August-- or a supply ship for disguised raiders. Some rather fanciful stories arose from this brief encounter, and the authorities were hard put to counter newspaper reports that PRINCE DAVID had forced the ADMIRAL HIPPER to "turn tail", some even classifying the incident as a shooting engagement.\*

On the following day, 28 August, PRINCE DAVID came upon the 4000 ton British merchantman ST. MARGARET wallowing towards Trinidad at five knots, with engine trouble. When PRINCE DAVID closed, the vessel's Master asked for the Canadian's Engineer Officer to come over to have a look. Which he did, and reported he did not believe the ST. MARGARET could make it. Bermuda was nearest land, eight hundred miles west. Expecting that either U-boat or surface raider would sink her, if she did not founder first, Captain Adams decided to intervene, and took the merchantman in tow. The ST. MARGARET was brought into Bermuda safely on 3 September.\*\*

\*Viz. the press clipping Vice-Admiral Nelles sent to Captain Adams in 1944, apparently from a British newspaper: "We took after her at once, emitting loud yaps from our six-inch guns," said PRINCE DAVID's captain, describing the action, and, deceived by the aggressive spirit of the small ship, the powerful German fled at high speed." (in NHS 4000-100/14 NELLES). Thus the power of the press to do more--that is, to do other, than inform.

\*\* A hassle whether PRINCE DAVID deserved a salvage payment over this affair was no short one: it went on almost seven years. In mid-1948, NSHQ collected \$14,105. from the owners, of which \$3,427.37 was divided up among the ship's company. Due to delay in locating civilian addresses of men who had left the service when the war ended, the last cheque was not sent out until nine years after the event--11 September, 1950. (NSC8852-412/1 Vols.1&2)  
PRINCE DAVID 28 August - 3 September 1941

Next, NSHQ planned a refit in Halifax, but before PRINCE DAVID sailed north she was to play a part in events originating in another theatre of war. When German forces overran Greece in April, the Greek monarch and key members of the government were evacuated to Crete. From here they were again evacuated to Alexandria, and in the late summer arrangements were made to transfer the royal family to London. The voyage was a long and circuitous one round the Cape of Good Hope via the Suez Canal (the intense fighting in the Mediterranean prohibiting the shorter route through Gibraltar), across the Atlantic to Trinidad, and thence northeastward to Liverpool. The last leg of the passage was by far the most dangerous, and the King, in the troopship DURBAN CASTLE, 17,000 tons, was to be escorted from Trinidad to the western approaches of the United Kingdom by the 6-inch cruiser HMS NEWCASTLE and the AMC HMS QUEEN OF BERMUDA (23,000 tons). On 8 September this plan was altered to include PRINCE DAVID, who was to leave Bermuda on the 12th and relieve NEWCASTLE in 37°N., 45°W.

PRINCE DAVID departed Bermuda 12 September and headed northeastward to rendezvous with the convoy. Contact was made on the 15th, and HMS NEWCASTLE detached. Before the western approaches were reached, however, a September gale began to buffet the Canadian ship, and it became apparent that she would not ride it out as well as DURBAN CASTLE and QUEEN OF BERMUDA. Her excessive rolling and the resulting difficulties of manoeuvring decided her Commanding Officer to heave to on the night of the 17th. The convoy continued on, and effected its rendezvous with the western approaches anti-submarine escort. In December, 1942, King George II of the Hellenes bestowed on PRINCE DAVID's Commanding Officer the Greek War Cross, Third Class—recognizing the Canadian ship's stormy mid-Atlantic escort to the exiles.<sup>27</sup> This 1941 meeting of the PRINCE DAVID and the Greek king has no connection with the cup that once reposed in her wardroom, inscribed

THE ROYAL HELLENIC GOVERNMENT  
TO HMCS PRINCE DAVID  
IN REMEMBRANCE  
OF THE JOURNEY OF LIBERATION

18 OCTOBER 1944<sup>28</sup>.

which was the result of a later and happier trip, and one the monarch was not permitted to make.\* On 18 September PRINCE DAVID proceeded to Halifax, and berthed there for refit on the 20th, having been in commission about nine months, and won no glory against the enemy to compare with PRINCE ROBERT's capture of WESER, or PRINCE HENRY's interception of the fugitives from Callao.

While PRINCE DAVID was carrying out her duties on the Atlantic routes, PRINCE ROBERT was still at it in the Pacific. During a refit period at Esquimalt from 18 March to 17 April, 1941, she repaired minor damage sustained oiling at sea from AWATEA, and had her bilge keels extended to lessen rolling. The ship had finally caught up with her 0.5-inch Colt Anti-aircraft guns, and these were installed, which rendered necessary a slight extension of the after superstructure; and the High Angle guns were fitted with shields. The refit was prolonged two days when "A" and "Y" guns had to be transposed, so both would train properly.

When she returned to service after two days of exercises, PRINCE ROBERT was allocated to the same duty that she had begun just before her arrival at Esquimalt in March. The Commonwealth Air Training Plan was bringing several thousand Australians and New Zealanders to Canada, and the continuing presence of at least one disguised raider in the South Pacific made the escort of the convoys imperative. If required the AMC could search out such raiders in addition to her convoy duties. She sailed from Esquimalt on 22 April and set course for Suva via the Great Circle track, her intention being to pick up the convoy on 3 May. Shortly after she departed Esquimalt, however, NSHQ learned that four German airmen, formerly employed in Colombia, had embarked for Japan in the passenger freighter SS PRESIDENT GARFIELD, 10,500 tons, en route to Germany. With the tacit sanction of the American government, plans were made to remove the airmen from the freighter and convey them to Canada as prisoners of war. PRINCE ROBERT was accordingly diverted to Honolulu to fuel. She arrived there on the 28th, topped up, and proceeded the same day for the estimated position of PRESIDENT GARFIELD. At 1405 on

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\*See pages 138-41 below.

the 29th, PRESIDENT GARFIELD was sighted in 24° 40'N., 125° 15'W. and stopped by loud hailer. A boarding party went across to the American ship, whose captain seemed to know exactly what was required of him. The names of the four airmen were immediately handed over to the officer in charge of the party, and the airmen seized with despatch in spite of their efforts to look inconspicuous among the passengers. 28b

With the four prisoners of war on board, PRINCE ROBERT set course southeastward to rendezvous with SS AWATEA and her escort, HMNZS ACHILLES of GRAF SPEE fame. Rendezvous was made on 5 May. ACHILLES detached, while PRINCE ROBERT headed for Esquimalt with her charge. In spite of rough weather toward the end of the voyage, the convoy made Esquimalt on 14 May as scheduled.

While this passage of the Pacific was being made, policy regarding PRINCE ROBERT's employment was finally decided. C-in-C America and West Indies preferred that both PRINCE ROBERT and PRINCE HENRY be used to escort the troop convoys to Esquimalt in order to provide complete coverage during the long voyage. The New Zealand Naval Board did not consider this necessary, and proposed the use of PRINCE ROBERT only; this request was complied with by NSHQ, with the proviso that the cruiser be returned to Esquimalt by the middle of August.

PRINCE ROBERT sailed from Esquimalt after one night's lay-over, and headed for Suva to resume her convoy duties. On arriving there on the 28th, she placed herself under the operational orders of the New Zealand Navy Board. During the next two months, she escorted three troop convoys, the third, fourth and fifth originating in New Zealand with which she had sailed. These convoys were escorted past the Marshall Islands into the Central Pacific, and there left to finish the voyage alone. No incidents enlivened the convoy work; PRINCE ROBERT's duties required her to consume more fuel meeting and leaving her convoys than in actual escort. She left Suva with SS AORANGI, 17,500 tons, on 30 May; Auckland with AWATEA on 18 June. On 22 July, with HMNZS MONOWAI (AMC), she escorted the SS DOMINION MONARCH from Auckland bound for Canada and Britain with wool, refrigerated

products, and about 1200 Royal Australian Air Force personnel. This valuable vessel and cargo, after passing through the Panama Canal, were escorted from the Caribbean up to Halifax by HMCS PRINCE DAVID, which was operating out of Bermuda.\*

The tempo of life afloat changed somewhat for the Canadian sailors two days after they left DOMINION MONARCH on 25 July. Course had been shaped for Auckland at a moderate speed, when orders arrived from the New Zealand Navy Board for PRINCE ROBERT to return with despatch. Intelligence reports indicated that a Japanese vessel tied up at Los Angeles was loading spare engine parts for a damaged German raider in the Pacific.<sup>29</sup> It was thought that the enemy supply ship would rendezvous with the raider in a secluded cove at Easter Island. PRINCE ROBERT's task was to be the familiar "Seek out and destroy". She arrived at Auckland on 28 July, took on fuel, and sailed east the same day. Guns' crews were exercised vigorously on passage, while following weather pushed her along to her destination twenty-four hours ahead of schedule. Easter Island was sighted at 0600 7 August. The ship went to action stations, rang up full speed, closed and circumnavigated the small island. The coves and possible anchorages were thoroughly investigated, but no ship was seen.

Captain Hart, with his navigator, the Sub-Lieutenant (Special Branch) borne for intelligence duties, and an interpreter changed into plainclothes\*\* and went ashore to look around. They found no enemy--only the Island's new Governor, Commandante Pasquale Reid, Chilean of German descent, and the Catholic priest Father Sebastian Englert, German alright but as he stressed, no Nazi. The last ship seen had been nine months earlier--the once-a-year visit of the single vessel that came regularly to the Island. This intelligence was believed, and was indeed accurate; the Canadians found the folk ashore very friendly and respectful, though curious--formed the opinion

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\*See page 28 above.

\*\* Navigating Officer Lieutenant A.R. Dykes, RCNR. Intelligence Officer Sub-Lieutenant (SB) S. A. DeZall, RCNVR. Plainclothes--for anonymity, so if the raider did eventually call it could not be told for sure an Allied ship had been there.

they were essentially pro-British. They would probably have seemed friendly still, just as nosy---and pro-German---had the German disguised raider KOMET\* arrived instead of PRINCE ROBERT to relieve their distant, tranquil monotony.

By 1300 PRINCE ROBERT was underway again. On the chance that the original information had confused the identity of the island reputedly harbouring the raider, she set course for Sala y Gomez, a dot on the ocean to the north of Easter. Next day at dawn they quickly saw that no vessel could find an anchorage there. Then she sailed to Talara to refuel before returning to Auckland. Overnight liberty in the Peruvian port, 13/14 August, resulted in a tragedy. One of the Canadian sailors, returning to his ship drunk, had to be restrained from walking over the edge of the jetty, and died from concussion and alcohol.<sup>30.</sup>

PRINCE ROBERT left Talara at noon on 14 August, and steered for Auckland. At 2220, however, a message from NSHQ turned her prow north-west, towards Esquimalt---and into the path of the raider KOMET. KOMET\*\* had made the greatest exertions to get to sea, steaming eastward through the Arctic ice clear around Eurasia before issuing into the Pacific via Bering Strait. Once out, she had found the game, in the western Pacific, Antarctic and Indian oceans, hardly worth the candle. She had been at it for thirteen months, and had yet to take an Allied merchantman on her own. She did share with ORION the credit for seven sinkings, and had damaged the Nauru phosphate works by gunfire---which greatly incensed the Japanese, German's neutral ally, for they used most of the mineral produced there. Now, during 10-20 August, KOMET was cruising around south of the Galapagos Islands (about six hundred miles west of Talara), looking for prey.\*\*\* As

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\* By purest coincidence (for the message which sent PRINCE ROBERT on the Easter Island mission was based on a completely false hunch) this raider did happen to be approaching Easter Island, and was a thousand miles to westward on 7 August.

\*\* ex-SS EMS, 3287 tons, six-5.9" guns, 19 knots maximum.

\*\*\* The chart in Appendix B compares the tracks of KOMET and PRINCE ROBERT during this period.

PRINCE ROBERT put to sea on the 14th, the raider came upon and sank the British MV AUSTRALIND, 5020 tons, whose radioed raider warning, for which the freighter paid with a severe battering, went unheard.

PRINCE ROBERT's career now took on an aspect it was later to show more clearly, and never quite to lose--the suspense characteristic of situations in which two principals impinge, and both are ignorant of the other--a double-suspense. She steamed blithely northward--home for Labour Day! and the ensuing ocean drama is very like the case of the lift-bridge operator who, for practice, lifts the span, permitting safe passage to a high-masted yacht that didn't see the bridge; or when a huge safe, being raised to a tenth-storey window, opens, and lets two tons of lead ballast tumble out: it splits the sidewalk a inch behind a heel, whose owner strolls on, whistling, while the crane operator goes on hoisting. Years later, historians study and collate the records, and scent the drama. Revealing the 'close call', they whine that it was so near and yet so far. But a near-miss is itself interesting history, and has often been the determining factor, especially in naval engagements. So with PRINCE ROBERT.

Had she only sighted the KOMET--merely that--it would have been a strategical defeat for the raider, whose steadfast scheme was to meet only merchantmen, frustrating the searches, and thus escaping the guns, of Allied naval units. Had the two come into an engagement, far out from land with no third-person interference, the probable outcome has already been suggested in connection with PRINCE DAVID, VOLTAIRE, and the raider THOR.\* Even though the chances are good that the Canadian would have suffered heavily, she would surely have broadcast the raider's position, and no doubt caused some, even extensive, damage. Had the encounter fulfilled these two minimum specifications--a raider report, and some damage--then even if it came to the most tragic of conclusions it would remain in toto a gratuitous boon to the Allies' side, sharpening the focus of their naval dispositions, and decreasing the likelihood of further depredations from at least one enemy source. And PRINCE ROBERT's whole purpose in being at sea was to fight just such

\* See page s 26-7 above.

an action against superior materiel, and to exact these little costs.

Yet it was not to be. The meeting of merchant cruiser and raider remains in the realm of Almost. On the 15th of August PRINCE ROBERT made her closest approach to the enemy, crossing KOMET's bows from starboard to port at one hundred miles distance. At 1400 the 16th, when the Canadian ship stopped in the water to give the dead rating a burial at sea, KOMET had been left three hundred miles astern, but was steaming north in PRINCE ROBERT's wake. Next day the German captured intact the 7000-ton MV KOTA NOPAN, while the Dutch freighter's crew were at prayers - it being Sunday!! She was the answer to a raider's invocations, and her valuable cargo of tin, coffee, tea and spices was eventually gotten safely into a German-held port. KOTA NOPAN made a radio signal, but PRINCE ROBERT, ever five hundred miles distant and steaming away, failed to receive it,\* and went on home.<sup>31</sup> Within four months dramatic, impersonal Fate would again bring her to the brink of a vastly more important sighting at sea, and, again, change its mind at the last moment. The armed merchant cruiser reached Esquimalt on 24 August, and began semi-annual refit 8 September.

So far the three Prince ships had been committed to programmes in areas far removed from each other, and their paths seldom crossed during the first year of their commissions; but as far as Naval Headquarters was concerned they were most definitely a group, and their operational roles were distinctly related to one another. It was considered necessary that at least one ship should be available to C-in-C America and West Indies for the maintenance of the blockade of South American ports and for the protection of Caribbean convoys against raiders, and at the same time a patrol had to be kept up in the vast expanse of the Pacific. Periodic refits were essential, but they could not always be predicted, and this meant that only two Princes could be definitely counted on as operational at any given time. Hence when it became obvious, in the summer of 1941, that PRINCE DAVID would be required in Halifax for refit during the early fall, there arose an urgent need for PRINCE HENRY to return to the control of C-in-C A & WI as soon as her own refit at Esquimalt was completed.

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\*SS DEVON, British registry, 9036 tons, was apparently the only one to intercept this message, but kept on coming to be sunk by KOMET on 19 August. This was the disguised raider's last accomplishment.

HMCS PRINCE HENRY, it will be recalled, had arrived at Esquimalt on 9 May, after riding herd on German merchantmen in North and South American Pacific ports, keeping the corral gate and rounding up strays. She was taken in hand immediately for refit, and since C-in-C America and West Indies urgently needed her to strengthen his depleted Caribbean force, only repairs which affected her efficiency as a fighting ship could be undertaken. The damage she had received alongside the wallowing HERMONTIS was patched up, and her H.A. guns fitted with shields, but the desirability of a perfect job lost out to the necessity of her early return to sea. The refit was completed on 23 July. A month of seamanship exercises followed, as the crew had been watered down by a generous admixture of raw new-entries. PRINCE HENRY's departure for the West Indies was being put off to coincide with PRINCE ROBERT's return from convoy duty in the Pacific, until it was hastened on 24 August by orders to proceed at once. Enemy raiders were reported to be refuelling west of the Galapagos Islands--this report referred to the three recent successes of the raider KOMET, outlined above--PRINCE HENRY was to seek them out. Leaving Esquimalt, she passed her sister-ship coming in. PRINCE ROBERT might have had some chance of locating the enemy if she had begun a week earlier to cast her search net while only a few hours' steaming separated her from KOMET. Now Captain Agnew and his "Prince Henry's" would have a stab at finding what was as sudden as a squall, as stealthy as night, as sharp at the calculated disappearance as the haystack's proverbial needle--and as dangerous to the unwary searcher's hand. Compared with the pursuit of German disguised raiders--"ghosts of the high seas"--the chase of the wild goose had a quarry of regular paths, predictable behaviour, pleasant disposition, and a personality that sought the company of men with guns. The several days it would take PRINCE HENRY to get near the infected area would give the raider plenty of time to get clear. Which, of course, he did, and the swirling, heavy fog shrouding Juan de Fuca Strait as PRINCE HENRY steered seaward presaged the degree of her success on this search mission. Still, there were lessons to be learned in the vicinity of the Galapagos.

On Sunday, 31 August, approaching the equator, she received instructions to rendezvous with HMS DESPATCH, six-inch cruiser (Senior Officer West Indies Force embarked). The Briton was met the following day, and the two ships began a curve search off the volcanic Galapagos which lie squarely on the routes between Panama and the Antipodes. Early in the morning of 3 September, PRINCE HENRY sighted the lights of a steamship. On instructions of the Senior Officer, she detached and shadowed the unknown ship throughout the night. At daybreak guns' crews were closed up while the stranger was ordered to stop. The reply was unintelligible and the order ignored. PRINCE HENRY approached closer still, asked for the ship's home port, and on receiving a muddled hoist, closed to hailing distance. The correct reply was finally made.

A similar incident took place on 4 September, when PRINCE HENRY intercepted another strange ship. When approached, the merchantman turned away quickly and made smoke. Aldis lamp communication proved useless, and the stranger's reply to the challenge was obviously incorrect. Apparently as much in the dark about PRINCE HENRY's identity as the latter was about hers, the stranger broadcast a rapid series of "QQQQ QQQQ"--the Allied "disguised raider in sight" code message. PRINCE HENRY closed to four miles, whereupon the ship identified herself as the British SS SURREY (8500 tons). PRINCE HENRY came within hailing distance to lecture SURREY's master on the correct procedure of secret challenge and reply, but the Canadian ship might with more profit have studied and improved her own tactics for conducting these investigations. The methods being used involved unnecessary peril, invited a needless and absolute disaster should a ship being queried at close quarters suddenly decide it was a raider and open up at point-blank with guns and torpedoes.\* PRINCE HENRY was saved from the follies of her modus operandi by

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\* PRINCE HENRY was not alone in making this mistake; HM Ships LEANDER and CORNWALL, in contact with actual raiders, had already made, and survived, this easy error; HMAS SYDNEY, investigating the raider KORMORAN, would not (November, 1941). SURREY's action in making raider reports should not have been an assurance of innocence, for this was an obvious dodge the German also thought of, to throw dust in the eye of an Allied warship. The raiders, too, made a practise of identifying themselves with the names of Allied or neutral freighters similar in silhouette (Historical Section, Admiralty, Battle Summary No.13: Actions with Enemy Disguised Raiders 1940-1, published in 1942).

the failure of its object; KOMET had steamed back westward, and as the Allies ceased their search after a fruitless week, the German was joining a large congregation of Axis vessels far from the scene of her last sinking.\*

Overnight 6/7 September PRINCE HENRY called at Talara; on the 8th she broke off the anti-raider patrol with DESPATCH and proceeded north to Panama to carry out the original orders. She transitted the Canal on the 11th, and arrived at Bermuda on the 25th. Her first duty on joining the station was to escort the CAPETOWN CASTLE, 27,000 tons, from Bermuda to Halifax with troops for Britain. On the 29th, after a two-day passage, the convoy arrived at Halifax, where PRINCE HENRY secured alongside PRINCE DAVID. She was back in Bermuda on 2 October. From the 7th to the 27th she carried out an uneventful patrol of the doldrums with HMS CIRCASSIA, armed merchant cruiser, under orders to capture or destroy enemy raiders, supply ships and blockade runners which might be encountered in the area.

PRINCE HENRY, unlike PRINCE ROBERT, was not yet equipped with RDF(Radio Direction Finding equipment, i.e. radar), and it was now decided to remedy the deficiency. Accordingly she left Bermuda for Halifax 30 October, arriving at No.4 jetty, HMC Dockyard, two days later. Fitting of gear was completed on 14 November, and it was expected that the ship would return to Bermuda immediately. At the moment, however, there was an urgent need for temporary personnel accommodation at HMCS AVALON II, the depot ship of the Newfoundland Escort Force at St. John's, until the new naval barracks there were completed. No ship at St. John's or Halifax could be spared for this duty, and NSHQ reluctantly decided that PRINCE HENRY would have to be used. The allocation of an operational ship for such a routine job caused some heartburnings at Ottawa and Bermuda, but NSHQ could find no alternative, and she duly moored at St. John's harbour on 16 November. Meanwhile PRINCE ROBERT, whose West Coast refit was completed 8 October, was involved in the overture to a new war. Japan \*KOMET with her prize KOTA NOPAN, met raider ATLANTIS and her prize SILVA PLANTA on 20 September, near Rapa island almost 4,000 miles west of where PRINCE HENRY and DESPATCH were searching. On 21 September supply ship MUNSTERLAND arrived from Japan. The five vessels sorted out supplies together until the 28th. (Waters, pp. 158-160)

was continuing restless in the East, and Great Britain could not ignore the facts: she would be deeply involved if hostilities broke out in the Pacific; and such an eventuality would find her woefully unprepared to defend her interests there, committed as she was to the death-struggle in Europe. But that same struggle necessitated the maintenance of all available troops at home, and it was recognized that the garrison at Hong Kong, which was the British outpost closest to the source of Japanese aggression, could provide only token resistance to a determined attack.

The token should be offered, but beleaguered Britain could not afford any reinforcements. This was the hard-headed but common-sense view that prevailed at Downing Street through the first half of 1941. It was altered--unfortunately, as the event proved--in the summer, by staff pressure to strengthen Hong Kong. The British position seemed to have improved by the strengthening of defences in Malaya, and it was thought that Japan was weakening in her diplomatic toughness toward the United States and Great Britain. Consequently the British Prime Minister yielded to the suggestion that Canada be approached to provide two battalions as reinforcements for the Hong Kong garrison. The Canadian government agreed to send the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers.

The troops, some two thousand strong, arrived in Vancouver on 27 October, and embarked without their transport \* on the ubiquitous AWATEA.\*\* PRINCE ROBERT was to escort the contingent to Hong Kong, and in addition she was to carry four officers and 105 ranks of the Royal Rifles. The Canadian ship left Vancouver and anchored overnight in Parry Bay to complete compass adjustments and machine gun testing. Rendezvous was made with AWATEA in the Strait of Juan de Fuca at 1400 the following afternoon, and course set for Honolulu. The passage was made without incident, the convoy arriving at Honolulu for refuelling on 2 November. Manila Bay was reached on the 14th,

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\*The few vehicles that could have been taken in AWATEA arrived at Vancouver too late. The units' 212 jeeps, trucks, etc. never did catch up to them. They arrived by slow freighter in the Philippines as Hong Kong was falling. They were diverted to American use. (Stacey, Col. C. P., The Canadian Army 1939-45, Ottawa: King's Printer, 1948, p.276).

\*\*AWATEA had already been back and forth across the Pacific with PRINCE ROBERT several times. Now she had been requisitioned by the British Government to carry troops. After leaving the Canadians at Hong Kong her passages were rarely uneventful. She dodged a U-boat's torpedo, ran away from a disguised raider, collided with SS PRIDE, and cut the American destroyer into two pieces in another collision. That was in the first half of 1942. Converted to a Landing Ship(Infantry), she safely carried troops in the "Torch" assault of that year, and was sunk in the Mediterranean by German bombs seen after.<sup>32</sup>

and HMS DANAE (6 inch cruiser) joined the ships as additional escort. The passage from Manila Bay to Hong Kong was likewise without incident, although course was altered during the night of the 15th to avoid a force of Japanese warships reported in the vicinity of the Lemma Islands. Reaching Hong Kong on the 18th, the military personnel disembarked and stepped into history. Of the 1974 Canadians who landed, 556 never came back; the rest, after a violent and gallant fight, endured four years of durance vile before PRINCE ROBERT set them free when peace returned.\*

PRINCE ROBERT departed Hong Kong on the 19th, retracing her route. Manila Bay was reached on the 21st, Honolulu on 3 December. The next day, PRINCE ROBERT set course by the Great Circle for Esquimalt at an economical speed of 15 knots. The voyage was without incident until the night of 5-6 December, when a flare was sighted off the port beam. This was identified as coming from an American submarine, and the Canadian continued on her way. At 2100 on the night of the 6th, PRINCE ROBERT's position was approximately 33°N., 148°W.; at the same moment a Japanese task force was in position 31°N., 158°W., about five hundred miles WSW of the Canadian, and making an alteration toward Hawaii. On the following day planes from the Japanese carriers fell upon Pearl Harbour in one of history's greatest surprise attacks, and the most successful.

The relative positions of the Japanese fleet and PRINCE ROBERT must be noted, for claims were later made that the latter had in fact sighted the Imperial Fleet and could have helped to avert the "Day of Infamy's" evil consequences if the significance of the sighting had been realized. It is difficult to trace the origin of this rumour, for which there is no basis. PRINCE ROBERT could not have seen the Japanese force. Close scrutiny of her log and the track chart of the enemy fleet has been made;<sup>33</sup> it shows conclusively that the Canadian ship was never closer than five hundred miles to Admiral Nagumo's strike group. Perhaps the hearsay started with some of PRINCE ROBERT's crew members, who claimed their ship had sighted and passed a large number of unidentified vessels on the Hong Kong voyage. These reports, if they be not absolute invention, seem to refer either to the sighting of

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\* Appendix C describes the fate of the Canadian Hong Kong soldiers, and pages 81-86 below tell in detail how PRINCE ROBERT accomplished their release.

Japanese junks on the westward passage, or the order, given on 15 November, to alter course to avoid Japanese ships near the Lemma Islands. However, even if a force of Japan's warships had been sighted in the western Pacific, no special significance would have been attached to the incident, as Formosa and Indo-China were both under Japanese control, and the general area was frequently used by the Imperial Navy for peace-time exercises. A sighting report by PRINCE ROBERT from this area would not have destroyed in the least the effectiveness of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour--nor would ships in the waters southwest of Japan be likely engaged on an attack far to the east. In the North American half of the Pacific, on the other hand, Japanese battle fleets had no imaginable lawful occasions, nor any purposes pleasant to contemplate. And in these waters PRINCE ROBERT did in fact make an approach to the actual Japanese attack force, as is detailed above. On 6 December, at dusk, she was just five hundred miles away from the sneak armada. At sea, and especially in that vastest of oceans, the distance is not great. But it is almost five hundred miles below the horizon. So PRINCE ROBERT by this margin at one of the war's most crucial hours, missed a chance meeting with the Japanese fleet, at its most vulnerable as it manoeuvred to fly off the Pearl Harbour strike the next dawn, and before it committed its Government and people to the course of destruction. Missed by this much a dramatic intervention which could have rusted the hinges on destiny's door, then aswing; preserving for next-week's new Ally the great American Pacific battle-wagons, giving to Japanese leadership a puzzle, perhaps a check,\* and placing the ship itself in extremest jeopardy.

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\*The orders for the Japanese fleet during the long voyage to Pearl Harbour were ". . . to sink at sight any American, British, or Dutch merchant ship encountered . . ." and to abandon the mission and return to base if reported prior to 6 December. During the last day before the strike, it was left up to the force commander, Admiral Nagumo, to decide what to do if discovered. It was in this period that PRINCE ROBERT made her closest approach, and since Morison gives no hint as to whether Nagumo was one of those favourably disposed to the attack, or otherwise, it is impossible to calculate whether he might have been more likely to give it up, or to destroy the Canadian and go ahead. Whatever happened on the Pearl Harbour strike, it is most unlikely that the Japanese would have, if it had been thus thwarted, called off simultaneous attacks on the Philippines, Guam, Hong Kong and Malaya. (Morison, S. E., History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume III, Boston: Little, Brown, 1948, pp.80-92).

The announcement that hostilities had broken out with Japan was made to PRINCE ROBERT in Commanding Officer Pacific Coast's signal of 2142 7 December, which also stated that the United States Army transport CYNTHIA OLSEN, a freighter\* of 2140 tons, had been sunk one hundred fifty miles SSW of PRINCE ROBERT's position, in the vicinity of 34 N, 145 W. Speed was changed to "full ahead both" while the ship doubled back for her first operation of the new war, to conduct a twenty-four hundred square mile search of the merchantman's distress area. Though the night was clear, the sea calm and the moon brilliantly full, no trace of the CYNTHIA OLSEN, her survivors, or the Japanese submarine I-26 which had torpedoed and shelled her, could be found. The freighter was written off by USN authorities as "presumed sunk by enemy action"; no survivors have yet appeared; the fate of the ship was not authenticated until twenty years after.<sup>34</sup> The Canadian cruiser resumed her course for Esquimalt, and arrived without further incident on 10 December.

Canada's declaration of war on Japan soon drew all the Prince ships to the West Coast. A full scale attack on British Columbia was never seriously contemplated by the Japanese, nor really expected by the North American nations, but the RCN naturally took what steps it could to guard against such a development. The more plausible threats of submarines, raiders, or carrier-based aircraft conducting nuisance raids were to be met by close patrols off Esquimalt. The policy was ". . . first, to provide objectives which are vital to our war effort with efficient close protection, and second, to provide mobile forces capable of proceeding with the utmost despatch to any threatened point."<sup>35</sup> The Prince ships gave the support of their 6-inch guns to the three corvettes, five minesweepers, three armed yachts, and the boats of the Fishermen's Reserve, which were also assigned to COPC for these purposes.<sup>35b</sup> They did not just wait to be called upon by the smaller ships, but spent as much time as possible at sea on patrol - around Vancouver Island and up to the Queen Charlottes, from the deepest recesses of fiords where a U-boat might hide out to one hundred fifty miles offshore. Returning from her Heng Keng mission in December, 1941, PRINCE ROBERT was immediately avail-

able, based on Esquimalt. PRINCE DAVID's refit at Halifax was cut short,\*\* and she  
\*Or "steam schooner", a type of vessel peculiar to the US west coast lumber trade. Modern steam schooners depend wholly upon engines for propulsion, but resemble sailing schooners in general structure. CYNTHIA OLSEN was built on Lake Michigan (Manitowec, Wisconsin) in 1919, and converted to steam schooner rig about 1927. She had been laid up all through the 1930's before being chartered by the American Army.

\*\*She was in hand at Halifax from 20 September to 4 December. Her bilge keels were extended, she got an RDF set, and one of her guns was exchanged for a more satisfactory one. She was to have asdic fitted, but this was deferred because she was needed back on Caribbean patrol. After Pearl Harbor, however, she was hastened west, without working up.

was rushed around from Halifax forthwith. Captain V. S. Godfrey, RCN, brought PRINCE DAVID alongside at Esquimalt on the second-last day of the year. For the next eighteen months and more, the Asian threat kept these two Princes close to British Columbia; with one interesting foray into Alaskan waters. PRINCE HENRY was slower in being allocated thither, and did not arrive at Esquimalt for duty until exactly five months after Pearl Harbor. Her function as accommodation ship at St. John's,\*\* though, was abbreviated by several weeks, when Naval Service Headquarters offered PRINCE HENRY's services to American naval authorities who, coming into the war, had now assumed operational control of Allied warships in the Caribbean area. NSHQ's offer was accepted immediately, and PRINCE HENRY's career as a hotel, or barracks, was abruptly cut short on 15 December.

Three-fifths of PRINCE HENRY's complement had been discharged to provide personnel space while at St. John's, which meant that some time would have to be spent in working-up a largely green crew. The new Commanding Officer was Captain J. E. C. Edwards, RCN. After ten days of minor repairs at Halifax, she set sail for Bermuda for two weeks of WUP's and training. At the end of this period, on 13 January, 1942, she came under the operational control of Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic (CINCLANT). Three days later she departed for San Juan, Puerto Rico where, on arrival on 18 January, she began working under the orders of Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier.\*

PRINCE HENRY's first assignment under the new system was a patrol of Anegada passage, a gap between the Virgin Islands and the main body of the Leeward Islands, comprising a strategically important entrance to the Caribbean Sea. Her patrol extended from 20 to 31 January, with a stop for fuel at St. Thomas on the 27th. All ships met during the patrol were friendly, and no sign of raiders was found. The patrol was resumed on 5 February after a five-day stopover at St. Thomas. On the 10th she put in at San Juan, where she embarked 84 American sailors for passage to Trinidad. These were taken to Port of Spain on the 12th, whereupon PRINCE HENRY returned once again to the Anegada passage. Her patrols were uniformly uneventful until 22 February, when she was ordered to proceed to 14° 30' N., 64° 45' W., and rescue survivors from the American SS LIHUE, 7,000 tons,

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\* CINCLANT Admiral R. E. Ingersoll, USN.  
CCSF Rear-Admiral J. H. Hoover, USN.

\*\*See page 39 above.

which had been torpedoed. PRINCE HENRY, who was on passage from St. Thomas to St. Lucia, immediately altered course and headed for the position at best speed. Next day she reached the area and found nothing, because the original position given was incorrect. An amendment was received and at 1724 LIHUE was sighted. The scene was a hive of activity, with a tanker close by the LIHUE and an aircraft buzzing around overhead. While HENRY was four miles from the stricken ship, the aircraft was seen to drop bombs ahead of LIHUE. This was followed by a plume of spray, which HENRY's Commanding Officer considered might have been a submarine breaking surface. He asked the aircraft by lamp whether there was a U-boat in the vicinity, but received no reply. HENRY's CO was thus put in a difficult spot; his ship was hardly an anti-submarine vessel, and could not risk torpedoing. He was therefore forced to assume that a submarine was in the area, and that he should keep clear of the torpedoed LIHUE for the time being. The tanker had moved off, and PRINCE HENRY moved after it. When intercepted the tanker stated she had all the survivors from the LIHUE on board, that LIHUE had been struck in No.1 hold, and that her instability prohibited any attempt at salvage. After persistent questioning, LIHUE's master admitted that she might be saved; however, in response to a request for a volunteer steaming party, he refused to risk his crew.

Considering that LIHUE was still floating well, PRINCE HENRY's commanding officer decided to wait in the area until the following morning, when some men might be sent aboard. At 0800 on the 24th, LIHUE was down by the head and listing, but not measureably worse off than during the previous evening. PRINCE HENRY sent away two cutters, and the officers in charge reported that steam might be raised in the LIHUE and the engine-room pumped out. After strenuous efforts the pumps were started, and by 1735 LIHUE's engines were turning over. Course was set for St. Lucia, and the damaged freighter wallowed through the night at two knots.

On the 25th, however, it became apparent that LIHUE was losing her fight due to worsening weather and excessive water in her fuel tanks. The officer in charge of the steaming party recommended that LIHUE be taken in

tow. This was done by USS PARTRIDGE, a minesweeper which arrived on the scene at daybreak. Most of the steaming party returned to PRINCE HENRY, only a skeleton crew being left on the LIHUE. The Canadian cruiser then set course for Port Castries (St. Lucia) in execution of previous orders. About 48 hours later, USS PARTRIDGE arrived there with the rest of the steaming party, but without LIHUE, which had parted her tow at 2136 on the 26th and gone straight to the bottom. The Canadian sailors were disappointed at the result of their long exertions, at losing the satisfaction, prestige, and cash that goes with salvage, but they had gained valuable experience.

The appearance of the U-boat in American waters during February, 1942, forced a change in the tactical situation. Now the danger from disguised raiders took second place to the greater danger from submarines off the coast. For U-boat commanders, 1942 was the "Happy Time" all the way from Massachusetts to South America, and offshore sinkings showed that the title was well-chosen. This turn of events meant that ships like PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID were no longer as useful in Caribbean waters as they were a year before; they had not been armed or built to deal with an undersea enemy. Yet there was still one type of vessel with which HENRY's guns could deal effectively, and that was the U-boat supply ship. Mobile, well-stocked with fuel and provisions, a supply ship could treble the length of a submarine's patrol. Furthermore, reports indicated that U-boats were receiving help from small ports and fishing craft off the northeast coast of South America. PRINCE HENRY was therefore detailed to patrol the coast of French Guiana and the central Caribbean south of Santo Domingo. She left St. Lucia on 4 March, and carried out an uneventful patrol until the 28th, when she returned to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

After a four-day respite for boiler cleaning, PRINCE HENRY left Port-of-Spain on 3 April to resume her central Caribbean patrol. Her stint was devoid of incident until the morning of 12 April, when the S.S. EMPIRE AMETHYST was met and challenged. The British merchantman reported that at 0302 in the morning she had intercepted a W/T message from S.S. DELVALLE stating that she had been torpedoed in 16° 50' N., 72° 25' W. PRINCE HENRY increased to full

speed and headed for the position in hopes of picking up any survivors. While en route to the scene a Catalina aircraft was sighted, and the pilot, under orders from PRINCE HENRY, began a search for lifeboats down wind from the position of the alleged sinking. Thanks to efficiency and a good knowledge of signalling on the part of the pilot, two rafts loaded with DELVALLE's survivors were located within an hour. PRINCE HENRY picked up the survivors, who were little the worse for their ordeal, and learning from DELVALLE's master that a motorboat and a lifeboat under sail were still unaccounted for, directed the Catalina on another search. At 1905 the pilot dropped a flare to indicate that he had found the lifeboat. The motorboat, which had last been seen headed towards Haiti, could not be located, but DELVALLE's master felt that it had an excellent chance to reach land without mishap. PRINCE HENRY headed for Jamaica with her forty-four passengers, all of whom were fortified with warm showers, extra clothing and a tot of rum. She reached Kingston on 13 April.

The period of 14-20 April was occupied with training, ship's regatta, firing practice and softball games. No war duties disturbed PRINCE HENRY's week-off at Kingston; nor was the ship to return to the Caribbean patrol. Back in mid-February Naval Service Headquarters had requested that the ship be released, as she was required for work under Commanding Officer Pacific Coast at Esquimalt. The request coincided with the launching of the U-boat campaign in the Caribbean, however, and it was withdrawn. By March PRINCE HENRY was in need of a refit again, and this, along with the lack of evidence that U-boat supply ships were operating in the Caribbean, led to a renewal of the request. On 20 April the Canadian cruiser left Kingston and headed for the door into the war's quietest naval backwater, the north-east Pacific. She would not emerge from it again until D-Day. She passed through the Canal from Colon on the 22nd, and departed Balboa the following day. The uneventful tenour of an eight-day passage to San Pedro, California, was hardly affected by a distant rumour of war. A message came in reporting a U-boat off San Francisco. This intelligence was

received with equanimity; the Prince continued her cruise, but deigned to zig-zag from 2100 the 27th. The visit at San Pedro during 1-4 May was long remembered by the crew, who had had little enough entertainment since leaving Esquimalt the previous spring. The routine was holed by "make and mend"; the holes were plugged with various fun. The highlight was an afternoon dance, for the entire ship, attended by a swarm of movie stars (and starlets), at the posh Beverly Hills Hotel. Chief guest was Basil Rathbone, who had been a citizen of the Commonwealth before he became the very model of a man of the world, and organized some of these times for the Canadians. As an anti-climax, the ship arrived at Esquimalt on 7 May.

On reaching the West Coast PRINCE HENRY found her two sister ships already there, PRINCE DAVID in refit, and PRINCE ROBERT just returned from patrol.<sup>N</sup><sub>A</sub> These patrols, which are outlined on page 43 above, had five purposes:

- 1) to guard the focal points for shipping in and out of Vancouver, Victoria and Prince Rupert;
  - 2) to superintend sheltered waters where an enemy might hide;
  - 3) to reassure the voting public;
  - 4) to obviate American pressure, which might insist on taking responsibility for Canadian territorial waters unless the RCN was actively doing so; and
  - 5) to make credible publicized threats that would keep the enemy away.\*
- It appears that this last aim was fulfilled at least as well as any of the others were. For three and one half years, the patrols off British Columbia caught no sight of the enemy, and came close only once.\*\*

In the first half of 1942 minor alterations were made to the three ships as they became available for refit. PRINCE ROBERT was in dockyard hands from 28 January to 28 February, and received depth-charge throwers, but her complete asdic set could not be installed at the time because of missing parts. (It was finally installed during a brief stop at Nanaimo on 9 April). PRINCE DAVID was taken in hand from 28 March to 11 May, and was fitted with the same equipments. PRINCE HENRY took her place on 12 May, and remained out of service until 22 July. In addition to

\*As Admiral Nelles had written in 1935: "[Enemy] units operating in Canadian waters will be at a very great distance from their home bases and consequently most vulnerable to attack. If sufficient defence is likely to be encountered the enemy may be deterred. . . ."35c

\*\*In June 1942, when the 7000-ton SS FORT CAMOSUN was torpedoed 70 miles off Vancouver island, and Estevan Point was shelled, by I-25 or I-26. Despite a lack of heroics, the RCN's incessant surveillance off British Columbia was a justifiable naval precaution. Monotony is the hallmark of naval success. The sea-arm's worthiest aspiration is to achieve by steady, quiet routine aims which, if they must be spectacularly fought for, are gained at greater cost. That is why the Navy is the "Silent" Service.35d

having asdic and D/C throwers fitted, she received two Oerlikons to augment her anti-aircraft armament, the result of repeated requests by her successive Commanding Officers. Headquarters approved the fitting of Oerlikons for the other "Prince" ships as well, but since PRINCE HENRY was the only one in refit at the time, the fitting of the others' guns was deferred for the time being. In actual fact, the necessity of keeping at least one "Prince" at sea meant that the auxiliary cruisers were in "continuous refit", sundry minor items and repairs being fitted and conducted whenever the ships came alongside at Esquimalt. This system, although not without drawbacks, worked very well.

For the crew of PRINCE DAVID, the summer of 1942 brought play as well as the monotony of uneventful patrols. From 24 to 27 July the ship was used as a floating studio for the filming of "The Commandos Came at Dawn", a typical war movie of the 1940's. Mock bombardments of imaginary shore positions were carried out by PRINCE DAVID in Saanich Inlet, and equally imaginary shore batteries fired back, while movie raiders rowed the ship's boats ashore as hard as they could. A ship-handling problem peculiar to this operation was that in every scene where PRINCE DAVID was to appear herself, she could present only her starboard side to the camera. It was calculated that cinema-goers would not likely accept the huge sound truck that had been hoisted aboard, and reposed on the weather deck port side, as a regular item in Combined Operations weaponry. The ship's company co-operated heartily, and kept up a high standard of discipline and war-readiness despite the distractions of this fling with film fame, and the glitter of hob-nobbing with the film famous.

The employment of the Prince ships was drastically affected by the Japanese seizure of the islands of Kiska and Attu in the Aleutians during June, 1942. At a conference of American and Canadian naval authorities in San Francisco that same month, Commanding Officer Pacific Coast was asked if the RCN could assist in any operation to establish an American foothold in the islands. COPC replied that while RCN forces on the West Coast were limited, it might be possible to provide A/S escorts for troop convoys. The matter was discussed between COPC and the Chief of the Naval Staff in July, and the former suggested that the Princes, now

equipped with A/S gear, might serve the purpose. The matter was then left in abeyance, and nothing more was heard until 16 August, when suddenly COPC received the following signal from Commander, North West Sea Frontier:

"How many escort and anti-submarine vessels are you willing to spare for Alaska project? Desire ships report 20 August at Kodiak . . . ."

Owing to the unexpectedly short notice, COPC did not wait for NSHQ's approval and signalled that the three auxiliary cruisers and two West Coast corvettes could be available at Kodiak on the required date. Commander, NWSF would have preferred two additional corvettes, but he immediately sent his acceptance and thanks. NSHQ was notified on the 17th, and approval given to COPC's action.

Both NSHQ and the Naval Minister were well aware of the limitations of the Prince ships as A/S vessels. Mr. Macdonald in particular had strong reservations about risking the auxiliary cruisers, and considered that corvettes would prove more useful to the USN in this operation, but while NSHQ was of the same opinion, it felt that the arrangement had progressed too far to be revoked. COPC was instructed, however, to inform USN authorities of the limitations of the Prince ships and thereby avoid future disappointment. The reply was not too reassuring. The Princes were to escort convoys, in company with a small number of US destroyers, between Kodiak and Dutch Harbour, and thereby release other destroyers for screening duties with Task Force 8, which was to establish a foothold on Adak, an island in the Andreanof group. The armament, particularly the anti-aircraft armament, of the  
was considered inadequate for fleet work with the main Task Force. Thus the only enemy units the cruisers were likely to encounter were submarines, which they were perhaps least qualified to combat.<sup>36.</sup>

Arrangements went ahead, however, and PRINCE DAVID, (SO), PRINCE HENRY, PRINCE ROBERT and HMC Corvettes DAWSON and VANCOUVER were ordered to proceed to Kodiak on 17 August, hours after USN acceptance of RCN co-operation was signalled to COPC. On arrival the Canadian squadron

was to be designated Force "D". PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY departed Esquimalt in company at 0924, while DAWSON and VANCOUVER, then at Prince Rupert, proceeded to sea the following day. PRINCE ROBERT, Captain F. L. Houghton, RCN, set course for Kodiak independently, being diverted while on patrol off the west coast of Vancouver Island. She joined PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID before entering Woman's Bay, Kodiak, and the three cruisers secured alongside at 1230 on the 20th. The corvettes had arrived three hours previously.

Between 21 August and 25 October, the Prince ships escorted some 150 vessels between Kodiak and Dutch Harbour and small intermediary ports. The convoys, consisting of from one to a dozen ships, sailed about every three days, escorted by one Prince and, when possible, one U.S. destroyer as well. They sailed by what was called the "inside route", along the south side, or the convex coast, of the Alaskan Peninsula and the Fox Islands. After navigating the 350 miles of open water between Kodiak and Gorman Strait the ships entered a 180-mile long stretch between numerous islands and reefs, negotiating several narrow passages and channels between the Inner and Outer Iliasik Islands. After sailing through Unimak Pass on the Bering Sea side of Unimak Island, the convoys set a course roughly WSW for Dutch Harbour.<sup>37.</sup>

While four Japanese 6-inch cruisers, eight destroyers and about eight submarines were estimated to be in the Aleutians,<sup>37b</sup> the Canadian ships comprising Force "D" did not meet the enemy during their stint in northern waters. This is not to say that their work was dull, uneventful or "routine". Seamen, especially those who are used to convoy work in the open ocean, seldom allow themselves to be unduly impressed by anything that weather and navigational difficulties have to offer; but the men of the Prince ships were soon to deny vehemently that the perils of the Atlantic warranted serious comparison with the sudden gales, erratic currents and uncharted shoals of the North Pacific. PRINCE ROBERT's commanding officer was not exaggerating when he stated that the fine days between August and November could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

It was a moot question which was worse--the dense fogs that blanketed the whole island chain without warning, or the violent winds, born in the narrow passes and sweeping down on labouring convoys that had little sea room to begin with. Most of the convoy ships could not exceed six knots, and when buffeted by gales and beset with four-knot currents, frequently had to disperse and find temporary shelter individually as best they could. The "Princes" themselves, heavy and "blocky", were not outstanding for their manoeuvrability, and when forced to keep pace with a six-knot convoy, sometimes found steerage way so difficult to maintain that one engine had to steam at twice the speed of the other.

In spite of gales that sometimes reached force 10, there were surprisingly few mishaps. PRINCE HENRY's first convoy from Dutch Harbour to Kodiak was an exception. She left on 30 August with SS SILVERADO and SS KLAMATH, bound for Kodiak, and was joined on the 31st by the destroyer USS BRIDGE and SS SATARTIA (5,000 tons). The convoy was lost twice in dense fog, and the merchant ships made the mistake of deciding to proceed independently without waiting for their escorts. SATARTIA was found on the morning of 2 September aground in twenty feet of water. PRINCE HENRY made an unsuccessful attempt to tow off the merchantman, and it took two US destroyers and a team of divers to refloat her. SATARTIA was eventually able to proceed to Kodiak under her own steam and the watchful eyes of PRINCE HENRY's lookouts. On 30 September, while proceeding to an anchorage in St. Paul's Harbor, Kodiak, PRINCE DAVID struck an uncharted obstruction in dense fog, slightly damaging her propeller. This minor incident was the only damage to the Princes themselves, during their Alaskan tour.

The suspected presence of a Japanese task force and a small fleet of submarines added spice to the sameness of convoy duty. On 31 August, while proceeding from Kodiak with her first convoy, PRINCE HENRY attacked a suspected submarine contact, and thus became the first Prince ship to drop a depth-charge in earnest. Contact was lost, however, and later assumed "non-sub". On 18 September PRINCE DAVID made a more promising attack. At the time she was escorting two merchant ships in line ahead

toward Kodiak. The contact was first classed as doubtful and then as "submarine". The Canadian cruiser increased to 19 knots, ran over the contact and fired a pattern of four charges. Contact was not regained after this attack. This incident was also relegated to the limbo of "non-subs".

Although no Japanese surface forces were ever seen or located by the convoys and their escorts during this phase of the Aleutian campaigns, the possibility of meeting such forces and the restricted visibility produced a mild case of nerves among merchantmen and Navy men alike. An unintentional alarm took place in the fog-bound morning of 31 August, when PRINCE DAVID streamed a fog buoy for the benefit of the two-ship convoy astern. No sooner was the buoy streamed when the SS ELIAS HOWE sounded her emergency whistle, sheared off to port and fired a deluge of machine-gun bullets at the buoy, somewhat limiting its usefulness. PRINCE DAVID's commanding officer, with commendable objectivity, complimented ELIAS HOWE on her "fine degree of alertness".

The co-operation between the Canadian and American navies was excellent from the start in this isolated theatre, and was all the more noteworthy because of the trying conditions of convoy work. Dislocated schedules, scattered convoys and occasionally spotty staff work did not disturb friendly relations. It took a while, of course, for the Canadian ships to become accustomed to the American way of doing things, particularly the dashing manner of destroyer captains and the often casual signalling; but then, signalling was not one of the strong points of the RCN either at this period of the war. PRINCE ROBERT's first convoy to Dutch Harbour was a case in point. Due to laxness on the part of her radar operator she suddenly came face to face with about a dozen ships proceeding in the opposite direction. Captain Houghton had not been informed of any friendly ships on the route, and he was forced to act on the assumption that the unknown ships were hostile. The convoy was ordered to scatter, action stations were sounded, and the challenge flashed. It was repeated three times without reply. PRINCE ROBERT's captain was just about to shoot first and ask

questions later when the US destroyer forming the other half of the escort decided that the only way to clear up the uncertainty was to dash alongside the leading "enemy" and ask who she was. This was done, and the destroyer, who had had more experience in local operations, signalled back that the strange ships were friendly; in fact, an Allied convoy proceeding in the opposite direction. Apparently the men of PRINCE ROBERT were the only ones who wondered afterward what might have happened if the unknown vessels had been Japanese cruisers and destroyers.

On 30 October, 1942, the ships of Force "D" were released by American operational authorities. PRINCE ROBERT had made six round trips on the Kodiak-Dutch Harbour run and one rendezvous escort trip outside Kodiak, for a total of thirteen convoys; PRINCE HENRY had completed six round trips for a total of eleven; and PRINCE DAVID, five for ten. The corvettes DAWSON and VANCOUVER had seldom been in company with the Princes, being employed in anti-submarine patrols off Adak, the newly-established American base. They were to return to Canada with the Princes, but would be back in Alaskan waters in February, 1943. All five ships were at Woman's Bay, Kodiak, on 30 October, and before leaving were officially thanked by Rear-Admiral Theobald, Commanding Task Force 8, who referred to the Canadians as "brothers of the mist". PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE HENRY, DAWSON and VANCOUVER then weighed and set course for Esquimalt. PRINCE ROBERT did not leave Kodiak until the following morning, when she proceeded southward as escort to US Navy Tanker CUYAMA and the cable ship RESTORER, both bound for Seattle. The first two Princes arrived at Esquimalt at 1545 on 3 November. PRINCE ROBERT parted company with her convoy off Neah Bay and reached home at 1845 on the 4th.

All three ships spent from two to three weeks at the dockyard jetty at Esquimalt being scraped and painted; PRINCE DAVID's port propeller was repaired in addition. Trials and intensive exercises off Nanoose were conducted by each Prince and by 13 December all three were back on patrol off Vancouver Island. PRINCE ROBERT conducted her patrol only until 24 December, securing alongside the drydock jetty. PRINCE DAVID

carried on until 2 March, 1943, and PRINCE HENRY three days longer. The patrols were uniformly uneventful, and no trace of enemy craft was found. In fact, the patrols involved little more than challenging innumerable merchant ships and American vessels, and making certain that local fishing craft obeyed the rules of the road---always a difficult job on the West Coast.

While the three auxiliary cruisers were patrolling off the coast, their future use was being keenly debated at Naval Service Headquarters, and had, as a matter of fact, been debated for some time previously. The basic source of the debate can be traced back to the first months of their commission, when dissatisfaction was expressed by all three commanding officers over the outdated 6-inch guns provided from Admiralty stock and the quick rolling characteristic of these ships. It was felt that obsolescent armament and poor gun platforms made a less than desirable combination, particularly in combat with a disguised raider or other surface unit.\* At the same time it was realized, as the war progressed, that the danger from disguised raiders in the open seas and large enemy naval units near North American shores had greatly decreased; while the necessity of giving ships protection against aircraft was becoming more urgent. There was also a growing feeling that the Allies would soon establish a foothold in Europe itself, taking the offensive on the Nazi-dominated continent, and the "second front" would require better-equipped, more versatile ships. These considerations, then, specific and general, led Naval Service Headquarters to take a close second look at the Prince ships.

In the earlier stages, the debate centered around better six-inch guns for the ships, and modern director equipment. In late 1941 it was hoped that new equipment might be forthcoming from the Admiralty, but

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\*It was not true, however, that the guns in the Prince ships had been cast during the Boer War, and that the barrels were in imminent danger of bursting during firing. This rumour was prevalent in the RCN at the time. Actually the guns were of World War I vintage.

a current shortage made this impossible. When Admiralty did offer four Mark XII six-inch guns for each Prince in April of 1941, however, Staff thinking had changed in favour of lighter guns, preferably 4" or 4.7" high-angle, low-angle armament. Admiralty made a strong objection, resting their argument on the smaller splash visibility of the four-inch. Naval Staff replied that the splash of four-inch projectiles was actually greater at the director height of the "Prince" ships. Furthermore the thirty-five pound shell of the four-inch presented few problems in loading, while the 100-pound six-inch shell was difficult to load in ships of such rapid roll. The total weight of a 4" broadside from a ship carrying five twin mountings was 3,600 pounds at five salvos a minute, while that of the present six-inch broadside was only 2,000. Finally, the four-inch guns could be used against aircraft as well as enemy ships. Ideally, the "Princes" should have twin 4.7" guns, in Staff's opinion, but these were unattainable, and the four-inch armament could be made in Canada. Eventually, Admiralty withdrew their objections, albeit reluctantly, and plans were drawn up for equipping each Prince ship with five twin Mark XVI four-inch high-angle, low-angle mountings, two quadruple two-pounder pom-poms, six 20 m.m. Oerlikons, two additional twin .5-inch machine guns, and four depth-charge throwers.

At this point two important considerations altered the new plans. So far no one had advanced a use for the ships, and the Director of Plans suggested that their future employment should be decided well in advance of any conversion.<sup>38</sup> The Deputy Minister of the Naval Service noted that re-armament alone would cost \$7,000,000, and asked whether the ships would justify the expenditure. This prompted the Chief of the Naval Staff\* to suggest using the Princes as troop carriers and landing ships and offering them to Admiralty for this purpose. Modifications would have to be made to boats and davits, but the expense would be much less than for conversion to anti-aircraft cruiser, which was reckoned at about \$2½ million per ship.<sup>39</sup> Left in their present state they were mediocre fighting ships;

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\*Vice-Admiral P. W. Nelles, CB, RCN.

a relatively inexpensive conversion to Landing Ships Infantry would allow them to make a highly individual and useful contribution to Allied seapower for the invasion of Nazi Europe. Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff,\* recently returned from consultations with the Admiralty, reported the latter's approval of landing ships on 10 September. On that date the Naval Board recommended re-arming one of the Princes as already planned, and converting the other two to Landing Ships Infantry (Medium). The Honourable Angus L. Macdonald withdrew his reservations as to expense on the 21st, and the fate of the three vessels was decided. PRINCE ROBERT was to undergo complete re-armament and remain as an auxiliary cruiser, with a high anti-aircraft capability added as another string to her bow. PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY would be fitted out as landing ships for about \$450,000 each.<sup>40.</sup>

PRINCE ROBERT was the first of the Princes to be taken in hand. She had secured alongside the drydock jetty at Esquimalt on 24 December, and was moved to the dockyard jetty after Christmas. Here she was paid off and her ensign hauled down on the 31st. Destoring began in January 1943, and continued through the month. After removal of guns, RDF equipment and heavy lifts she sailed on 30 January for Vancouver, berthing at No.3 wharf, Burrard Drydock. For the next five months PRINCE ROBERT was no longer a ship, but a number, Job 6707, as dockyard hands swarmed over her, lifting plates and installing miles of wiring. The task was a slow one, for it took time for the conversion plans to arrive from the United Kingdom, and minor changes were added to the original plans from time to time. On 26 April the first of the twin four-inch mountings arrived, and PRINCE ROBERT began to look like a fighting ship again.

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\*Rear-Admiral G. C. Jones, RCN.

PART II: HMCS PRINCE ROBERT: Anti-aircraft cruiser 1943-1945.

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT, Captain A. M. Hope, RCN., recommissioned for her second tour of duty on 7 June, 1943, at Burrard Drydock in Vancouver. At the middle of the month, with civilian electricians still working aboard, she was sailed to Esquimalt for storing and painting. Sea trials and a work-up program followed, the highlight of which was the RCAF attacks on 12 and 14 July. The umpire of these war games ruled the ship well and truly sunk during a sneak dawn air-raid at 0530 on 12 July, blasted to the bottom by flour bombs. It was judged on 14 July, however, that PRINCE ROBERT might very well have survived the day-long series of sudden sorties that her sister-service flew against her.

It was to be hoped these results indicated a growing proficiency in anti-aircraft gunnery and evasive tactics in the fighting and conning of the ship, for in her new suit of arms PRINCE ROBERT was chiefly intended to oppose enemy aircraft. The most striking feature to catch the eye, watching this new anti-aircraft cruiser perform her evolutions, was the action of the four-inch high-angle, low angle guns. There were ten of these guns, disposed in twin centre-line mountings six aft, and four forward, and they elevated from the horizontal to nearly vertical. One officer who saw PRINCE ROBERT in action about this time wrote:

"... here she is again, with her nose turned up, effecting a retrouse profile, bristling with heavy, twin anti-aircraft mountings and [etc] ... together with all the other accoutrements that help to make things unpleasant for the Hun."<sup>1</sup>

In July 1943 it was yet to be discovered whether the huge sum which her conversion had cost would bring forth an efficient and up-to-date fighting ship in PRINCE ROBERT; it had at any rate thrown her into incognito. Even after the clouds and heaps of flour dust from the bombing had blown and been hosed away, those who knew her best from the old days as an AMC on Pacific patrol had now to peer closely and look twice to recognize the ship.<sup>2</sup>

On the 15th of the month at 1900, Commanding Officer Pacific Coast and the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia were embarked to spend the night and for passage to Vancouver, where they left the ship, having inspected her, at 1600 the next day.\* PRINCE ROBERT returned to Esquimalt on the 17th, and finished preparations for sailing to the European war zone. At 1057, 29 July, she slipped from Esquimalt bound for the United Kingdom via Panama and Bermuda.

The first leg of the voyage, Esquimalt to Balboa on the Canal, occupied eleven days of fairly uneventful sailing. Dawn action stations were exercised at 0500 on every morning but the last; "one mental case [was] placed under forcible restraint", and a great rain on 7 August nearly drowned several ratings who had deserted the hot lower decks to sling hammocks in the open. At 0800 9 August the ship was in the Panama Canal's southern end; by that evening, PRINCE ROBERT had completed the transit towards the Caribbean and had secured alongside at Colon.

Here PRINCE ROBERT took on fuel and a prisoner of war for passage to Britain, then sailed for Bermuda on 11 August. While on voyage to Bermuda

"the prisoner took to the deck for a few minutes, but hurriedly withdrew at his own request. It was necessary to put him in the chaplain's cabin . . . One rating was heard to ask another why I had placed the chaplain under guard."

Arriving in the forenoon the ship spent the daylight hours of 16 August in South Basin, Ireland Island, while Captain Hope planned the onward passage,<sup>3</sup> through waters within reach of enemy U-boats and aircraft, with C.-in-C. Bermuda Rear-Admiral Curtis and his staff. At 1700 she sailed. No German forces were in fact encountered during this last leg, and PRINCE ROBERT anchored off Greenock in the Clyde at 1700, 23 August, 1943.\*\*

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\*COPC--Commodore W. J. R. Beech, RCN.  
Lt. Gov.--Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Woodward.

\*\*"The PRINCE ROBERT, after her conversion as an Anti-aircraft ship. . . arrived in the United Kingdom too late to be used as a Headquarters ship for General Montgomery or General Eisenhower in the Mediterranean theatre during the invasion of Sicily and Italy." (NHS Narrative B, Draft C, v. I, p. 25).

Having thus rushed from Esquimalt to the wars, PRINCE ROBERT now dwelt a pause of two full months before putting to sea on active duty again. The causes of this delay were her armament, her asdic, and labor unrest on Clydeside.

Early in September the Gunnery staff of HMS EXCELLENT reported on PRINCE ROBERT's gunnery and director arrangements with a total of forty-seven recommendations for improvement--thirteen of them essential items, another twenty-three which could wait, and eleven which the ship's own officers proposed, but which EXCELLENT did not recommend as essential. In general, this report reads:

"HMCS Prince Robert has been well fitted out and is in an adequate state of fighting efficiency, with the exception of a warning aircraft Radar set and any aircraft plotting or fighter director arrangements."<sup>4</sup>

During September, some of the essential alterations and additions were carried out. Radar type 291 and two types of 242 IFF\* were installed, air plotting arrangements were set up, and six more Oerlikon guns were put into the ship. PRINCE ROBERT now had twelve of these weapons,<sup>5</sup> so disposed as to fire seven on each broadside, and all overhead. A labour dispute in several of the Clyde shipyards halted work for a time while the new Oerlikons were being fitted.<sup>6</sup>

Also retarding PRINCE ROBERT's return to active service was the condition of her asdic gear. For six days in the middle of September, the ship was laid up in Admiralty Floating Drydock No.4 at Greenock on this account. Two punctures were found in the dome, and the whole apparatus had worked loose off the hull during the passage from the West Coast. The dome was repaired, and anti-fouling, anti-corrosive composition on the ship's bottom was touched up. During this long lay-up, many of the men were sent to Royal Navy schools.

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\*Identification Friend or Foe; it was a radio set which sent out its signal simultaneous with the radar impulse. Friendly aircraft had IFF 'responders' on the same frequency that amplified the signal and sent it back to appear as 'friendly' on the transmitter's radar presentation.

Then came post-refit work-ups, 6-16 October, and inspection on the 17th by Rear-Admiral R. A. S. Hill. On 18 October PRINCE ROBERT was allocated to Gibraltar "primarily to provide anti-aircraft escort to personnel convoys",<sup>7</sup> and at long last, having arrived in the United Kingdom on 23 August, the ship on 20 October put to sea to become one more link in the chain of Allied seapower and, perchance, to engage the foe.

Whether or not PRINCE ROBERT would actually meet the enemy very often on the North Atlantic convcy routes in the fall of 1943 was problematical. For most of the war, of course, there had been plenty of hostile forces in these waters; until well into 1943 the German U-boats' determined onslaught had been relentlessly wresting from our grasp the vital ability to pass supplies across the ocean.<sup>8</sup> But the war was one of resources and invention--diligent application could reverse the advantages held by one side--and in the first five months of 1943 the Allies at last began to take a heavy toll of enemy submarines. Our new radar,<sup>9</sup> greater air cover for convoy operations, and the formation of "hunter-killer" groups were the chief factors in this improvement.

During January to May of the year under review Allied merchant vessel losses declined to an average sixty per month, while U-boat sinkings in a corresponding period rose to twenty-three.<sup>10</sup> These trends clearly indicated that Admiral Doenitz, German Commander-in-Chief, must soon either refurbish his boats, or lose them all, or call them off. May decided him. In that month, Germany sank fifty merchantmen, but lost forty-seven submarines! This was catastrophe for the carefully husbanded underwater fleet;<sup>11</sup> Doenitz withdrew his craft entirely from the convoy lanes.<sup>12</sup>

The scales of the anti-submarine war had thus, as PRINCE ROBERT was preparing to re-commission at Vancouver, finally weighed in our favour. As the ship worked up and made passage to Great Britain during the summer of 1943, only the very rare enemy occasionally disturbed the tranquility with which Allied shipping flowed to and from those islands. However, the see-saw sea war could not be depended upon as permanently stabilized. New enemy gadgets or tactics could turn our new-found advantage back to his side, and

one could not foretell, as PRINCE ROBERT poked her prow up the Clyde past Rothesay to Greenock in the first dog-watch of 23 August, which side now would keep, or next seize, the upper hand, or how.

During the PRINCE ROBERT's Clydeside refit, the Battle of the Atlantic started up again. In mid-September, Doenitz sent the U-boats swarming back onto the convoy routes fitted out with a whole host of new weaponry: improved search receivers,<sup>13</sup> sensitive aircraft detection listening devices, radar jammers, 'Aphrodite',<sup>14</sup> 'black' anti-radar coating,<sup>15</sup> increased anti-aircraft armament and acoustic homing torpedoes,<sup>16</sup> and with better air support. Over the summer, Hitler had been persuaded of the need for more aircraft in anti-convoy operations. The attack role was given back to the Focke-Wulf 200's; the Heinkel 177--with phenomenal range for ocean reconnaissance--replaced the older Junkers 88 at that task; and two of the first squadrons of Very Long Range\* Junkers 290's, coming from the factories in August, were allocated "for use in the Atlantic."<sup>17</sup> Like their U-boats, the Germans' airplanes were also outfitted with horrible, and horribly efficient, new tools of destruction. The glide-bombs could be released from up to four miles above, and six miles away from the target, lessening the danger to the mother-plane from anti-aircraft fire.<sup>18</sup>

Thus did the enemy prepare to bring more fully into action against Allied convoys the air arm which PRINCE ROBERT had been specially reconstructed to combat, as well as a strengthened underwater attack. In fact, PRINCE ROBERT's debut on escort duty between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar coincided with a determined Nazi offensive that aimed to interdict those very routes. The enemy had renewed his anti-convoy onslaught in September, 1943, and had endured five weeks of poor or indifferent success in mid-Atlantic and the Northwest Approaches.\*\* Then the German naval command

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\*Ranges--HE 177--with 2000 pounds of bombs, 2300 miles;  
--JU 290--with 10,000, 1745 (Historical Section, Admiralty,  
The Development of British Naval Aviation 1919-45, II, pp.357-360).

\*\*During September and October, an average of seventeen Allied merchantmen, and fifteen and one-half U-boats, were sunk monthly; a recurrence of the scale of loss which Doenitz refused to bear in May. (Roskill, III (I), p.54).

sought greater results and more effective use of air strike and reconnaissance tactics by shifting the whole attack "farther to the eastward, so as to include the United Kingdom to Gibraltar and West Africa convoys as the primary targets."<sup>19</sup> Separately lethal, the enemy's forces were directed from the end of October by air and sea in unison doubly dangerous, against the shipping plying the very lanes which PRINCE ROBERT was charged to help protect.

It is necessary to insert a word on these convoy routes, and the general outline of PRINCE ROBERT's work on them. Fast convoys between the United Kingdom and North Africa were designated KMF and MKF. Their cycle was thirty-five days, and PRINCE ROBERT shuttled back and forth between Plymouth and Gibraltar with them. On the run outward from Great Britain, the anti-aircraft cruiser was usually ordered to sail from Plymouth thirty hours or so before making rendezvous with the convoy, which had entered the Atlantic via the Northwest Approaches north of Ireland. The meeting place was about two hundred miles west of that island. Anti-submarine escort vessels, five or six in number, usually sailed from Londonderry.<sup>20</sup> At the other end, until June 1944, Gibraltar was PRINCE ROBERT's turn-about port whence other forces took up the protection of the vessels that were proceeding eastward into the Mediterranean. Details of the composition and terminal ports of these convoys are set out in Appendix D.

The dangers, which in November 1943 lay in wait for this shipping as it passed through the Approaches and skirted the Bay of Biscay, have been indicated above. Being in the Mediterranean did not mean safety, for ships of the KMF and MKF convoys in those waters had still a gauntlet of possible hostile action to endure. However, since PRINCE ROBERT had no part of the escort work very far west of the Pillars of Hercules until summer 1944--when enemy forces in the Mediterranean were near eradication--threats in the inland sea over the winter of 1943-4 will be merely mentioned here, and described in Appendix E.

PRINCE ROBERT's Captain can best outline the ship's routine of operations while on escort duty: the ship had

"no particular station in convoy, her position depending on the demands of the moment and how they are interpreted by the Commanding Officer. Normally, she will be in station on the land side of the convoy, that is, to port when heading south and to starboard when heading north, hoping in this way to prevent any aircraft from getting over the main part of the convoy. When forming part of the outer screen, she will take up station from three to five miles away . . . either [a]head, abeam, or astern. At times, she will become part of the first or second column of the convoy in a concentrated air attack. Her normal cruising speed varies between ten to twelve knots . . . From dawn to dusk, the ship is constantly at action stations ready for immediate action should any enemy aircraft approach the convoy."<sup>21</sup>.

At 0412 20 October, 1943, HMCS PRINCE ROBERT sailed from Greenock for Gibraltar. Messdeck and wardroom rumour had hostile aircraft sightings and submarine echoes running circles round the ship during this voyage--but nothing really happened. Saturday evening the 23rd was typical of their tension: "Weapon [drills] were carried out, the day completing with many alarms and excursions, none of which occasioned any serious consequences." At 1800 24 October the cruiser berthed under the Rock, and was formally attached to the naval forces there next day.\*

On 28 October PRINCE ROBERT slipped from Gibraltar at 1103 to meet and escort convoy MKF 25. At 1230 she was in station astern of the troopship-liners FRANCONIA (Gunard), DUCHESS OF BEDFORD (Canadian Pacific), STRATHEDEN (Peninsular & Oriental), SATURNIA ("Italia"),<sup>22</sup> and other vessels; in all 400,000 tons of as valuable shipping as the Allies possessed. Aboard the giants in the convoy were 60,000 men, women and children: units of the British Eighth Army, former Prisoner of War ANZAC's, and civilians from internment camps in Italy.

At this stage in PRINCE ROBERT's career, as at several yet to be reached, the wartime writings of Peter MacRitchie<sup>23</sup> are a special boon to history. A Special Branch officer or idea-man, he was borne for the purposes of publicity and morale. His dispatches did not aim to inform, except

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\*Flag Officer Gibraltar and Mediterranean Approaches (FOGMA) Vice-Admiral Sir H. M. Burrough, KBE, CB, DSO, RN.

incidentally; they were censored, and a history based solely on what MacRitchie wrote would be naval fantasy. There are in his reports, however, certain incidents not recorded elsewhere; yet more important, he emphasizes the human element. Documentary remains are remorselessly factual and Dryasdust, usually--less precise, the wartime correspondent put down immeasurables, something of what the ship, and its story, were like inside. For instance, not that certain events transpired, but that men like us did these things (with feeling) is shown as he deals with convoy MKF 25:

"When the time came to announce the type of convoy and the names of some of the ships in our care you seemed to sense a sudden mask of tenseness envelop the faces of our men . . . . For many of our ship's company it was their first convoy . . . . You sensed a greater degree of activity as the gunners went about their task of cleaning and loading their guns . . . how the quartermaster at the wheel sang back his 'fifteen a-starboard on, sir,' and how the lookouts yelled whenever there was something to report . . . . To anyone who has sailed in escort ships there can hardly be any sight more imposing than that of a convoy sailing on a broad front, head on head, especially when the ships are all of great tonnage. So it was with this one. And as PRINCE ROBERT closed in on the convoy at certain times as per tactical plan, we could hear these men, who had twisted Rommel's tail, sing their songs of joy at home-going. And those in PRINCE ROBERT, who were many thousands of miles from home, could appreciate that joy and even share it with them."<sup>24</sup>

"Alarms and excursions" continued during the next five days, but no close action was joined with the foe. The anti-submarine escort claimed to have attacked and damaged an enemy U-boat.<sup>25</sup> However, PRINCE ROBERT's gunners only glimpsed, and just once, their principal enemy--a Focke-Wulf 200 at too long range to shoot at.<sup>26</sup> When the ship detached at midnight 2/3 November, the convoy and escort were unscathed, as they remained until making the United Kingdom.

PRINCE ROBERT then steamed to Horta, on Fayal in the Azores, arriving at 1932 on the 4th of November for a week's lay-over. Portugal was not in the war, but the government was favoring the Allies with a benevolent neutrality,<sup>27</sup> and the people ashore were friendly as they daily relieved the sailors on leave of the one hundred escudos (about four dollars Canadian) they were permitted to take to town. The ship's company played soccer with two RN vessels in harbor; they were beaten by a destroyer, but

tied the game against a corvette. PRINCE ROBERT might have been able to field a winning team--if only she could have found the crew of a yard craft, midget submarine, or glider bomb to play with!

In some haste,<sup>28.</sup> the Canadians left to get back to their own war at 0915 on the day set aside to remember their fathers'. Combing the Bay of Biscay for blockade runners en route<sup>29.</sup> the ship found none, and arrived uneventfully 16 November at Falmouth, whither she was diverted because of an air raid on Plymouth the previous night. She moved to Plymouth two days later, and sought repairs for the asdic dome again, but was warned to be ready to sail on convoy escort operations.<sup>30.</sup>

For although PRINCE ROBERT had as yet met no enemies, the war was far from over; indeed, on the Britain-to-Gibraltar convoy routes it was being intensified by the enemy, as we have seen. Convoy SL 138/MKS 28\* was attacked by a pack of eight submarines on 31 October, and one merchantman was sunk. A week later, while the PRINCE ROBERT's men were paying and playing at Horta, the enemy applied similar strength against MKS 29A. None of the convoy or escort was damaged this time, but otherwise the result was the same as in the battle on Hallowe'en---one U-boat sunk, and one damaged.<sup>31.</sup> The German was paying high for meagre gains, but he now chose rather than turn off the heat, to broaden the scale of the assault.

On 20 November Admiral Sir Max Horton's<sup>\*\*</sup> office sent out two messages: to the escort forces protecting the next northbound convoy, SL 139/MKS 30, encouragement and congratulations; and to PRINCE ROBERT, go help them.<sup>32.</sup> The summons came well after midnight 19/20 November. By 0400 the ship had slipped from Plymouth to rendezvous with the convoy which was being hard-pressed by actually dozens of U-boats, and with air attack imminent.

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\*SL convoys were from West Africa (Sierra Leone) to the United Kingdom. After May, 1943, they combined with the MKS convoys from out the Mediterranean off Gibraltar to proceed together. The fast Mediterranean convoys (KMF-MKF) had no such rendezvous. (Admiralty, Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1A, p.32.)

\*\*Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches from 19 November, 1942.

The protracted fighting through of SL 139/MKS 30 merits attention on several counts. The unusual strength of the forces committed alike to its destruction and its preservation,\* and the long length of time during which these forces were rarely disengaged are, tactically, notable.\*\* Strategically, it was a crucial fight, for of all the actions following the reappearance of the enemy in strength on the convoy routes in September, this one was hardest contested, and made the clearest test case for maritime supremacy. One-quarter of the Allied ships in close escort were Canadian, and PRINCE ROBERT in defending the convoy fought her only major action against the arm she was specially re-designed to combat. Therefore the story of this passage looms large in this history.<sup>33</sup>

The convoy of 67 merchant vessels was first reported by enemy air reconnaissance on 16 November off Portugal, as PRINCE ROBERT was making for Falmouth from Horta. The gathering wolf pack began to strike on the 18th: HMS EXE damaged U-333, and HMS CHANTICLEER took two "gnats" in the screws but stayed afloat to be towed to the Azores. By 19 November, HMC Ships CALGARY, SNOWBERRY, LUNENBURG and EDMUNDSTON had joined fourteen other ships in the escort,\*\*\* and air cover was well-nigh continuous overhead, as it was to be for the next four days.<sup>34</sup> This staff of shepherds herded the flock of Allied shipping northward into a closing enemy trap, and in the evening they heard the concentrating U-boat wolf pack's characteristic howl--the short, staccato radio messages by which submarines

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\*The total forces employed on each side, and their losses, are set out in Appendix F.

\*\*It was one example, and 1940-2 yielded many more severe, of the sacrifice and sufferings on the North Atlantic convoy routes, which within twenty years would be made to seem somehow sweet through the operation of memory's age-old trick. Thus tales, in which nothing is so prominent as misery, of passages in which security is gained only by good luck and limitless exertions, become romance--not only distorting, but reversing, our view of the past. This is the danger Roskill wards off, as he epitomizes the Atlantic struggle in his understatement: ". . . unceasing battle, of a more exacting and arduous nature than posterity may easily realize." (The War at Sea, II, p.377).

\*\*\*To be completely accurate, the "escort" comprised five RN Ships, and the Royal Indian Navy Sloop KISTNA. The rest of the vessels accompanying the convoy were temporarily attached "support" groups. The Americans called these "hunter-killer" groups; in British parlance they were "7th Escort Group", "5th Escort Group", etc.

in contact guided others onto the target, intercepted by Allied High Frequency/Direction Finding gear.

On 19 November U-211 was sunk by an escorting Wellington aircraft from Gibraltar, and a Flying Fortress damaged a Junkers 88.<sup>35</sup> Very early on the 20th, as PRINCE ROBERT was raising steam in Plymouth, the team of CALGARY, SNOWBERRY and NENE sent U-536 to the bottom. Then two friendly aircraft were shot into the sea by U-boats 618 and 648, and two others failed to return to their bases. RAF planes had some revenge when they downed two enemy air shadowers five hundred miles to starboard of the convoy near Cape Ortegal, Spain. After 1000, 21 November, when HM Ships CRANE and FOLEY sank U-538, having hunted her since the middle watch, the enemy submarines fell behind and lost contact.

The Fifth Escort Group<sup>36</sup> offered at 1400 to join the convoy's escort, but the Senior Officer\* politely and proudly declined, preferring to rest the continued safety of his charges upon the skill and laurels of his present force. Justifiably proud. For four days the escort, ships and planes, had withstood a terrific surge from the foe, had hunted twenty-nine contacts,<sup>37</sup> and given out more punishment than it had received. Most important, the convoyed vessels were completely unharmed, for no enemy had been able to penetrate the strong British and Canadian double screen. So far--all right! Then the German played his second ace against SL 139/MKS 30, and threatened to undo in an hour the work of a whole week's watch and ward. At 1520 the 21st, with the refused help still below the horizon and PRINCE ROBERT now in the offing, enemy bombers arrived over the convoy with the deadly glider bomb.

Shortly after 1500 on 21 November PRINCE ROBERT was thirty-three hours and about six hundred fifty miles out of Plymouth when the quiet of a 'pipe-down' Sunday routine was shattered by the 291 Radar coming up with two blips, range twenty miles. IFF presented them as 'unfriendly'. When two

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\*In HMS PHEASANT. This ship had joined at 1300 18 November, and been ordered to "take over command of all support forces as they arrived." (Anti-U-boat Division, Admiralty, Analysis of Anti-U-boat Operations in the vicinity of convoys SL 139/MKS 30 and SL 140/MKS 31, p.2).

Focke-Wulf 200's appeared beyond extreme range in the crisp fall air,<sup>38</sup> PRINCE ROBERT shot at them with the four-inch guns until a patrolling Sunderland aircraft chased them away.<sup>39</sup> During this shoot, the ships of the convoy hove into sight, fiercely fighting their way, row by row, over the horizon.\*

The enemy planes first attacked HMS EKE, convoy escort leader.<sup>40</sup> By 1530 the whole raid of German aircraft was present, estimated by Allied officers at fifteen to thirty-two in number, and probably totalling about ten Focke-Wulf 200's loaded with 250-pound bombs, and ten or twelve Heinkel 177's carrying a glider-bomb under each wing. EKE sent her principal antagonist away trailing smoke; and, generally, the escort and merchantmen's barrage was heavy enough to keep the enemy well away for a time.<sup>41</sup> But the straggler had poor chance. A dozen glider-bombs whooshed down at MV. MARSA (4500 tons), dragging her stern three miles behind. She dodged them all, but was sunk by the fifth, which near-missed and started uncontrollable flooding. HM Ships PETUNIA and ESSINGTON rushed back there and took off the crew before she sank,<sup>42</sup> while a Focke-Wulf 200 dropped four bombs on this act of mercy, none hitting. Both MARSA and ESSINGTON claimed to have hit an attacker during this phase.

While disaster and rescue went on, PRINCE ROBERT, steaming to the convoy's port quarter at twenty-one knots, and out of range for a full half-hour, was the sole audience of a diabolic ballet. There were the Allied vessels--seven or eight dozen of them--dancing with destruction amid pillars of bomb-misses, over a several-mile ocean stage; above them, rising and falling in cadence and darting among inkspots of flak (which splattered onto the sky like tomatoes tossed from the pit against the wings), were unsinister-seeming specks of enemy planes. The merchantmen together executed stately and measured emergency turns, while here and there an individual ship jerkily

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\*The air attack on convoy SL 139/MKS 30, lasting about 1½ hours, began in approximately 46° 39' N., 18° 23' W. The battle moved northward (004°) at convoy speed of 7 knots.

and unrhythmically twisted itself about trying to evade a missile gliding down from aloft. To the PRINCE ROBERT's bridge and decks a light wind wafted the deadly orchestration of gunfire, bombs and flak, at first faintly, but growing clearer.

PRINCE ROBERT arrived in station at about 1610, her four-inch high angle guns ablaze at a German aircraft attacking the Canadian corvette LUNENBURG on the convoy's port side. The cruiser threw up a barrage from two miles astern of the little ship, and LUNENBURG escaped being hit by a scant forty yards. As the action went on and got thicker, PRINCE ROBERT maintained twenty-one knots and zig-zagged from side to side behind the convoy, spreading about the anti-aircraft protection her special armament afforded. Next, MV DELIUS (6000 tons), in a starboard column, was hit. Her officers were killed and a fire started. HMIS KISTNA's Medical Officer went aboard while the DELIUS' crew were fighting the flames and getting their ship underway again.<sup>43</sup> HMS MOYOLA, and once more EXE and LUNENBURG were attacked, but all three escaped being hit.

Then the enemy pilots picked out HMCS PRINCE ROBERT as the source of the heaviest flak that troubled their flying and aiming. She divided up her four-inch guns among three attackers and as they approached, used the lighter weapons as well.

"Now the multiple pom poms and oerlikons added their sharp barking to the crash of the four inch guns. First one and then another of the planes veered off in the face of the storm of steel. The third kept coming and under it's [sic] belly that red light was burning. But he turned away too - something had gone wrong. The last we saw of him, he was flying away to the horizon, the red light still glowing. Evidently, having once started the bomb in operation, it would not release and he could not get rid of it. No one felt sorry for him and there was much speculation as to whether it would go off under him."<sup>44</sup>

It was in this duel that Captain Hope made his ship's only claim to have inflicted actual damage upon the enemy:

". . . several 4" shells were observed to burst in close proximity and underneath the plane. In my opinion either the bomb release gear was damaged or hung up in some manner and the bomb never left the plane which departed from the scene of action in a hurry."

The next German to take on PRINCE ROBERT was a single Heinkel 177, which deliberately circled the convoy clock-wise amid the eight-tenths cloud cover, and then flew in to attack. It came on a steady course and on even keel, showing our ship its starboard side--the hallmarks of a glider-bomb attack. Lieutenant MacRitchie was at the ship's public address system microphone watching these events, and later wrote:

"He closed in to about 3000 yards and as he turned we knew right well what was in his mind. He turned his starboard bows towards PRINCE ROBERT when he came abeam of us. Then he let it go.

It was a glider bomb and I was sure it carried our label.

I could only holler into the microphone: 'Hold onto your hats! Here comes a glider bomb.' Everybody below decks held tight. The sight of the projectile coming so close had me transfixed. You know no fear under those circumstances. Captain Hope was holding on too but he was smiling grimly.

Our guns seemed to have the plane enveloped in flak and as the bomb fell from its rack it seemed to level off. The observer seemed to have it under control, momentarily. It seemed to be coming for PRINCE ROBERT, then of a sudden it veered off and went straight for the convoy. It looked for all the world like a small monoplane and it carried a streak of red tubing on the underside. It had passed our bows only 800 yards away.

I hollered into the microphone: 'It's missed us and it's going for a freighter in the convoy.' Then I held my breath. This was the closest yet.

You could see it plain as day and that freighter looked to me as if already it were in the throes of death. But, just as the bomb was about to hit the ship, fate intervened. The bomb turned upward, passed between the freighter's masts, and ended its crazy career in the water, about eighty yards on the freighter's starboard side, setting up a violent cascade in which the ship wallowed for the next minute.

I screamed into the microphone: 'My God, it's missed her,' whereupon the men in PRINCE ROBERT set up a mighty cheer."

Soon afterward, towards 1700, the attack petered out. HM Ships DRURY and CALDER of EG 5, and WATCHMAN and WINCHELSEA of the escort, were attacked about forty miles to the south as the German raiders flew back to their French base. Of the four ships, only WINCHELSEA suffered moderate damage from this sting of the Luftwaffe's tail.

The convoy was not molested again, and PRINCE ROBERT, with SNOWBERRY and HMS TWEED, escorted one section of it safely into Plymouth on 25 November. The German anti-trade war, in this long drawn-out battle and others less vigorous, was thus defeated again in the closing months of

1943.\* It remains to evaluate ROBERT's brief share in the Allied victory around SL 139/MKS 30, especially because the afternoon of 21 November turned out to be the only occasion on which she met the foe for which her recent extensive reconversion had been done to prepare her.

PRINCE ROBERT's part in the anti-aircraft triumph was not brilliant, but solidly creditable. Of four claims to have hit or damaged the enemy, the Canadian cruiser made one.<sup>45</sup> None of the enemy flyers were so considerate of the Allied sailors' morale as to splash satisfyingly into the sea within sight. But some of them merely saved their humiliation for the way home, because all the German aircraft did not return safely to their base. The credit for this must be shared with Allied air support, the estimates vary from six to nine, and they cannot be reconciled. However, one should not only measure damage to the enemy, but also security to self. A barrage is effective if it brings the enemy down---also if it keeps him well up, and at bay, and fouls up his bombing runs. Both sides then emerge more or less unscathed, and it is a victory for the defense. That this convoy and its escort put up an effective curtain of gunfire is proven, not only because so little damage was inflicted upon a far-away foe, but also in that two of the three ship-casualties occurred outside the area where vessels in company gave mutual support. "What share the PRINCE ROBERT can claim in this achievement cannot be estimated; but her guns alone formed the greater part of the convoy's anti-aircraft protection."<sup>46</sup>

Forced to keep a safe distance by the Allied flak, PRINCE ROBERT's the heaviest, the enemy gnashed his teeth to have such meagre results from so strong a raid. Still, had he pressed the attack more closely home, he might have gained no more successes, and would assuredly have sustained greater loss. Admiral Horton showed a keen prescience in sending out the anti-aircraft ship to arrive coincident with the hostile bombers, and in his Report of Proceedings covering the action, Captain Hope professed himself delighted with his men in their baptism of fire, and satisfied with the

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\*The list of forces employed and losses suffered in this fight (Appendix F) may be compared with the record of other United Kingdom to North Africa convoys, given in Appendix G.

ship in its material aspect. Did PRINCE ROBERT then earn the multi-million dollar cost of her re-armament all between 1500 and supper on that autumn afternoon? Not the whole sum, perhaps. But she defended this convoy, and would have defended more, if the enemy had attacked again.

Actually, she was never again called upon to help fight off a convoy attack. In the ten months of escort duty that remained to her, PRINCE ROBERT sailed with seventeen convoys, entailing one hundred thirty days at sea between Plymouth and Gibraltar, and later Naples. Though fully exposed, she never again met the enemy.<sup>47</sup> When he aimed a blow at the United Kingdom to North Africa shipping, it invariably fell upon the slow convoys, and not on the faster vessels with which PRINCE ROBERT sailed.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this utter absence of hostile incident, however, PRINCE ROBERT's role from December 1943 to September 1944 was an important one. Although weakened, the enemy could still strike, as is illustrated in Appendix G. Therefore, if the Allies were to make the seas their highway, and secure, merchant shipping needed the constant guard of ships like the Canadian cruiser. The work of our sailors became very monotonous. PRINCE ROBERT's career in this period has none of the excitement of action, nothing to give her officers and men the knowledge of harm, or even the suspicion of interference inflicted on the foe; it exhibits in clear focus that tedium which many naval writers attest, and which is summed up in Judge Holmes' terse dictum that Morison quotes:<sup>49</sup> "War is an organized bore!"

"The days at sea were monotonous and irksome, but your nerves were taut every minute of the time you were outside the harbor gates."<sup>50</sup>

--which, for PRINCE ROBERT in the time under review, was almost a full half of her wearisome days and nights.

So, an unrelenting task, she ploughed the seas between Devon and the Mediterranean. As her voyages were without incident except for practise exercises and false alarms,<sup>51</sup> there is no instruction to be gained in detailing her arrivals and departures, and this information is relegated to

Appendix H. She was often in drydock and the hands of repairmen. However, breakdowns were not unexpected in a fourteen-year old ship performing duties for which she was not originally designed. From June on, Naples replaced Gibraltar as the eastern terminus of her cruises, which added a thousand miles to their length, although the convoy cycle was not lengthened. Even so, and in spite of serial mishaps with her machinery,<sup>52.</sup> she steadily kept the sea, and never missed a convoy sailing.\*

Official occasions sometimes relieved the tedium for PRINCE ROBERT and her company---little molehills of events, perhaps, but they became milestones in her dull career. The ship was visited during the winter by Canada's High Commissioner in Britain, Right Honorable Vincent Massey, accompanied by a former captain, and by the Senior Canadian Flag Officer (Overseas) Vice-Admiral Nelles.<sup>53.</sup> At Gibraltar on 8 March a guard from PRINCE ROBERT performed the ancient and colorful Ceremony of the Keys

"This is the second occasion since the commencement of the war that the Navy has carried out this ceremony and the first occasion that any of the Dominion [sic] or Colonies have participated in any way."

so well that the Governor of the Fortress<sup>54.</sup> made a special request for the Canadians to do it again---a singular honour!

Most of the dusty records that tell of PRINCE ROBERT's service deal with the ship as a soulless piece of steel, capable of apt description in statistical terms. But now and then the veils of la langue officiel fail to obscure hints of the human personalities that lived in the ship. Some comments on leave are of this nature. Gibraltar:

"Suitable recreation during this period for the ship's company as a whole was very difficult to find and largely consisted of individual rock climbing parties and swimming in semi-oil-covered waters. The curfew law still exists and a number of concerts and movies aboard interested the ship's company to a greater extent than the dubious haunts and holes in the wall ashore."

In Naples the 'haunt' was the Maple Leaf Club<sup>55.</sup>---catering specially to Canadian servicemen---and PRINCE ROBERT's men were the first to bring RCN whites and blues thither amid strange crowds of their fellow-countrymen's

\*After PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY came over in January 1944, PRINCE ROBERT met her sisters only twice: all three were together at Greenock 19-21 February 1944; and when PRINCE ROBERT turned around in Naples 4-6 September she found PRINCE HENRY in deckyard at nearby Castellammare.

khaki. Diverted to Belfast for engine repairs just before D-day, they had the chance to meet face to face (for the first time after serving together at sea for months) their opposite numbers in EG 5. (But they missed 1944's Biggest Show, in which PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY were stars.\*\*)

It almost seems odd there is so little reference to Plymouth, which was PRINCE ROBERT's chief retreat during her European tour. But it is understandable. Crowded with warships and sailors of every nation, and especially with well-known Canadians; located in no strange land (although not quite home); so accustomed for centuries to absorb war, with its rumours and ravages, that Drake's mythical attitude on the Hoe had become the highest civic virtue; the grey old British port tended to encourage a routine greyness in everything---life, leave, alarms, air raids: all to be taken in stride, all business as usual, so expected and regular as to be not worth recording. So future generations will have to dig that much harder to be able accurately to imagine what it was like for those Canadian sailors fighting their ships from that Halifax of Southwest England. One incident at Plymouth was sombre, yet grand. Her own hands had plenty to do, but a fifty-man party went over to HAIDA to help re-ammunition after HAIDA's crew had been up all night fighting the Germans and rescuing survivors---ah, so few!---from ATHABASKAN. They found a similar party from HURON beat them to it and had the job done.<sup>56</sup> PRINCE ROBERT joined on three occasions in the Plymouth barrage during air raids, and may even have shot down an enemy aircraft; but Captain Hope was nothing if not judicious:

"... it is considered that one aircraft which was brought down may have fallen to PRINCE ROBERT's guns, but there is no evidence to confirm this fact. The plane in question was equally claimed by the shore defenders."

These were her only meetings with the enemy after the hot work of 21 November, 1943. In these engagements, she could as well have been a shore battery as a ship.

At 0830, 13 September, PRINCE ROBERT returned to Plymouth for the last time, escorting MKF 34 from Naples. During the following six days, the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Commander-in-Chief Plymouth and Vice-Admiral Nelles all came aboard to bid farewell.\* Then, having withstood incessantly the

\*Chaplain of the Fleet Right Reverend G. A. Wells, MA, DD, CMG (C of E), RCN; C-in-C Plymouth Admiral Sir R. Leatham, KCB, RN.

\*\*Pp. 94-112.

rigors of escort, the rare violence of the enemy, and more often the terrors peculiar to official inspection, the crew sailed their ship back the way she had come fourteen months before. The passage, via Bermuda and Panama, took twenty-three days. PRINCE ROBERT arrived at her home base of Esquimalt about noon 12 October. Within a week the Signal Publications and Confidential Books were air-mailed to Ottawa,<sup>57</sup> two thirds of the crew were given two months leave,<sup>58</sup> and the ship was put in care and maintenance. She was paid off for refit at Vancouver on 20 December, 1944.

Anticipating this refit, Naval Service Headquarters first suggested to Admiralty in May 1943 that all three Prince ships become escort maintenance vessels for the Pacific war against Japan, and asked their Lordships' advice.<sup>59</sup> British counsel arrived in September.<sup>60</sup> For PRINCE ROBERT, improvement as a fighting ship was favoured, rather than relegation to the Fleet Train. Additions mooted were:

1. full cruiser Action Information Organization;
2. a barrage director for the after guns;
3. power-trained pom-poms (Mk. VII Star P);
4. five more single oerlikons;
5. new radar numbers 281B, 293, 277 and 283; and
6. Radar Plot Control.

On 11 September the Canadian Naval Staff approved all this, and assigned the production of electrical drawings for PRINCE ROBERT's refit priority over work for CAYUGA and ATHABASKAN (second of name) then building in Halifax. Next the price was toted up---\$1,900,000.---and NSHQ had second thoughts. On 27 September NSHQ sent to CNMO:

"Before presenting this for financial approval it is necessary that very convincing reasons for the necessity and advisability of carrying out this work be supplied by the Admiralty. Also the proposed employment and location of ship after conversion. Age, construction and lack of protection of ship should be taken into consideration."

At the Admiralty, the Plans people wanted PRINCE ROBERT on station for anti-aircraft protection in the western Pacific by 1 July, 1945, while the technicians wanted to pack her full of gadgets and the schedule be hanged.

Plans won, and suggested to our high command: 1. less sophisticated AIO, and 2. after barrage director, RPC and radar #293 be omitted unless there seemed to be plenty of time to complete the work and allow two months for work-ups and passage before the Dominion Day deadline. With these modifications the work on PRINCE ROBERT would cost less--\$1,146,450.--and Naval Staff approved it on 6 November. Three weeks later, over Director of Naval Construction's objection, some minor additions were made: 1. Very High Frequency/Direction Finding sets--\$8,000.; 2. wooden furniture to be replaced by steel--\$10,000.; 3. steel bulkheads, instead of wood, in cabin spaces, and 4. Fighter Direction equipment. PRINCE ROBERT entered Burrard Drydock three weeks later for this gear she was never to use. In the event, the work occupied a month longer than expected, and the ship was not ready to begin working-up until several weeks after VE Day, 1945.

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT commissioned, Captain W. B. Creery, RCN, on 4 June, 1945, at Vancouver, and was sailed to Esquimalt on the 7th by an advance party of about forty ratings.<sup>61.</sup> Work-ups, including dummy dive-bombing and strafing exercises, were completed by the end of the month; COPC\* inspected on 29 June, and the ship was now ready to join the British Pacific Fleet<sup>62.</sup> and the American Navy in hurrying on Japan's defeat. After one day's extra delay to wait for two Special Branch (naval information) officers<sup>63.</sup> who rushed out to the coast by air, PRINCE ROBERT slipped from Esquimalt at 2130, 4 July.

The voyage out to Sydney, Australia was made by way of San Francisco and Pearl Harbor. In San Francisco 6 to 20 July, Captain Creery sent the entire ship's company to fire-fighting and damage control courses while PRINCE ROBERT's armament was altered. C-in-C British Pacific Fleet had signalled his preference for Bofors over Oerlikon guns for the work to be done in the eastern theatres.<sup>64.</sup> The job of replacing four twin Oerlikons with four single Bofors was taken in hand and completed with dispatch by American dockyard hands.<sup>65.</sup> On the 20th the ship sailed from San Francisco, and at 1600 10 August reached Sydney.

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\*Rear-Admiral V. G. Brodeur, CBE, RCN.

In the Pacific, the war against Japan was ending. All spring and early summer this last enemy, once-proud, sagged inexorably towards utter ruin. Daily the Rising Sun declined, less and less able to make war, to feed its people, or to protect them. The Allies wrested from Japan many of the territories which aggression had snatched, and cut her off from the rest. By July the home islands lay all open to assault, their forces unable to offer much resistance even on the thresholds of great cities. In that month, while PRINCE ROBERT steamed westward, the foe shuddered and suffered as, with incessant power and increasing bombardment by sea and air, the Allies carried destruction throughout the length and breadth of small Japan--the whole country a battleground, and a laboratory for war. Allied power culminated in terror more devastating than the world has ever known, or hopes to see again. When the first atomic bombs were used on 6 and 9 August, Japan prepared to accept the Potsdam declaration. The world tottered on the brink of peace.

Thus it came about that PRINCE ROBERT was too late to join in the fighting. "To the distress of the executive branch, and the delight of the medical and galley staffs, it became clear in Sydney that our newly-refitted ship would never fire an angry shot in the Pacific war, but would take up the cause of the Hong Kong soldiers" that is, of the Allied prisoners of war, many of them the very men that PRINCE ROBERT herself had carried four years previously to a hopeless fight and long captivity. That is, the survivors among them.\*\* On 15 August, within two hours of receiving the news of Japan's surrender, Task Group 111.2 of the British Pacific Fleet--PRINCE ROBERT attached--sailed from Sydney to liberate the captured Crown Colony.<sup>66</sup> On the 29th TG 111.2 arrived off its destination, PRINCE ROBERT in ". . . an anchorage to the northward of Tam Kan Island . . ." When the rain cleared Stanley Prison where the Japanese had interned enemy civilians was in view some twelve miles to the northward."

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\*"This quote is taken from the medical officers' report which, if I had read more carefully at the time I would have taken exception to. It is all nonsense to think that the executive branch want to risk the loss of life and limb (their own or anybody else's) any more than do the other branches of the Navy. They fight when they have to, but dont we all?" (Greery to MacLeod 22 August 1965 - NHS PR v. 3).

\*\*See Appendix C.

That afternoon Rear-Admiral Harcourt conferred with the local Japanese commander by radio, and one of INDOMITABLE's aircraft brought a Japanese representative from shore out to the flagship. They reached an agreement that recent enemies would cooperate for a time in keeping civil order. On 30 August at 1030 units of the Task Group weighed anchor for the last short lap of their journey from Sydney. PRINCE ROBERT was the fifth Allied ship to enter Hong Kong harbour.\* She was ordered to go alongside at Kowloon on the Chinese mainland, while six RN vessels took up berths across a mile of water at Victoria on Hong Kong island.

PRINCE ROBERT's work during 30 August, 1945, and subsequent days, makes a chapter of special interest in RCN annals. Her mission was to take over the Kowloon decks from an enemy force incomparably superior, fully armed and locally undefeated. There was no assurance that the Japanese would not continue hostile, although pledged by a distant government to surrender; there were still several days before peace was officially signed in Tokyo harbour. The Canadians would also have to police a large civilian population\*\* whose attitude towards the war was undetermined, and whose destitute plight might excuse any excess. The prepared landing party of ninety-one men in three platoons seemed small indeed for these improbable tasks. The act of liberation was no regular one for RCN ships, although PRINCE ROBERT did have some predecessors in this line of work.\*\*\* To a situation in which novelty, danger and suspense were so liberally mixed, and were coupled with the pathos of releasing imprisoned fellow-countrymen, our own naval tradition gave no, and the rich lengths of British sea-history few, parallels.

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\*The order of entry was: HMS KEMPENFELT, SWIFTSURE, EURYALUS, URSA, PRINCE ROBERT, then two of the RN submarines. PRINCE ROBERT's Report of Proceedings indicates that HMS MAIDSTONE and one or more of the minesweepers were also in this first contingent, but "Sea War", VI, paragraph 3116 is more likely correct in giving the list as above. The larger ships remained outside at first for fear of mines (Roskill, III (II), p.383).

\*\*The 1945 population of Hong Kong colony was 500,000 (Encyclopedia Britannica, XI, Chicago, London, Toronto, 1955, p. 719).

\*\*\*Namely her own sister-ships, in their Grecian operations of the previous fall and winter. PRINCE DAVID liberated Kithera and Athens, PRINCE HENRY Athens and Salenika. The enemy was not present on these occasions (although sometimes there was a civil war going on), and these two ships had less to do with events ashore than PRINCE ROBERT did at Kowloon. See pages 130-144 below. Altogether, the Prince ships easily held the RCN championship at the happy and once-a-war-time (i.e. towards the end) task of liberating.

Apprehensively at 1330 30 August PRINCE ROBERT, turning about to point seaward again - in case of a quick exit - closed Holt's Wharf, Kowloon. Her Commanding Officer picked out this jetty because it was not damaged, and because, being a floating penteen connected to the mainland by two bridges, it could be easily defended and controlled. PRINCE ROBERT's men, as she came alongside, jumped to the deck to handle their own wires, studiously ignored by an armed patrol of Japanese soldiers who were watching two small vessels being loaded. The confrontation played to a full house. From behind a fence that closed off the streets of Kowloon from the waterfront area, a pandemonium of greeters and gawkers commented nesily upon the Canadian style in liberating - enthusiastically gleeful Chinese residents, nestly children; sullen Japanese soldiers and longshoremen; an American couple speechless with excitement;<sup>67</sup> and perhaps only one person who had ever before seen the maple leaf funnel.<sup>68</sup> The landing party hurriedly disembarked and sorted things out. Civilians, surging forward, were kept back; vehicles and equipment on the jetty were confiscated; the loading of vessels halted; and Japanese personnel disarmed, without resistance.\* It was all highly agreeable to the vast majority of on-lookers. Twenty years later, Captain Greery recalled

"... they went crazy with joy when they saw us disarming the Japs [sic]. Actually it was contrary to an agreement made with the Japanese commander on board INDOMITABLE the previous day to disarm them since they were to be responsible for the maintenance of civil order until the British could muster a large enough force to take over this responsibility. However, they were loading a coastal vessel or two with various kinds of loot and I made a quick decision to deal with this breach of the agreement by making one myself. This was deeply resented by the Japanese officer in command of the troops in that area and we eyed each other steadily for a critical moment or two. Whether or not he was influenced by the fact that I had a large A.B. beside me who was poking a Tommy gun into his belly, I wouldn't know but I felt considerably relieved when he hissed, saluted and gave the necessary orders for the troops to disarm."<sup>69</sup>

Later in the afternoon, when nearby freight cars were broken into, PRINCE ROBERT's men arrested some of the Chinese looters, drove off the others in a shouted exchange of unintelligibilities, and extended their cordon of sentries from the wharf to include several hundred yards of railway track running along the shore.

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\*But not without incident. Commissioned Gunner Massingham, while carrying out a reconnaissance of the Holt's Wharf area with the platoon of landing party he led, slipped off a low stone wall and shot himself in the arm. This was the only casualty of the occupation. He was transferred to the hospital ship OXFORDSHIRE for passage home via Sydney, Australia, and was back in the ship by 15 November.

Now the remainder of the Task Group entered harbour, except HMS VENERABLE, which "remained at sea and kept continuous air patrol over Keng Keng until September 2nd."<sup>70</sup> A very minor engagement against Japanese suicide boats took place.\* Reports of spreading disorder and looting came in. In Kowloon, Captain Creery sent a squad of fifty armed sailors on a march through the crowded streets, to display themselves and their weapons - a tactic which on this occasion seemed to have more of the desired effect than similar debauchements have sometimes had. Perhaps the Canadian sailor-militia ruled their bailiwick with too iron a hand. Chinese civilians were found to give the most trouble; when the Canadians caught them looting, they just locked them up. By evening a few ratings had sixty or seventy under guard in a warehouse on the wharf.<sup>71</sup> Japanese servicemen and labourers were more docile and obedient than the seething, hungry citizens. Although they were the enemy they were usually allowed to go on their way, relieved of any weapons. When the local Japanese commander was complaining to Admiral Harcourt that naturally he couldn't keep order in Kowloon - PRINCE ROBERT was disarming all his men. Harcourt told him to buck up, and probably agreed with PRINCE ROBERT's assessment:

"The Jap commander was being bloody minded in my opinion. I don't suppose we disarmed more than about 200 men, if that and he had about 15,000\*\* in the Kowloon area. I don't think his shortage of arms as a result of my action could have been very serious."<sup>72</sup>

Any Japanese held captive were set free. Three companies of Royal Marines came over from the big ships at Victoria to bivouac in the railway station and help keep order. By nightfall, there was good reason for Canadian pride in the day's doings; a ticklish situation had been handled very well:

I consider that during this period the landing party as a whole acted with initiative and a suitable dignity and were a credit to the Service in that they did not take advantage of their opportunities to collect souvenirs for themselves. Their coolness and steadiness in the face of vastly superior numbers of Japanese and the unknown attitude of both Japanese and Chinese to the occupation of Kowloon contributed in a large measure to the peaceful occupation of the city."

Meanwhile, Commander MacRitchie and Petty Officer Photographer Jack Hawes had made their way to Camp ShamShuiPo<sup>73</sup> three miles across town. Here they

found 1500 Prisoners of War, including 370 Canadians, living in "bug-ridden

\*The suicide boats were "built of wood, and loaded with explosives." Aircraft from INDOMITABLE spotted three of these craft trying to put to sea from Deep Water Bay, across Heng Keng island from the main harbour. They were destroyed by bombing. This accidental engagement did not indicate organized Japanese resistance to Heng Keng's occupation, nor did the "desultory sniping by Japanese" recorded in some accounts of the takeover. During the next few days, about sixty of these suicide boats were rounded up by the Allies in Heng Keng, and destroyed.<sup>74</sup>

\*\*Another account says there were 21,000 Japanese troops around Heng Keng.<sup>75</sup>

stone huts without doors and windows",<sup>76.</sup> and since 15 August, without guards. They were the first of the victorious Allies to reach the compound. It was liberation!<sup>77.</sup> The prisoners wildly thronged about their guests, exhibiting all the varied expressions of enthusiasm at freedom confirmed: much talking, shouting, singing--some grins, some tears. They were found to be:

"... all thin and a little worn, easily tired, but eating well and in remarkable spirits . . . The state in which we found the men poorly reveals the condition of their life over the last three and one half years, for many died and the rest have had a gradually improving diet, with recent large increases since the Japs [sic] have again put on the dress of human beings to meet the world."

During the next ten days the released Canadians made PRINCE ROBERT their second home. Before they embarked 9 September in the EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA,<sup>78.</sup> to sail two days later, they had the satisfaction of seeing their recent warders being marched into the cages and jails where they themselves had for so long languished.

PRINCE ROBERT's company carried on their police and security work in the Kowloon water-front districts until relieved by men from HMS VENERABLE on 4 September. The time-table for the progressive disarming of Japanese troops concluded on the 5th,<sup>79.</sup> and they gave no trouble. The same cannot be said of the civilian population, who beat up some of their late overlords,<sup>80.</sup> made mob scenes in the rice queues, generally seethed and stirred, and gave our sailors their worst scare of the occupation when they opened up with the traditional tools of oriental jubilee:

"Often . . . Chinese crackers were mistaken for rifle fire. The local population thawed only gradually, but by 1st September the full muster of some 400,000 persons appeared to be at large in the streets. The noise of crackers alone is said to have exceeded that of London's heaviest AA barrage."<sup>81.</sup>

From 4 September, PRINCE ROBERT had no specific job ashore to perform;<sup>82.</sup> to some degree, ennui now set in amongst her company, and restlessness, not assuaged by the unaccustomed heat of a Hong Kong summer.<sup>83.</sup> Captain Creery believed two causes to be responsible:

" . . . firstly, there was the let down after the long voyage from San Francisco to Hong Kong via Sydney with very little shore leave, the subsequent excitement of the first few days at Hong Kong followed by the taking over by RN ratings of a job the RCN ratings felt they had done well, and the ensuing period of inactivity when no shore-going was permissible;

secondly, whereas the strictest control had been exercised with regard to souvenir collecting it was claimed that officers and ratings from some other ships had been allowed considerable latitude in this respect."

PRINCE ROBERT's officers set about a strenuous round of trying to keep their men busy and out of trouble. Admiral Daniel\* was asked to provide work for the ship; so on 6 to 8 September PRINCE ROBERT guarded the Stonecutters' Island magazine, until relieved by HMS VENGEANCE newly in port from Sydney. On 10 and 11 September she was sent around to stand off Stanley Prison and assist in the embarkation of 1,000 internees aboard the EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA. On board the ship lectures, discussions, debates and a boxing tourney were organized. But discipline became slack;

"Organized walking parties which had been permitted by the C-in-C Hong Kong had to be stopped owing to the general failure of such parties to remain organized."

Several ratings "broke out of the ship", engaged in looting (for which the euphemism is 'souvenir-collecting'), and "succeeded in getting themselves drunk". They were restrained by RN patrols--an embarrassment no service suffers lightly, nor ever wishes to deserve. The great majority of the Canadians, of course, bore themselves correctly; maintained while ashore the stance which natural instinct suggests, which isolation from home confirms, and which the regular habit of seamen does not forbid;

"A most satisfactory attitude is seen in the men's conduct ashore--they don't drink water and they don't eat food, except bananas, although they use spirits and beer frequently, and have suffered no decline in their libido in the presence of the attractive and inexpensive Chinese prostitutes . . ."84.

HMCS ONTARIO, pride of the Canadian Fleet, arrived 13 September.

She was escorting more occupation troops and carrying 540,000 Hong Kong dollars for the restoration of commerce in the Colony.<sup>85</sup> At the official ceremony of surrender by local Japanese commanders 16 September, both Canadian cruisers provided guards to line the route to Government House. Captain Creery observed the peace signature on Canada's behalf. There are many apt descriptions of this important occasion, in Rear-Admiral Harcourt's War Diary

\*Rear-Admiral C. S. Daniel, RN, became C-in-C TG 111.2 on 30 August, while Rear-Admiral Harcourt moved ashore as C-in-C Hong Kong (The War at Sea, (preliminary narrative), VI, paras. 3118-9).

\*\*For the role of all RCN ships and personnel that took part in the war against Japan, see Appendix J.

and elsewhere; but the laconic passage in PRINCE ROBERT's Deck Log for the day seems to sum it all up in a clear and meaningful fashion:

"1400	Ceremonial guard landed
1505	Captain ashore---as signatory to surrender of Hong Kong
1600	Hong Kong surrenders
1625	Royal salute---21 guns
1730	Splice the main brace." <sup>86</sup>

PRINCE ROBERT detached from the British Pacific Fleet, and sailed from Hong Kong, on 26 September, while ONTARIO, stayed behind for another month. Course was shaped for Manila, where Canadian ex-Prisoners of War awaited passage home. ROBERT arrived at the Philippine harbor at noon the 29th:

" . . . assigned to an anchor berth, and after weaving our way between wrecks and ships at anchor found the berth already occupied. This, we had found, is not an unusual occurrence in these enormous anchorages crowded with shipping and we had become expert at selecting a berth by eye and letting go the anchor . . . "

What followed that hectic afternoon, outlined in the waste-no-words prose of the Report of Proceedings, is a classic example of the situation called 'snafu':

"Lt. Cdr. Davies, RCNR., was sent ashore to get in touch with the BNLO. [British Naval Liaison] Officer and arrange for embarkation of repatriates and a few hours later a representative from BNLO's office came onboard for the same purpose. Both BNLO's representative and LtCdr. Davies on his return (they had not met) said it would not be possible to embark the repatriates that day but at about 1700 they suddenly arrived alongside in a US. landing craft."

With dispatch the fifty-nine former prisoners<sup>87</sup> of the Japanese were transferred to PRINCE ROBERT---all but one climbed the Jacob's ladder without assistance---and the ship cleared port again at 2200 the same evening. Pearl Harbor was reached on 12 October, and Esquimalt a week later. At both ports there were special organizations all set up to cater to the varied needs and wishes of the returning soldiers, and there were brassy, friendly fanfares of greeting and good wishes. At Esquimalt the welcome was:

" . . . overwhelming: sirens sounded, crowds cheered, and a band played. It was very moving and was, I know, much appreciated by those for whom it was intended."

The Manila and Hong Kong Prisoners of War are the central theme of this autumn passage, and of PRINCE ROBERT's final commission in the RCN.

At Kowloon the reaction of the ShamShuiPo inmates showed the ship's company how very important was the role they played:

"Needless to say the Canadians on first seeing the Canada flash on the naval uniforms gave vent to wild demonstrations of enthusiasm. It was subsequently stated by senior officers, ex Prisoners of War, that the beneficial psychological effect was very great. It would seem that through their three years and eight months of imprisonment many had come to wonder whether their fate loomed large in the eyes and hearts of their fellow countrymen or whether, gradually, they were being forgotten. Here was proof that such was not the case; the first of the releasing forces to enter the camp were Canadians from a Canadian warship."

Later, sailing from Manila, PRINCE ROBERT's officers and men had a group of the repatriates all to themselves for the voyage, to coddle and care for. After taking the WESER, the ship had been the debutante of the Fleet; now she had matured, and maternal instincts revealed themselves. Lately the scum and butt of enemy guards, these our comrades with weakened physiques and every reason to be bitter now received every attention, treatment usually reserved for Very Important People--a first installment of their country's gratitude for loyalty which did not count the cost. The Principal Medical Officer especially, Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander Hackney, gave them "untiring and careful attention"; cured their ailments, those he could; helped the galley to fatten them up;<sup>88.</sup> and wrote a report which is exceptionally arresting and articulate--well answerable to the stirring circumstance of release from servitude:

"A word should be said of the psychic state in which we found our passengers. Two or three distinguished themselves by announcing their intention to accept the permanent support of the government in reward for their ordeal. One man had slipped into a sort of apathy and could hardly be persuaded to eat. But the great majority were normally alert, interested, and well informed of world events . . . most men were able to take a fairly objective view of their captors. Many had used a form of fatalism to survive their mistreatment, but this seemed to have been shed, appropriately, as they left the Orient. Others again, described an attitude of dignified resistance to the Japs--a tough course which refused appeasement and stopped just short of provoking reprisals on the whole group."

Indeed, PRINCE ROBERT's connection with the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles imposes a definite unity upon her entire, far-flung career as a man-of-war. Early, she brought the Canadian soldiers to an ambush, a battle glorious in disaster, their alternatives death or

despair. Now the selfsame ship, so far from home, and so long afterward, returns to rescue the survivors from debilitating incarceration. This plot had been fully and forcibly outlined to PRINCE ROBERT's 1945 company before ever they left Canada, or even put their ship in commission. Her Commanding Officer wrote:

"... the ship's company was first assembled together at Comex\* in April-May 1945 while the ship was completing her refit, where they went through a full 'assault course'. It was during this period that the Government's policy re everyone having to volunteer to go to the war in the Pacific - no one could be sent unless they did so volunteer [was announced]. We stood to lose our entire ship's company but were get round that it is an old fashioned custom in the navy that we never let a soldier down. Well PRINCE ROBERT had escorted Canadian soldiers to Hong Kong in 1941, should we just leave them there to rot or should we go and fight like hell to get them - or these of them who still survived - home again?  
85% of the men and all the officers volunteered. 89.

Thus PRINCE ROBERT became a Canadian COSSACK,\*\* arranging a glad, romantic reunion of compatriots in a distant country; in high drama and rich pathos sheathing at the close of her wartime career, "The Navy's here!"\*\*\* She had been the navy that brought the Canadian troops out to face a bad deal in the East, and now she set it right. The play thus ends with artistic perfection of characters, setting, and plot - a finely drawn, intensely satisfying denouement; and may we not hear, as she is made fast at Esquimalt 20 October, 1945 (while the band plays - not for her), the old ship's plates and engines together give a sigh of fulfillment long awaited? Her unaccustomed job, begun long since, is finally finished. Her diligence matched its dangers. Essentially a man of war for 'Hostilities only' - like the bulk of her wavy-navy crew - this ship has done hard duty without flinching, and may now chuck the habiliments of war for modes of life with which she was once familiar, and intends to know again.

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT disembarked her precious cargo, and spent a week making 'open ship' fund-raising appearances in aid of the Ninth Victory Loan. Then she lay idle awhile, and paid off on 10 December, 1945. Her first step back towards civilian life was made on 18 January, 1946, when the ship was handed over to the War Assets Corporation for disposal.

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\*HMCS GIVENCHY III, the RCN Combined Operations School (see Appendix I).

\*\*In a famous incident of 16 February 1940, HMS COSSACK bearded ("in old style") the German prison ship ALTMARK in Norwegian territorial waters, and released 299 captive British seamen. The British naval historian writes that "the cry of the COSSACK's boarding party to the prisoners confined in the ship's holds, 'The Navy is here!', rang throughout the length and breadth of the nation." (Roskill, I, pp. 151-3).

\*\*\*See pages 171-2 below.

PART III: HMC Ships PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY: Landing Ships  
Infantry (Medium) 1943-1945

Towards the end of September, 1942, Ottawa had decreed the conversion of HMC Ships PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY to Landing Ships Infantry (Medium). PRINCE ROBERT was to be an Anti-Aircraft cruiser.\* As at the beginning of the "Prince" ships' war career, the latter one was rushed ahead, while the other two waited. By the end of January, 1943, the PRINCE ROBERT had been out of commission for a month and was entering Burrard Dry Dock in Vancouver, but Naval Service Headquarters was just then deciding that PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY would also be taken in hand in this country, and not elsewhere. The same shipyard would start work on them when PRINCE ROBERT was finished--mid-June.<sup>1</sup> Although finishing touches and some special equipment were to be provided in the United Kingdom, the Landing Ships would wear at least half of a "Made in Canada" label. Getting ready for refit and conversion, PRINCE HENRY paid off on 30 April, PRINCE DAVID the following day; the work went ahead as scheduled.

On 20 December, 1943, HMCS PRINCE DAVID was recommissioned at Esquimalt by Commander T. D. Kelly, RCNR. She sailed on the 23rd. By Christmas Eve Swiftsure Bank had dropped well over the horizon, she stood south for Panama, and NSHQ's parting message was being promulgated through the ship:

"Your sister ship the PRINCE ROBERT who has preceded you to a more active war zone is setting a good standard for you to equal or possibly better . . . Much will depend on you during the coming months, not just the safety of your ship but the lives of many of your countrymen and allies . . . All Canada will watch your progress. Good luck and God speed."<sup>2</sup>

Before PRINCE DAVID arrived at New York on 9 January, 1944, her twin--recommissioned 4 January--had sailed in her wake on the 6th. Captain V. S. Godfrey, who for precisely two years had steamed PRINCE DAVID from Halifax to the Aleutians, but mostly around Juan de Fuca Strait, had this time been placed in command of PRINCE HENRY.\*\*

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\*See page 58 above.

\*\*Which made PRINCE HENRY the Senior Ship of the two.

Even at this stage of their interrupted conversion, the two "Prince" ships' appearance had been altered beyond compare with any other vessel in thirty-four years of the Royal Canadian Navy. On each ship, a row of huge, high davits ran half the length port and starboard. Each pair was capable of lifting twenty tons from the sea. Later they would hold stubby little landing craft, an outfit of eight per ship. But as these had not yet been provided the "Princes" sailed empty-handed, their reaching fingers grasping only air and funnel smoke. Anti-submarine equipment was retained. The 6 and 3-inch guns were gone; in their place, two High Angle/Low Angle 4-inch mountings, and a whole array of little weapons--eight single Oerlikons and two 40 m.m. Bofors.<sup>3</sup> 272 Radar had been added.

Below, medical facilities had been expanded, and almost no wood remained in the ships. Long, cavernous messdecks, cafeteria and ample storerooms filled the 'tween decks. Spaces designed for troop-messing were soon dubbed with grandiose and inappropriate appellation; PRINCE HENRY would bear the lads to the war after they had checked into the RITZ, the CAVE, the ROOF GARDEN, and dished duff in DIRTY DICK'S or SHES MURICE.<sup>4</sup> As personnel carriers, the capacity of each "Prince" was four hundred and fifty men for a month, or more for less time. Naturally, an inverse ratio related comfort to crowds. PRINCE HENRY did not blanch on one occasion to stuff 1700 passengers--plus baggage, weapons, and seasick livestock--between her bulging gunwales: the record lift for the Canadian Landing Ships.

Each ship was destined to carry a flotilla of eight landing craft. To man and maintain a flotilla five officers and fifty ratings were borne in the ship's company of 345. Their status was part, not parcel. Only their duties set them apart from the other officers and men on the "Prince's" books. This divergence from Royal Navy practice was an improvement no matter from which end it was viewed. That is, the Canadian innovation improved both administration and morale of the combined operations contingent. More will be said of the landing craft personnel in the proper place--that is, in their boats, which they will not receive until after arrival in the United Kingdom.

During the January 1944 passage to Britain, the Landing Ships had some chance to work-up their innkeeping qualities. PRINCE HENRY brought only a dozen passengers: three brass hats\* from Esquimalt, and nine civilians, including some schoolboy refugees, from Bermuda. PRINCE DAVID, however, found a full queue of American soldiers waiting in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. Joining convoy UT 7, she sailed from Staten Island, New York, on 18 January, with 437 guests. Nothing of note happened to either ship in the crossing. At 2046 28 January PRINCE DAVID arrived in the Clyde, six days ahead of her sister.\*\* They remained at anchor off the Tail of the Bank, Greenock, until 22 February, when they went up to Glasgow for a seven-week session in dockyard hands.

The opportunity offered by refit was seized to send away many on leave, and on courses, especially gunnery, which HMS EXCELLENT had reported as unbelievably awful when the two ships arrived.<sup>5</sup> Captains, seconds, and Navigating Officers were summoned to a colloquy at HMS VECTIS,\*\*\* where they discussed their half-new ships' new role, and watched landing craft manoeuvres. In mid-March, the combined operations personnel from both ships were sent to HMS CRICKET,\*\*\*\* for organization and training.<sup>6</sup>

On 10 and 13 April PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID finished their two-stage, two-nation conversion. The left-overs now done included: 1. two Oerlikons fitted; 2. Radars--253 fitted, 285 completed, 242 adjusted to operate with 291; 3. complicated signals and cypher machinery, loud hailer, and twenty-two inch Visual Signal projectors (paraphernalia for a flagship); 4. improved surgical facilities; and 5. the 4¼ inch wire boats' falls were replaced by 2½ inch wire.<sup>7</sup>

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\*Captain E. R. Brock and Commander W. G. Shedden, RCNVR, and Pay Commander H. A. McCandless, RCNR.

\*\*Both ships now came under the control of Rear-Admiral Unallocated Landing Ships (FOLSU) Rear-Admiral G. L. Warren, RN.

\*\*\*The Combined Operations Headquarters at Cowes, in the Royal Yacht Squadron (Fergusson, B., The Watery Maze, p.84).

\*\*\*\*At Bursledon on the Hamble River above Portsmouth (Admiralty, Battle Summary No. 39, II, p.136).

The two ships moved to their base of operations, coming to anchor off Cowes for the first time on 19 April. They completed their arsenal there at noon on the 21st, when the Canadian combined operations contingent, formed into two flotillas, came proudly riding their newly-provided landing craft across the Solent. Flotilla Officers\* reported their units, and hoisted the craft. Hove up neatly in snug davit-harness, serially aligned along each side from quarterdeck to forecastle, the little boats from now on dominated their parent-ship's exterior prospect. With flotilla shipped, a "Prince" ship's airy waist became a dingy flat into which the sun never penetrated (though spray could fly), while davits, braces, winches and reels impeded passage through these fore-and-aft tunnels.<sup>8</sup> The landing craft's function was to be their ship's chief weapon, and make of the Army, in Admiral Jackie Fisher's phrase, the Navy's principal projectile. Their exploits, often chugging into tight scrapes, meeting hostile forces face to face inside rifle range, give to the account of the "Prince" ships' year of invasions its highest interest.

The craft themselves, as to physical detail, are described in Appendix K, along with the minutiae of shuffles and switches in the ones allotted at various times to the Canadian ships. Their crews decorated them up, painting on maple leaves and other emblems; bestowing names like PANTHER, GORGEOUS GAL; and assigning battle honours represented by appropriate inscription on the armoured sides of the coxswain's cubby-hole. Inside the cubby-hole was one approved place for pin-ups, though perhaps not as good as the cramped stokehold, where one crouching sailor at a time had room to nuzzle the General Motors diesels and in perfect bedlam contemplate the pulchritudinous lassies pasted up on the back of the door that shut out the weather and the whining bullets.<sup>9</sup>

The men of the landing craft fleet had a definite and stalwart élan, justified by the dangers they dared, reinforced by the centrifugal nature of their missions, and symbolized by special insignia: 'Royal Canadian Navy'

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\*Of PRINCE HENRY's No. 528 Flotilla--Lieutenant J. C. Davie, RCNVR;  
of PRINCE DAVID's No. 529 Flotilla--Lieutenant R. G. Buckingham, RCNVR.

shoulder titles, and Lord Louis Mountbatten's 'hook, hawk and rifle' badge on their Army battledress.<sup>10</sup> They had been chosen and trained for initiative and responsibility. In one-half of the craft the highest rank --captain, if you like, was in square rig. Thus swamping their officers through weight of numbers, and often escaping all but the vaguest supervision, the lower deck was able to make its traditional qualities--the camaraderie of doers, simple enthusiasms, absence of "side"--predominate in shaping the Flotilla's attitudes. The relative attractiveness of the commando profession, compared with the dull lot which was the duty of the ship's company as a whole, produced a certain small uneasiness on board. At the end of the autumn eight months hence, Captain Godfrey was to comment on this inequality. He admitted there had been problems of discipline on board PRINCE HENRY

" . . . a certain amount of friction between Combined Operations crews and ship's personnel, but this has now largely been eradicated."<sup>11</sup>

The five officers assigned to PRINCE DAVID's landing craft outfit may be taken as typifying the focussed skill and valuable background of all the small boat sailors. Only one was a newcomer to this type of warfare; the others had been two years in the amphibious game, training with the RN and working out against the enemy in the Mediterranean, and other places. The history of RCN personnel in combined operations (1942-3) is sketched in Appendix L. It explains how it came about that the "Princes", blazing a new war-path in the Force they served, had from the beginning the advantage of a firm nucleus of their own officers and men well versed in the necessary occult sciences of assault from the sea. These officers embraced both example and exhortation as methods of exerting discipline; they wielded a persuasion that was both gentle, and effective; they ran loose boats, but efficient ones, and they contributed a good share of the spark that convinced the commando-sailors their special training would let them hit Hitler where he really hurt.

"A boisterous, playful lot, always ready for a prank or a scrap --the latter invariably ensues when someone refers to their beloved craft as 'barges'--they have been chosen carefully for their experience, high spirits and cool thinking."<sup>12</sup>

The remainder of April, and May, were given over to practices for Operation "Neptune", the naval side of the invasion of western Europe, called "Overlord". Flotillas were lowered, beached, kedged off, and hoisted, by the stop-watch. With or without guinea-pig soldiers, ship's companies learned their part in getting troops on, unpacked, messed, unmessed, and off. At 2215 25 April Captain Godfrey ordered out the ten Landing Ships of Assault Group J-1\* (of which PRINCE HENRY had been designated Senior Officer), for night-time landing craft manoeuvres.

"This particular exercise turned out to be more eventful than was expected. Shortly after the group was underway an air raid developed ashore. Heavy gun fire was audible and the flash of guns and exploding bombs was clearly visible."

Then at 0215 the next morning a patrol of German E-boats raced and reached to within six miles of the Allied troopships, where they tensely waited in the dark off the Dorset coast. Guns' crews closed up, and wished for a whack. But the radio soon confirmed what the bark of guns and the drone of (friendly) aircraft indicated, that the intruders were being engaged and driven off. When the tumult died the "Exercise was subsequently completed and successfully carried out".

The story was the same with all the Normandy preparations, as it would be with the invasion itself--"successfully carried out"--despite enemy effort at interference. His only triumph against the assembling forces came two mornings after the fracas PRINCE HENRY had just missed. Off Slapton Sands in Lyme Bay west of Wight, E-boats stumbled by accident upon a poorly-defended convoy of Landing Ships Tank and sank two, tragically drowning six hundred American troops.<sup>13</sup> The most ambitious drill was Exercise "Fabius", in which four of the five assault forces sailed. PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY on 30 April embarked at Southampton the troops allotted to them for the "Overlord" attack. They sailed with the whole fleet at midnight 3/4 May to attack an area just east of Portsmouth the following dawn. All went well. More exercises and briefings came next. By these means book, chapter and verse of Combined Operations doctrine, drawn indiscriminately from both failures and triumphs of

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\*PRINCE DAVID was not assigned to the same group, but to J-2. The D-day composition and tasks of the two groups, in the framework of the overall plan, are described in Appendix M.

the past, were got by rote; lessons learned for which, among others, nine hundred Canadians<sup>14</sup>. paid the ultimate tuition at Dieppe, when "even Death must have been ashamed at their eagerness".<sup>15</sup>

On 24 May---imperial date---the King reviewed the invasion fleet from Royal Yacht Squadron Castle, Cowes. The concentration of the battalions and navies in the South of England reached a zenith; plans were given a final polish of perfection. Still they stood fast, highly honed in their expertise, and beating off last-minute air raids on the anchorages.<sup>16</sup> Tension tightened. Operational orders were opened on 28 May, and the ships were sealed.<sup>17</sup> In PRINCE HENRY, two dozen British Pioneers who had embarked for "Fabius", and been retained in the ship, were trapped by this last order. For the next few days, they could be seen gazing placidly from the scuttles, and devoutly hoping they could soon: 1. go ashore; or 2. go to sea, and get the show on the road.

1944's feature attraction finally got started on the 2nd of June. The curtain rose slowly, and in sections. At Southampton PRINCE HENRY embarked 326 troops (including 227 of the Canadian Scottish Regiment), and PRINCE DAVID 418 (of whom one-third were of le Régiment de la Chaudière). According to the invasion scheme, these men would next step ashore in France. In the meantime, they waited at Clowes, where Captain Godfrey on 3 June issued to all J-1 Commanding Officers and Masters his orders for the coming passage. Briefing on the orders was put off until the eve of battle. The ships' companies were instructed on 4 and 5 June, only the most important D-day details being omitted. Operation "Neptune" was to be conducted according to the ancient priority which with pride His Majesty's navies now asserted once again, "At all costs the Army was to be landed".<sup>18</sup>

In the Landing Ships, the khaki-clad folk wiled their last few days rehearsing action and disembarkation stations, playing cards, arguing war, women and religion, and wondering if "this was It". One was overheard plotting manoeuvres:

"There are something like a million and a half surplus women in England . . . Why not pick the best and put them in invasion barges? If the Germans have been isolated as long as we have, they'll drop their guns and come running."<sup>19</sup>

The men of the "Princes" laid on concerts and cinema for them. "Mairzy Doats" and the more timely tune "Melancholy Baby" competed for popularity on the Public Address system hit parade. In PRINCE DAVID at 2115 5 June, while the movie "No Time for Love" was packing them in in the cafeteria, the captain called the army officers together to say he would sail his ship in half an hour to attack Hitler's Fortress. At the same moment PRINCE HENRY and her group weighed anchor, the band of the Canadian Scottish playing them out to sea.

"The sound of the pipes carried across the water told of brave men and brave deeds in the past, . . . Now their descendants carried machine guns, but the spirit was the same."<sup>20</sup>

So this was It! The men were called away from their movies and music. As the capstan hissed on the forecastle, the anchor cable rattled and rumbled through the hawse, the soldiers' officers went into their men's messdecks to spread, with quiet grimness, the news of Armageddon. During these oft-imagined moments of final briefing,

"Some of the men continued with what they were doing before; one man mechanically cleaned his fingernails with his commando knife . . . I saw one soldier carefully fold the messages so they would fit into his wallet, and then he removed a snapshot and kissed it . . ."<sup>21</sup>

**No time for love, indeed!**

"Come, foreign rage! Let discord burst in slaughter!  
Oh, then for clansmen true, and stern claymore."<sup>22</sup>

The Allied ships pointed their prows southward, across the Channel, to find a happy landfall--or to make one. By midnight both assault groups were well started, in line ahead, for France. Each kept to the port side passing lane in its own cleared channel of "The Spout".\* Through the night, while unexplained, distant flashes occasionally lightened the horizon ahead, aircraft droned over the Channel. Spasmodic gunfire or explosions could be faintly heard, from far away. There was no sign of enemy interference. The moon shining intermittently amid overcast symbolized the great hopes (modified by doubt) that rested on Operation "Neptune"; if the Allies succeeded, they

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\*The ten channels cleared of mines and used for the approach to Normandy were called, collectively, the Spout. In each channel the starboard side was reserved for slower groups of smaller ships and craft that had started earlier.

indeed stood a good chance of bringing peace out of pain--light through darkness--of soon ending the terror, destruction and death of war, which it is the aim of war's death, destruction and terror to do, with honour. If they did not fail!! On the next few hours everything depended. Captain Godfrey's orders to the J-1 Landing Ships typified this urgency by rescinding the usual rules of search and rescue. On the passage to France, he emphasized, keep closed up;

"The only alteration of course that should be made by an individual ship is to avoid a torpedo which if she did not alter course would hit her. If a ship gets so badly damaged that she cannot proceed the LCA loaded with the assault flight of troops are to be gotten clear of the ship at once. No LCI is to stop to render assistance to another ship which may get damaged.<sup>23</sup>

Steaming down her corridor, PRINCE HENRY during the night overtook and passed five separate groups of smaller vessels--Landing Craft Tank, Support, Mechanized, etc., etc., Landing Ships Tank towing parts of the artificial harbour destined for Arromanches, Motor Launches, destroyers, trawlers, etc.--all bucking along to the same rendezvous. At 0340, for example, the twelve Landing Craft Infantry (Large)\* of RCN-manned No. 262 Flotilla were passed as they tossed along in their slower-moving queue, in company with thirty other vessels and an escort.<sup>24</sup> The wind blew north-west at eighteen knots or so until 0430, when it freshened--no good omen for beach assault. PRINCE DAVID, exasperated at the pokey Red Ensign ships ahead of her, thrust past them where they strayed out of station. She would not be late for D-day.

A bugle at 0500 called the troops.

"There was unusual silence at the breakfast tables; many of the men looked weary. When you questioned them they said they had managed to sleep for a few hours, but you saw in their eyes that this was not true.<sup>25</sup>

Dawn, breaking cloudy about 0530, revealed a tremendous Allied seapower in every direction. The other one hundred and four Canadian ships that were out there somewhere were but a small fraction of it.<sup>26</sup> Group J-1 had maintained

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\*LCI(L) were craft 160 feet in length, speed 16 knots, troop accommodation (with bunks) 185, naval crew about 25. (NHS 8000 LCI General). RCN landing craft in the invasion were PRINCE DAVID's and PRINCE HENRY's, and three flotillas (Nos. 260, 262 and 264--total 31 craft) of this larger type. Among the many other Canadian naval units active in the invasion of Normandy, the sister-ship PRINCE ROBERT was not included. She was undergoing a few days of repairs at Belfast on the 6th of June--see pp. 75-6 above.

a fifteen-minute lead during the passage, and arrived at the lowering position that much ahead of J-2. At 0605, PRINCE HENRY anchored seven miles offshore. PRINCE DAVID was manoeuvring with her group about two miles to the east, lowering landing craft to deck level as way was taken off the ship. Some of her boats had early appointments, hazardous missions--and short futures.

D-day is not one story, but many. It was an operation, as Churchill said, "undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult that has ever taken place".<sup>27</sup> The general aim was easily enough understood, but the means to it were of unparalleled complexity. In short, what an operation! The planners of "Overlord" had made stalwart efforts to render it a coherent whole; its co-ordination was as vast as its conception, the direction as strong as the purpose. Still, all that the most intricate time-tables, the detailed, dove-tailed tomes of instructions, the reams of quick-indexed, cross-referenced agenda could do, was to set particular and limited goals for small units of men and weapons. Once the great machine was designed, wound up, and let go, the invasion proceeded on its own, by inertia. Les jeux sont faits. The 6th of June was, in a sense, out of control, as a wisely-programmed computer automatically sorting out correct answers, making ready and acceptable responses to expected stimuli without the interference of a superintending will or command, is out of control. On the day itself, all that was vital and basic--all that was--was fragmentary, episodic, single digital clicks of the great machine. Then 'twas "all in pieces, all coherence gone". A thousand pieces, not one. Countless separate individual events occurring in isolation, though close in space and time. Particular ships, tanks, boats and small groups, each fully occupied making its own number; each operating alone, as one is alone in a big-city subway-crush; shut off from much contact with others by all the pressure and danger, the motley haste and confusion, the conflicting impulses, the volatile, seething activity.

It is true, of course, that all the small events, combining and culminating in their effect, made the one grand overall result. Following generations may look wise, and look wide, at "Overlord"; it is possible to

write its history in one piece--it is already available on a dozen shelves--by ignoring the miniature fragments of which the great day was made and glorifying the statistic instead; but the aim here is to peer closely at one tiny corner of the far-flung field, and by giving an account of certain forces provided by the Canadian government, give a base to the generalizations of others. So there is no apology that for the ensuing crucial ten hours of 6 June, it has been impossible to devise a unified chronology. Students of historic events have to accept them the way they happened--if fragmentary, so be it. The account of the "Prince" ships on D-day (a story whose facets are legion, or at least hard to count) will be treated as neatly as can be under four headings: How did it fare with PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY, and their Combined Operations Flotillas?

The D-day assault's chief aspect, as witnessed from HMCS PRINCE DAVID, was one of disaster--real, or narrowly and with loss averted. Invasion perils either thwarted outright, or adversely delayed and critically amended, every operation that fell to her lot in the plan. Only the security of the ship itself was not threatened. Thus, although D-day success surpassed all the Allies' calculated hopes, PRINCE DAVID saw no triumph, and had to be told we had won. Mishaps with the landing craft, their destruction and carnage on her decks, was what she knew. PRINCE HENRY did better. Her skirmishers--that is, the flotillamen--in the assault lost only as many craft as PRINCE DAVID preserved--one--and the ship saw far fewer wounded.

PRINCE DAVID's two British-manned craft fared worst of all.\* As LCS(M) 101 was being lowered at 0620, the forward fall jammed. The boat swung, crazily askew, over the ugly, choppy sea, while the crew hung on. When freed, the craft smashed hard against PRINCE DAVID's side, and ". . . the bow of the craft, port and starboard, was holed . . ." But accidents

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\*For the D-day operation only, PRINCE DAVID embarked two boat's crews of RN and Royal Marine personnel. ("PD Data" 15 May 1944 in NHS 8000 PD).

did not alter deadlines, and off she set, sinking, for the distant French shore. As it turned out, LCS(M) 101's subsequent career quite belied this inauspicious beginning. She proceeded to within a half-mile of the beach, and thereabouts between 0740 and 0830 engaged her assigned targets, while giving the Forward Observation Officer embarked a good look as he spotted for one of the bombarding destroyers. Then he was delivered safely onto the beach, and LCS(M) 101 rescued several soldiers drifting in a wrecked LCA, before hitting a mine and sinking. Two of the crew were wounded by snipers, but all returned later to the United Kingdom. LCA 985, lowered at 0642 for the hazardous duty of obstacle clearance, was never heard of again. "How" this craft was lost with all hands is a matter of conjecture, but "how soon" can be guessed at. When PRINCE DAVID's main assault wave struck the beach two hours later, the obstacles had not been cleared.

The third craft PRINCE DAVID lowered on D-day was the RCN-manned LCA 1375, at 0630. Her duty was to take 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade Headquarters\* ashore from HMS WAVENEY, and then join the permanent ferry service off the beaches when the parent-ship returned to Britain. The adventures of this craft before she returned to PRINCE DAVID on 9 June to find that all the rest of the flotilla had been destroyed, will be described later.

PRINCE DAVID's other five craft were doomed. By 0655 they had all been lowered, total lift about 175 soldiers. PRINCE HENRY was dipping all of her eight craft into the brine at the same time, and embarking into them 227 troops. The army clambered heavily into their conveyances, cumbersomely accoutred with knapsack, weapons, Mae West and oilskin gas-cape, and a thicket of shrubbery at the brow. PRINCE HENRY sent the warriors over the side with a rousing cheer, while the Canadian Scottish band's pipes squealed glory from the quarter-deck,<sup>28</sup>. No heroics marked the departure of 529's boats from PRINCE DAVID's side, although, expendable like ammunition, they would not return from the shore. Businesslike, they circled and organized themselves

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\*Brigadier R. G. Blackadar, CBE, DSO, MC, Canadian Army.

for a few minutes, then formed astern of the guiding Motor Gunboat 300 for the run-in. PRINCE HENRY's craft joined eighteen others taking a course from MGB 324.\* The purposes of the assault waves from the Canadian Landing Ships were similar: to land the first of the follow-up troops at H-hour plus forty-five minutes. PRINCE HENRY's flotilla was to beach on "Mike Red", near Courseulles, two miles west of PRINCE DAVID's (Nan White). Both would touch down at the same time of the tide, which at PRINCE HENRY's beach was ten minutes earlier by the clock, 0830. To those watching from the parent-ships, the Canadian flotillas disappeared in two stages: first unidentifiable on the tossing seas among the hundreds of Allied craft of every description also going in, or to and fro; then lost from view in the greyish cloud of dirty smog that drifted out to sea from the beleaguered coast.

The one-and-a-half hour passage across La Baie de la Seine was not the pleasantest ever:

"Despite the tablets which many took to prevent sea-sickness, the rolling, plunging motion of the LCA made quite a few men sick. To add to their discomfort, the stubby bows of the assault craft hitting the white-capped waves sent sprays of water over the men. The oiled gas-capes came in handy as temporary raincoats. As the large LSI grew smaller in the distance, the men began to stand up in the craft to look at the shore. As yet there was no evidence of enemy fire, but the rumble and roar of the naval bombardment was still throwing up clouds of dust and smoke . . .<sup>29</sup>

The soldiers were not the only indisposed ones. The Commanding Officer of the Canadian Scottish recalled ten years afterward:

"At this stage my RCN counterpart, who had directed landing craft into Salino, North Africa and other landings, became violently seasick and was of no use for the direction of craft into the beachhead."\*\*

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\*LCA Flotillas No. 517 and 526, from SS DUKE OF ARGYLL and HMS QUEEN EMMA.

\*\*Lieutenant-Colonel F. N. Cabeldu, DSO, Canadian Army, Notes written for R. H. Roy (NHS 1650 "Neptune", vol. 2). No shame attaches to a seasick sailor--more credit, perhaps, for doing his duty at sea in spite. Every navy has plenty such. In this instance, however, it appears that the one referred to was not RCN: 1. HMS QUEEN EMMA carried the regimental Headquarters of the Canadian Scottish (Cabeldu's notes); 2. No craft from PRINCE HENRY was sent to take personnel ashore from QUEEN EMMA; 3. No RCN officer was borne in QUEEN EMMA or in HMS ULSTER MONARCH (the only other White Ensign ship beside PRINCE HENRY that carried the Canadian Scottish --1944 Royal Navy Lists); 4. If his craft had had an RCN lower deck coxswain, would the Lieutenant-Colonel have referred to him as "my counterpart"? 5. Cabeldu's Headquarters landing craft seems to have grounded offshore, its soldiers using a beached LCT as wharf to shore (Roy, p. 215). All of PRINCE HENRY's craft made the beach. Conclusion: It is probable that Lieutenant-Colonel Cabeldu went ashore in one of QUEEN EMMA's No. 526 Flotilla craft, perhaps the Flotilla Officer's--"counterpart". After the passage of some years; and since (see Roy) the regimental memory of going to Normandy in a Canadian ship--although it was true for only a quarter of it--remained very strong; it is easily understood how this little error could happen.

D-day: approaching the beaches

They neared Normandy. Behind them and to the sides, the loud bark of naval guns achieved the crescendo of their bombardment a few minutes before 0745 and 0755, when the first Allied troops were due to hit the beach. The French coast replied to this salute with dull rumblings. All around, multitudinous jostling invasion barges pressed forward in ragged thick echelons, curving away far out of sight in either direction. The fifty-mile stretch of Normandy shore which the Allies had chosen to attack, noted during peacetime as a resort (and fishing) area, was receiving the new season's first crowd of tourists with a bang. H-hour! The beach was now visible, but who could read the lessons on that shuffling scene? assault craft plying in and out, glimpsed through interposing seas; ants of men running on the beach, and heavy equipment moving ashore; among and behind them, rising plumes of smoke and debris, and many visible, though silent explosions--what did it all mean? Many navigators now had difficulty picking their spot, and had cause to recall the official understatement, ". . . heavy bombardment and bombing prior to H-hour is likely to alter the appearance of conspicuous buildings"! The boats' uneasy motion, the clamour, the uncertainty of the outcome, the ineluctable time-table rigidly fixing the onset--while fears prayed to become courage, and valour tensed to transform purpose into act--all blended together into an ocean of apprehension, over which floated forward the sailors and soldiers in the Canadian Flotillas, mere minutes from heroism. The glumness broke in some of the craft when a Royal Marine trumpeter, riding into earshot in an LCT, rendered into the edgy air the theme many may have shared: "I am going to get lit up when the lights go on in London." At 0800 the two groups of landing craft arrived at their release positions about 4000 yards offshore. They settled into their penultimate assault routine, each boat chasing the tail of the next ahead around an endless circle while they waited for their turn to thrust shoreward.<sup>30.</sup>

At 0815 the scheme beckoned to the twenty-six craft of Group J-1. They opened their throttles and ran a fifteen-minute gauntlet to the shore, PRINCE HENRY's No. 528 Flotilla spread out on the formation's left flank. At first it seemed easy.

"Initial run-in was quite uneventful and we were surprised that no heavy shells were being sent our way. We were also surprised to see the lack of the Luftwaffe."<sup>31.</sup>

Another observer wrote:

"It wasn't until we almost touched down that they opened fire from mortars well back on the beach."<sup>32</sup>.

In "moderately heavy" fire, they churned the last few yards. This tumbling, swirling surf was Hitler's Atlantic Wall, ivied with terraced destruction. Row on row, the German beach defences climbed out of the sea, the nearer outposts washing--now clear, now obscured--in the risen tide.\* Rounds from hostile barrels whizzed over the combers and the obstacles. As sailors by natural propensity are neither saints nor stoics, it is not surprising that many soldiers, ducking the spray and fire, discovered they could measure the nearness of the beach by the sensitive, even artistic inflection of "the curses of the sailor at the wheel."<sup>33</sup> The eight craft of PRINCE HENRY's flotilla swerved among the obstacles and booby-traps, and grounded themselves on the beach at full tilt.

". . . small mines exploded, engine rooms, hulls and forepeaks were damaged--but the craft were expendable and every man in them got ashore unhurt."<sup>34</sup>.

No, not quite every one. As LCA 1372 lay its ramp open, mortar bombs caught the 10th Platoon of Canadian Scottish disembarking. One Private was killed, the Lieutenant seriously wounded. It was estimated by the RCN Boat Officer\*\* that another six or eight of the Scottish took small pieces of Nazi metal ashore with them as they hurried their worst casualties along hastily-rigged lifelines. Able Seaman D. Tennant, RCNVR, was wounded in three places by the same bursts but "refused to stop working until finally ordered to much later by Lieutenant Nuttall". According to the plan, each craft would return to the ship independently. LCA 1372 did so with only two small holes in her bottom. These trophies marked her as one of the harder-used half of PRINCE HENRY's flotilla, but were still a bargain price for the 6th of June.

\*These defences were of three basic types: 1. fence-like apparatus to keep craft away from landing; 2. spear-like projections, and pyramids, to rip out bottoms; and 3. mines. The first two types were often also mined. (NHS, Narrative B, Draft "C", vol. I, p. 91). Low Water on PRINCE HENRY's beach had been at H-hour, 0745.

\*\*Lieutenant G. E. Nuttall, RCNVR.

Other RCN casualties were incurred in LCA's 1021 and 1033. The last success of the first-named craft was setting its army ashore without a scratch. Then a tank disembarking from a British LCT astern rammed into her; she broached broadside to the combers, with a fouled keedge; finally struggling off on engines alone, she struck a bobbing mine. The engine-room got fire and flood together. The coxswain, Leading Seaman D. Townson, RCN, himself wounded in the approach, put out the fire while the other two hands evacuated the badly hurt stoker; but the craft sank. On the beach, the four castaways played soldier and dug in. When an Army medic came along, the stoker was left in his care,\* while the other three caught a ride in an LCT. It came to grief. Shipwrecked still, 1021's crew got off for PRINCE HENRY shortly after 1000, in HMC LCI(L) 117 of No. 260 Flotilla.

For a good while it looked as if LCA 1033 would never get off the beach either. This craft's passengers were of the 85th Field Company, Royal Engineers. Warned by the Boat Officer\*\* at 0805, 0820 and 0825 that they would soon be in Normandy, they didn't believe the conductor, and would have ridden past their station if there had not been a stop scheduled. Some of the troops were still buckling on equipment when the craft beached. They strolled ashore in leisurely dribs and drabs. By 1845 only three were left, struggling with their qualms under the gunwales, measuring duty against danger, no doubt, and trying to heft a heavy handcart full of explosives along with them. It is true there was plenty of enemy activity to dissuade them; and one of the Canadian seamen set a not very encouraging example just about this time, when he was tactlessly hit and slightly wounded by shell splinters. According to one account which could be more explicit, since it is anonymous, the skipper "rained expletives"<sup>35</sup> upon them; when machine-gun bullets splattered on his craft's armoured sides, he crouched behind their baggage to continue the diatribe. Did his words strike home? a sudden

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\*Leading Stoker F. Bialowas, RCNVR, "Seriously wounded", was later on brought over to Number Nine Canadian General Hospital at Horsham, England, and released from there to HMCS NIOBE Hospital for convalescence on 17 August, 1944. (WSR V-11753 BIALOWAS).

\*\* Sub-Lieutenant J. A. Flynn, RCNVR.

animation crossed their visage; he took it for a prick of conscience, a decent pride, a stern resolve. For their part, the reluctant warriors had probably observed their interlocutor punctuate his oratory by **butting his cigarette** on a case of the Engineers' favourite bridge-blower! Duty, or a sense of self-preservation, now prevailed. The three disembarked, leaving behind the demolitions, their army packs,\* and a distinctly unoriginal battle-cry: "To . . . with this, let's get the . . . out of here!!" The Canadian sailors warmly reciprocated this adieu. LCA 1033 finally cleared the obstacles again shortly after 0900.

On the way out to PRINCE HENRY, she overtook and passed a pathetic convoy of three flotilla-mates. LCA's 850, 856, 925, and 1371 had run for the beach with the others at 0830, and managed not to incur any casualties. The Flotilla Officer's 856, however, was impaled on an obstacle while grounding right next to an LCA of No. 509 Flotilla (SS CANTERBURY) that had been wrecked at the water-line during the morning's initial assault.

Lieutenant Davie looked about him as the troops debouched with a splash,

" . . . ran across the beach, ascended a small cliff about one hundred yards up and disappeared over the other side. I saw some men lying on the beach, apparently dead, but there weren't many.<sup>36</sup>

In the derelict next door a "badly wounded" Corporal of the Winnipeg Rifles was discovered. He was brought into the boat, which then pushed off.

" . . . We discovered we were making water fast." Fortunately, help rallied round. LCA's 850, 925 and 1371 had all landed their loads without incident, and now came alongside their disabled leader for orders. 850 set off for HMS STEVENSTONE with the wounded soldier. The other two craft took the damaged 856 in tow, one on each side, and sent men on board her to assist.

"The engineroom was flooded and the forward bulkhead had to be closed off. Five men bailed with buckets continually in the well until we reached HMCS PRINCE HENRY and at one time we had to stop bailing LCA 856 to bail out LCA 925 which was filling with water owing to the heavy sea.

Averaging two knots, this unseaworthy convoy was brought safely over the long seven-mile haul mostly by will-power, and by 1230 they had all been safely hoisted.

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\*At any rate, two packs were found in the craft when it returned from the beach.

The luck of No. 528 Flotilla's eighth craft, 736, is also indicative of how Providence seemed to reinforce skill to preserve PRINCE HENRY's combined operations units. With a greater flair for drama and suspense that is very often expected, and hardly appreciated, in such matters, this craft beached and swung her ramp open squarely on top of a live mine, which took its weight. But it did not explode--yet! The army tiptoed up the brief incline and plopped into waist-high water. In muted tones the craft's company cautiously noted that the kedgewarp was tangled. When it was cut, and wrapped itself around one of the propellers, this intelligence too was received without rancour or violent movements. (You were never so careful to avoid banging things, even when Mother was raising bread in the oven). 736 tenderly rocked and eased itself off the shore on one engine, breathed again, and headed out for the lowering position to take up her other eight lives.

By contrast with the good fortunes of PRINCE HENRY's No. 528 Flotilla, PRINCE DAVID's five boats that assaulted in the same wave met a disastrous fate. Thankfully, their personnel were mostly spared. At 0825 they steered in for Nan White beach, in line abreast. Among all the British and American forces there that day, "no LCA Flotilla had a tougher time in reaching the beach than did PRINCE DAVID's".<sup>37</sup> Stray bullets began to whistle, then purposive ones. All kept low, while right forward the coxswain peered out through slits in his box-like enclosed bridge.

"The tide was considerably higher than had been anticipated and the beach obstructions were partly covered with water. There were six rows of obstructions but we were able to weave our way through them . . . On the beaches there was considerable enemy fire . . .

and as they rode in the last few yards at 0840 on crested whitewater, LCA 1059's Lewis gunner saw, among the viciously-grinning surf-swirled German booby-traps, the bodies washing up and down.<sup>38</sup> There were corpses of obstacle clearance frogmen, who like the Highwayman's love warned others with their death.\*

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\*Noyes, A., "The Highwayman" (Collected Poems, Philadelphia and New York: Lippincott, 1939, p. 13). This scene was fairly standard for the later assault waves on D-day. Canadian Scottish "D" Company's commander wrote: "The first grim sight of war faced us as we rushed from our LCA. It was a Canadian soldier face down in the shallow water. The body was rushing up to the beach on each wave and receding as it broke and ran back to the sea." (Roy, p. 216)

1059 detonated a mine port side, and lurched to the right, grounding on the beach as the water rushed in and sank her. The two soldiers killed in this explosion, and another wounded when the Flotilla Officer's LCA 1150 next caught it from a mortar shell seconds after beaching, were the only troops PRINCE DAVID's boats failed to deliver intact.\* About 0845 LCA 1137, having emptied its troops into two to three feet of water, detonated two mines simultaneously and stove in both bows and stern. LCA 1138 was winding itself off the beach with the keedge when

"... a wave lifted it onto a [mined] obstruction. The explosion which followed ripped the bottom out of the craft"

and threw the Boat Officer, unconscious and badly hurt, into the water. His life was saved by the craft's coxswain, Able Seaman J. Cole, RCNVR, who dragged the inert officer ashore by main force.

Thus, within five minutes of striking the German beaches, four-fifths of these craft were smashed beyond use. Lieutenant Buckingham decided to wait until enemy fire lessened, and more water covered the obstacles, before attempting a return to PRINCE DAVID. The routine was "Shipwrecked, take cover!" while for a dangerous hour exposing themselves at the water's edge to every peril of plunging surf, exploding mines and enemy fire, the crew of the one boat left intact--LCA 1151--kept their craft secure.\*\*

About 0950 the Flotilla Officer thought they'd try it, and herded his little band of two dozen or so souls into LCA 1151 to leave the beach. But it didn't work.

"By this time there was a cleared channel through the obstructions, which had been made by an LCT beaching, but as we were leaving, an approaching LCT forced us to alter course. An obstruction ripped the bottom out of LCA 1151."

They had to wait another two hours before getting back to their ship in LCT 530. In the hubbub, they kept their casualty list down by a variety of seamanlike expedients. Perhaps LCA 1059's gunner's tactic was not typical, but it was seamanlike, and not inexpedient. After being blown up in LCA 1151, he waded

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\*Three soldiers issuing from LCA 1137 were struck down as they raced up the beach (CNMO to Naval Sec. 27 June 1944--NSS 1250-9, Vol. 1).

\*\*During this period 1151's coxswain, Leading Seaman M. Walker, RCN, leapt from the relative safety of the craft to tow out of harm's way a floating log with teller mine attached that was about to bump it. His name heads the captain's list of those to be mentioned in dispatches.

to a partly-submerged LCT, and

"there he found other marooned seamen--and a gallon of rum. For the next few hours, while mortar shells sent up deadly spouts of water, Rose and his companions fortified themselves . . ."<sup>39</sup>

Having sent all their boats away by 0700, HMC Ships PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY waited, and watched. Up and down the coast cruisers and destroyers could be seen moving about, bombarding. The Allied Landing Ships lay still, anchored in clusters that, separated by three or four mile intervals, grew gradually smaller until they passed beyond the ten-mile visibility range<sup>40</sup>. or dropped below the western horizon. These vessels disgorged positive swarms of small landing craft--for equipment, obstacle clearance, support, assault personnel--which were everywhere circling, shouting, signalling, forming up, and moving off to swell the throng of boats already heading shoreward. For the middle--and large--sized landing craft who had crossed the Channel on their own were now arriving in ten columns apparently as exhaustless as conveyor belts, and were streaming towards France through every gap in the line of vessels at anchor. All of this meshing activity--fulfillment of a planner's dream--the officers and men in the Canadian ships could easily see. In the direction of Normandy, however, smog baffled visibility. As in a madman's theatre, the landing ships had been invited to the play, and had come as highly interested spectators, to find the first acts were going on behind the curtain which the management was reluctant to raise. When after 1000 the sun burnt off the fog and shore could be seen from time to time, watchers so far from the action were really none the wiser. And it was hard to interpret the varied aspect of the invasion's initial naval units coming out from the beach. Very many landing craft, even flotillas, seemed to emerge undamaged: full of knots, manoeuvrable, undented, all hands on deck evidencing at some distance the enthusiastic appearance of men who have done well. Other units struck forlorn chords, limping out to sea again with more gaps than ranks in their tattered formations: minor craft with sides stove in, bailing just fast enough to keep afloat; major craft with their ramps blown all askew and upperworks riddled, or thronged with the dead and dying.

D-day: viewed from the Prince ships

From offshore, at this stage of D-day, it was easy to suspect things were not going too well. The events in PRINCE DAVID were especially depressing. LCS(M) 83 was due to come alongside about H-hour to pick up a Forward Observation Officer for inland, but the craft never showed up.\* A sharp eye was kept for PRINCE DAVID's own landing craft returning any time after 1030—as we have seen, they did not come back. At 1145 LCT 1145 came alongside to embark the troops still remaining to be taken ashore. First a wounded marine was hoisted in an open stretcher.

"... it was noted that the sight of a badly wounded patient dangling in one of these stretchers presented a gruesome sight both to the ship's company and to the troops waiting to disembark."

Not noticeably encouraged by the dying serviceman, the 250 soldiers boarded their LCT, and were away by 1350. Meanwhile, more stragglers arrived, whom also the Nazis had handled harshly. LCT 530 came with five uninjured survivors from DUKE OF WELLINGTON's Landing Craft, one hysterical rating from ST. HELIER's and a bedraggled lot of about twenty sea-soaked Canadians, bearing among them their single casualty with two broken legs. Thus returned PRINCE DAVID's own combined operations personnel, having lost all their transport, but lucky to be alive. Another LCT brought two more naval casualties. In the afternoon larger numbers of wounded were embarked. At 1500 the ship presented the appearance of a busy, if unusual, admitting ward: LCT 942 was alongside just sending on board the last of twenty-three injured from the 41st Royal Marine Commando; LCT 2230 was secured outboard of her, transferring equal numbers of wounded and unhurt survivors, totalling thirty; while circling and waiting her turn was LCT 728, who also had two wounded personnel for the Canadian Landing Ship.

From PRINCE HENRY's decks during these same hours of 6 June, the scene was much the same, but less sombre. After some unplanned delay, craft were summoned to take the rest of her troops ashore in two more batches at 1155 and 1235. Although she gave accommodation to over twice as many uninjured survivors as PRINCE DAVID did, a more vital statistic reveals that her sickbay

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\*She had foundered making the night passage from Britain.

treated only six casualties, compared with forty-three in her sister-ship. At 0740 forty-five survivors of LCT 2039 (only one wounded) were brought aboard.\* A compound fracture stretcher case was transferred from LCI(S) 526 about noon.

\*. . . pieces of soft-nosed shells were removed from this rating's leg by Surgeon-Lieutenant H. A. McDougall, RCNVR, who operated for more than an hour in an effort to save the leg.\*\*

He was successful. At 1210 a United States Coast Guard vessel sent a Private of the Regina Regiment up the ladder, acutely seasick. To these three patients PRINCE HENRY's own Flotilla, trickling back from the front between 1030 and 1230, added as many more--one each from LCA's 1021, 1033 and 1372.\*\*

This latter craft was also rushed into one of PRINCE HENRY's clinics. Two holes below her water-line needed patching before she was sent to join the ferry service at 1330. The maintenance men did their stuff in short order, and the craft kept its deadline; their hasty labour held together, and no Canadian could be blamed when the craft was demolished by repeated encounters with a beachmaster's bulldozer during the next couple of days. Another craft being worked on at the same time as 1372 was LCT 2044, who came alongside at 1155 in very grave condition. A portable pump, repairs to the stern glands, and a hot meal for her officers and men, fixed everything. Finally, at 1220 LCA 716 was spotted awash. PRINCE HENRY snatched her out of the sea just in time, and both craft and crew was carried back to the United Kingdom.

HMCS PRINCE HENRY sailed at 1453 with the other LSI of Group J-1, under destroyer escort. By 2320 they were anchored in familiar Cowes Roads, where PRINCE HENRY's first task was to send a boat ashore with the Canadian Press correspondent, who was sure he had a story folks might read.<sup>41</sup> For

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\*This craft had sailed across the Channel, and swamped when it arrived in la Baie de la Seine. Motor Launch Q-297 brought the survivors to PRINCE HENRY, whose number included Lieutenant W. D. Alford, RCNVR, one of the Canadian radar experts serving RN. He and a few others leapt dryshot from their craft just as it turned turtle. (NS 0-1560 ALFORD; Halifax Chronicle, 9 June 1944 --in 19-4-2).

\*\*See pages 101-102 above. As noted, LCA 1021 was sunk. This craft's crew were delivered to PRINCE HENRY by HMC LCI(L) 117 about 1210, along with a Royal Marine survivor from MV LLANGIBBY CASTLE's No. 557 Flotilla.

her part, PRINCE DAVID left Normandy a half-hour later than PRINCE HENRY, but arrived in Britain earlier. She was given permission to proceed independently on account of her lame and halt. She spoke Spithead at 2105--the first LSI to return from the invasion.<sup>42</sup> The best efforts of drugs, two doctors, the chaplain and countless volunteers from the ship's company could not keep all the wounded alive;

"In the Sick Bay by the end of the passage there were 10 wounded and 1 dead, while in the Wardroom they had 30 wounded and 2 dead . . .<sup>43</sup> . . . A single wound was a rare occurrence; they were invariably multiple. One Marine had over 100."

And these were the men who attempted, after the King had broadcast on the BBC at 2100, to stand to attention for the Anthem!! PRINCE DAVID reached Southampton at 2230, where the ambulances were lined up waiting on the jetty.

Reviewing Operation "Neptune" in his Report of 15 June, PRINCE DAVID's Commanding Officer had three complaints: 1. supply of naval and victualling stores was inadequate; 2. assault groups should contain only ships with the same speed; and

3. ". . . in future operations the problem of evacuating casualties from craft and from the beaches of D-day should receive closer consideration. On some beaches, there were First Aid facilities, but none at all for the treatment of more serious casualties. Commanding Officers of Major Craft seemed to be at a loss as to how they were to dispose of their wounded. Some even reported that ships had ordered them away."\*

In reference to the second point above, Captain Godfrey of PRINCE HENRY noted that station keeping on the passage over had been good. To his mind, the greatest hitch was

"Owing to the fact that a good many of the LCI(L) were casualties and also the fact of bad weather . . . difficulty was found in providing sufficient of these craft for disembarking second flight troops from LSI. Delay was experienced in unloading MV LLANGIBBY CASTLE which had nearly 1100 troops on board."

Flotilla Officers commented that they discovered on the beaches more obstacles than had been expected, or more than they had expected to find not previously cleared away. Recommended for decoration or mention

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\*Indeed, PRINCE DAVID had had to order away LCT 728, who offered two wounded men, because time did not permit her to stay and take them.

in dispatches were: in PRINCE DAVID--1. Leading Seaman M. Walker, RCN (Coxswain LCA 1151--risked his life to protect the craft); 2. Able Seaman J. Cole, RCNVR (Coxswain LCA 1138--saved Lieutenant Beveridge's life); 3. and 4. Surgeon Lieutenants J. A. Beggs and P. G. Schwager, RCNVR (for care given to the casualties); and in PRINCE HENRY--1. Lieutenant J. G. Davie, RCNVR, for bringing the Flotilla back "with so little loss despite heavy seas and enemy mortar fire"; 2. Able Seaman D. E. Townson, RCN (Coxswain LCA 1021--fought fire while wounded, and rescued his crew); 3. Able Seaman D. Tennant, RCNVR (LCA 1372--could not be persuaded from doing his duty despite multiple injuries). During the summer, Lieutenant Davie was gazetted Distinguished Service Cross "for good service in the invasion of Normandy".<sup>44.</sup>

The only D-day activity of the "Prince" ships remaining to be described is the operations of the two craft detached for ferry duty. PRINCE DAVID's LCA 1375, coming alongside WAVENEY seventy minutes before H-hour, found that Brigadier Blackadar and his staff had impatiently taken other transport to the beach. So she made herself generally useful running errands, and performed several rescues of stranded boats and personnel that failed of official commendation because the Flotilla Officer had not personally witnessed them. LCA 1372 from PRINCE HENRY was meanwhile busy about the same kind of work, and in the intervals alternately grounding on the beach, and getting off, as tides waned and waxed. Twice on 6 June she needed to be bulldozed off into the water. 1372 secured alongside a ship at anchor for the night, and soon after getting underway again at 0700 the 7th was squashed between two LCT's coming in to the beach. The craft sank in one fathom, almost before the several days' rum ration on board could be saved. The next two nights the shipwrecked PRINCE HENRY's slept in LCA 1375 beached near Courseulles. They kept alive a hope of salvaging their craft until a giant bulldozer stumbled on it in the surf and wrote finis. They shared their grog with casualties in the First Aid stations while LCA 1375 kept up a more mundane war effort, ferrying.<sup>45.</sup> On 9 June all the Canadians

and the craft were embarked in HMS GLENEARN\* for passage across to their parent-ships.

All these D-day experiences and trials in no way diminished the RCN Landing Ships' taste for combined operations. In PRINCE DAVID at least, they might have been thought to. This ship's company returning across Channel in the 6th of June's glum evening--davits empty; three craft and their complements completely unaccounted for; two corpses on the Wardroom table; over three dozen shocked and smashed men in the groaning sick-bays, with the morphine almost gone--they could be excused if they considered that the glories of the attack for which they and the world had four years waited, had been vastly overrated, and were not equal to its rigours. Instead, like many predatory animals--and like the soldiers PRINCE HENRY had brought to the Normandy beach-head, their blooding only made them more eager and Ready for the Fray.\*\* But although both ships quickly received replacements for landing craft lost in the invasion, and kept their spirits and intentions sprightly up, a six-week stretch of consistent underemployment now followed, frustrating their enthusiasm. PRINCE DAVID's captain had been afraid of this happening, when he said three weeks before Operation "Neptune",

"The Prince ships could make a succession of cross-channel trips to the beachhead for about 20 days carrying about 400 troops per trip, or for a shorter time carrying as many as 1700 troops per trip, without taking on fresh stores or topping up with fuel and water; but they were not to be allowed to do this. They must conform to the pattern of their weaker brethren who had to waste many hours on each turn around in taking on their stores, going from the oiler to the water boat, to the ammunition boat, to the anchorage, to the jetty for embarking troops, and then to the collecting area to form up as a convoy."<sup>46</sup>

Sadly, this prophesy was all too true. The official reports on the six-week period between the invasion and the two vessels' departure for the

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\*Landing Ship Infantry (Large), Force "S".

\*\*Roy, R. H., Ready for the Fray ("DEAS GU CATH")--The History of the Canadian Scottish Regiment, 1920-55 (Vancouver: Evergreen, 1958).

Mediterranean complained of rarely-interrupted inactivity:

"It is . . . regretted that fuller use was not made of the armament and fire control system and the endurance and general capabilities of HMCS PRINCE DAVID, observing that except for the one passage made on D-day this ship has been lying at anchor in the Solent. [written 15 June] . . . The amount of material and labour expended in fitting out HMCS PRINCE DAVID, coupled with advance newspaper publicity, had led all personnel on board to expect that the ship would be more usefully employed during the operation and the build-up . . ."

For the eighty ship-days starting 7 June, PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY were altogether usefully employed on less than a quarter of them. Details of the three voyages PRINCE DAVID made to France during this time, and PRINCE HENRY's five, are given in Appendix N. There were reasons for the lack of work: it stemmed from Allied success. Two thousand invasion casualties among Canadian troops had been expected, but less than half that number were incurred. As the campaign for Northwest Europe developed from the beach-head, all Allied armies similarly had lighter losses than apprehension had allowed for. So ships carrying personnel replacements were less needed, stores-ships more. British routing officers, too, were embarrassed with surplus lift capacity. For example, when Captain Godfrey brought the ten Landing Ships of Group J-1 back to Cowes on the evening of 6 June, there was difficulty finding space for them all.

"The naval authorities had not expected the J-1 force to return intact by any means, and had not reserved sufficient anchorage for them".<sup>47</sup>

And it is not surprising that, in this highly complex task, some less than perfectly efficient measures\* developed in the turn-around procedures.

As the Canadian ships intermittently helped the build-up in Normandy, there were only a few reminders from the enemy. On several nights after 24 June, German V-1 flying bombs droned over PRINCE DAVID's anchorage. During the passage of 5/6 July, HM Trawler GANILLY was torpedoed\*\* within five thousand yards of the two "Princes", and the 11,000 ton vessel SEA PORPOISE,

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\*E.g. 7 June, when PRINCE DAVID was ordered from Southampton to St. Helen's on the Isle of Wight. She sailed half way, then queried whether the message was not intended for the hospital ship ST. DAVID---it was.

\*\*One of only four such German successes during July ("Sea War", V, para. 2106).

travelling in the same convoy with them, was mined. Captain Godfrey, who as convoy commodore felt some responsibility, wrote:

"It is considered that the mining of this ship was entirely due to PRINCE HENRY's convoy being forced out of the swept channel by a slow convoy on the wrong side of the channel, proceeding in the opposite direction."

The Canadians' most serious brush during this period, however, was not with the enemy, but with a Yankee skipper who happened to be senior to the Commanding Officer of PRINCE HENRY and was therefore made commodore of the 9 July convoy. Stupidly, he signalled PRINCE HENRY to keep station in line ahead, although the current was sweeping across the cleared corridor. The lead ship's prow thus did not point straight along the safe channel, and the rear vessels keeping line ahead might be steaming through the adjoining minefield. Captain Godfrey pointed out they were all out of step but himself, and how necessary it was in mined waters for each ship to do her own navigation, rather than merely follow the leader. As is usually the case with reprimanded authority, the American captain did not seem to be impressed.

During 15 to 23 July, PRINCE DAVID went for a week's refit at Barry (near Cardiff), Wales,\* while PRINCE HENRY lugged her last load to France and begged Admiralty to arrange a thorough boiler-cleaning. Though this was denied, she was sent to Southampton to be taken in hand for awhile on the 17th. She cleared from that port at 0730 24 July, bound for Naples via Gibraltar. PRINCE HENRY greeted HMC Ships HAIDA and HURON in British waters, caught a far-ahead glimpse of PRINCE DAVID---who had sailed the same day---while at sea, and arrived at the Rock with no other excitements at 1500 28 July, two hours behind her sister.

The "Prince" ships' arrival in the Mediterranean at the end of July 1944 heralded an appealing, esoteric chapter in RCN history. Between them, they served for 14½ months in these sunny climes. Each combined operation---

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\* The 291 radar aerial was finally fixed during this Barry refit:

"It had been broken since the middle of April, and due to it's [sic] inaccessible position at the top of the foremast, all efforts to have it repaired were unavailing. Through the courtesy of the local officer commanding Canadian Forestry Corps, the services of one of the men in this unit who was by profession a 'high-rigger' were utilized."

planned or practised, real or rumoured--involved them, often as Headquarters ships. This was quite regular, for assault was their stock in trade. But, also, they learned to take much else in stride as well; to expect the unobvious; to live with flux and fascination; to explore new seas, and new lands; to depend on nothing save themselves, the goodwill of everyone but some of the Germans they met, and the irreversible trend of Allied mastery. Over a fall and winter, as victory spread in many Mediterranean sectors, they reversed and somewhat straightened the course of Hercules, when he set up the Pillars by which they entered the inland ocean of so many interesting opportunities. Operations and injuries drew them successively eastward: Gibraltar, Corsica, France, Italy, Albania, Greece, Egypt. They met many eminences, served many masters; with politicoes, ambassadors and a Prime Minister scattered in memory among the several Admirals (British, American, and one Greek) from those days. Nothing daunted them. FOGMA, FOTALI, FOLEM, SBNO(G)--merely foods which the communications rates ate for breakfast. Invasions, liberations, evacuations, aid to civil power--nothing to it! They dabbled in diplomacy, and even espionage, and played nursemaid to women and children as well as grown men from a half-dozen armies. The Mediterranean experiences were a far call from the frustrations of mostly waiting, which had so predominated in the spring, and had set in again so soon after D-day. Their sojourn in this inferior war-zone had few dull moments, few that could be predicted, and a few that will stand forever in history, noteworthy niches in the story of man that never will recur.

Crossing courses with PRINCE ROBERT near the harbour mouth, PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID arrived at Naples on 31 July.\* Next day they sailed fifty miles south into Salerno Bay, where PRINCE DAVID made Agropoli her base for a week while PRINCE HENRY worked from nearby Castellabate.\*\* Most of August

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\*Passing under the operational control of Commander Task Force 86, Rear-Admiral L. A. Davidson, USN.

\*\*Santa Maria de Castellabate, four miles south of Agropoli. Not to be confused with Castellammare, a dockyard town twelve miles south of Naples, where PRINCE HENRY went for boiler-cleaning after Operation "Dragon".

was given over to Operation "Dragoon"--the invasion of the South of France. The waters north and south of Naples were to this assault what the area inside the Isle of Wight had been to "Neptune". Here the invasion troops were matched up with their ships and received final training, manoeuvres were polished, and the time-table was adjusted to conditions that mirrored the approaching actuality.

The night practice sessions of 3 to 5 August concentrated chiefly on: 1. night navigation, and 2. rubber boats. In "Dragoon", the "Prince" ships' Flotillas were cast in a spine-tingling, clandestine, classic commando-style role--worthy of Hollywood's horrors. Hence these rehearsals, so they could get ashore in the dark, and do it silently. Thirty-nine rubber boats (16 by 8 feet) were supplied to PRINCE HENRY for the landing, and eight to PRINCE DAVID. They were

" . . . specially designed inflatable rubber doughnuts similar in shape to a Carley float but a little larger. In warm, calm waters they give the assault troops the greatest possible chance of surprise since they can be paddled in for the final stage of the approach; but if surprise is lost, they are very easily sunk and an LCA towing them must proceed at under five knots to avoid swamping the boats.<sup>48</sup>

The drill was to launch and hoist these dinghies using the LCA's as elevators, and to arrange them like beads on a string astern of the towing craft. Nine of them could bob along together in this fashion.

On 6 August the two ships withdrew to Naples to embark some high-ranking officers and their staffs. PRINCE HENRY was to be Headquarters ship for "Sitka", one of the invasion's four assault groups, and also for one of three Task Units into which "Sitka" would eventually divide. Until after the successful attack, she was home and office to: 1. CTG 86.3--"Sitka", and 2. CTU 86.3.2--"Sitka Baker". PRINCE DAVID was to be in the same assault group, and was

1 - 6 August 1944

Headquarters for CTU 86.3.3--"Sitka Romeo".\* The troops that were bivouaced at Agropoli and Castellabate, and had participated in the rubber boat experiments, were embarked on 7 August for the full scale exercise "Bruno". They were by no means the least interesting part of "Dragoon"--PRINCE DAVID's soldiers because they were strange and exotic, and were going to their homeland, PRINCE HENRY's for the opposite of both reasons.

Officers and men of the First (American-Canadian) Special Service Force were carried in Rear-Admiral Chandler's flagship. This outfit was a "unique international organization" designed to "undertake tasks more difficult and hazardous than were usually assigned to regular troops".<sup>49</sup> Its combat force was 1800 all ranks, of whom one-third were Canadians. These boys from home, some of them old friends, wore American Army uniforms, with special badges to show they served His Majesty still. Their new commander was an energetic US Colonel who was busy in 1944 fighting against fascism, although he may have changed his mind later on.\*\* The regiment had been

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\*CTG 86.3 Rear-Admiral T. E. Chandler, USN  
CTU 86.3.2 Captain G. E. Maynard, USN  
CTU 86.3.3 Captain S. H. Norris, DSO, DSC, RN

The organization of the invasion armada, and "Sitka" Assault Force's composition and objectives, are detailed in Appendix "P".

During World War II, the RCN and the USN became Allies to whom working together was a regular occurrence, whereas previously the Canadian force had had such relationships almost exclusively with the RN, as was natural. The "Prince" ships were involved in the first two important steps in this process. The "Dragoon" command arrangement was the second of these; "Historically unique for the RCN was the occasion on which Radm. T. E. Chandler, USN, made a Canadian warship--PRINCE HENRY--his flagship . . . It was the first time a Canadian or British warship had acted as flagship for an American admiral." (\*Globe and Mail, 20/9/44, File 19-4-2)

Earlier, the three "Princes" had served under Admiral Theobald, USN, in Alaska--see pp. 52-55 above. Then the same Captain Godfrey that now commanded PRINCE HENRY, had said as Commanding Officer of PRINCE DAVID, "This is the first occasion on which a squadron of the RCN has served under the command of a US admiral, and we hope very much it will not be the last."

The first recorded instance of this type was of the reverse order. In May 1918 eight very small US ships "were placed under the operational control of the RCN" at Halifax and Sydney. (See the paper "Specific instances of co-operation between USN and Canadian Naval Service during First World War, 1914-18" in NHS 1550-157/71).

\*\*Colonel Edwin A. Walker. In April 1961 Major-General Walker was relieved of his command of the US 24th Division in Germany. It was charged that he had been brain-washing his troops with extreme anti-Communist propoganda and had attempted to influence their votes in the November 1960 elections. (Britannica Book of the Year 1962 (Toronto: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1962), p. 731). History will probably best remember him for neither this nor that, but as the other person at whom L. H. Oswald aimed a shot.

Operation "Dragoon": the First Special Service Force embarked in PRINCE HENRY

raised originally to attack Norwegian hydro stations with snowmobiles under the code name "Plough", had trained in Montana with parachutes, campaigned in the Aleutians, fought at Cassino and Anzio, and led the way into Rome.<sup>50.</sup>

In a fitting partnership, Canada's only commando unit was to be carried to its most daring engagement in one of the two RCN ships that specialized in the same line of work.\*

HMCS PRINCE DAVID embarked 248 ranks of the 1st Groupe de Commandos. Commanded by a Colonel Bouvet, these French\*\* and Algerian raiders sustained an atmosphere more dashing, violent and attractive than any other of the 7000 troops the ship lifted in 1944. Allowed by American diplomacy to call themselves the "Fighting French" after North Africa fell away from Vichy, they still used the "Free French" name their visionary leader had first given them, and remembered his slogan: "The enemy is the enemy".<sup>51.</sup> They were on their way to France to fight the Germans, and put the craven metropolitan government straight on these matters. They were a

" . . . queer mixture . . . . Dressed in American uniform, they wore the Free French badge, spoke French, sang, as did some, a chant denoting Arab extraction. Their equipment was to a degree standard but they carried odds and ends, French, Italian and German bayonets, etc., picked up in North Africa.<sup>52.</sup>

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\*Also embarked in HMCS PRINCE HENRY for Operation "Dragoon" was Lieutenant-General J. L. Devers, US Army. He and his aides were the "Allied Advance Headquarters Detachment", which until 16 September was a group of chiefs with no Indians. On that date the South of France Army merged with the others under General Eisenhower, and General Devers took over from General A. M. Patch. (Nicholson, pp. 669-70).

\*\*This "Dragoon" assault force were not the first French fighting men PRINCE DAVID had accommodated. In December 1939, when she had not yet been taken over by the Naval Service, and was lying in moth-balls at Halifax Dockyard, a need suddenly arose for accommodation for the spare crews of French submarines. The French Armed Merchant Cruiser QUERCY (3000 tons) arrived with the submarines ACHILLE, CASABIANCA, PASTEUR and SFAX, and had 335 officers and men for whom she wanted lodgings for awhile. By agreement with the Canadian National Steamships, they were put up in SS PRINCE DAVID. The last of these French sailors left the ship on 22 December. Then CN Steamships and the Naval Service haggled until June 1940 over the bill to be presented to the French government. During this dispute, in the course of which the Naval Deputy Minister threatened to deliver 500 light bulbs to the French consul at Halifax if the Department of Transport persisted in including such items in their bill, the Navy managed to knock the government steamships' charge from \$7500.55 down to \$3567.33. (NSS 1037-45-2, v. 1)

The Free French unit's ancillary and miscellaneous personnel included an orphan boy and two British nurses.<sup>53</sup> The latter, gracefully boarding PRINCE DAVID, disturbed flocks of rumours that flapped off in many directions: all sorts of intrigue, romance and tragedy were attributed to these unlikely retainers, and clung vicariously to the men they served with. They were widows of gallant commandos; trapped by the Fall of France, they had pursued a vendetta against Hitler all throughout the Middle and Near East--one was mother to the orphan lad (?)--so ran the encyclicals of the messdecks. A photo taken in PRINCE DAVID shows the two women sunning themselves on the deck, smoking Churchmans and reading--like ordinary people. They were members of the Hadfield-Spears unit of the Women's Army Corps, both 2nd Lieutenants;<sup>54</sup> they had apparently accompanied the Frenchmen when Elba was taken a month previously, and Colonel Bouvet is reported to have "refused to make further invasions without them".<sup>55</sup> For his part, PRINCE DAVID's captain adopted a paternal attitude:

"Feeling that any girls who had the courage to storm an enemy shore should not be called upon to do so without alcoholic encouragement, I parted with a . . . bottle of Scotch after exacting a promise that they would write a letter (if they survived) and relate their experiences.' They did survive, write, and enjoy the Scotch".<sup>55</sup>

The dress rehearsal "Bruno" was a mock attack overnight 7/8 August. Its objectives (in the Gulf of Gaeta north of Naples) closely resembled the topography of the real targets in the South of France. The islands of Ponza and Zannone represented Port Gros and Levant, in which PRINCE HENRY was interested. Minor, easily fixed hitches occurred in the Allied schedule, but the defenders played their part most gratifyingly. It was hoped their reaction was an omen. The

". . . exercise was so unexpected the Italian people on the rocky, steep-cliffed island thought for a few minutes the Germans had returned. One old lady was so terrified she couldn't even remember the name of her own village."<sup>56</sup>

On the 11th the soldiers were embarked for the main event. Unlike Operation "Neptune", "Dragoon" was not launched direct from the assembly area, which was well over four hundred sea-miles from the South of France objectives. The attack was staged through Corsica, within five or six hours steaming.

"Sitka" Assault Group was assigned the port of Propriano on the west coast of Corsica, where on 12 August the troops were landed ashore for the second-last time. Next day was Sunday. For the eve of a pitched battle with an entrenched foe, there were very few signs of passion or anxiety. Flag officers gave briefings and chaplains gave sermons; one of the nurses finished reading Sense and Sensibility; and seventy-five degree sea-water attracted a swarm of officers and men for a swim; all pretty much as usual in any port, on any Sunday. Harsh, high-pitched sounds emitted from PRINCE DAVID's Landing Craft workshop; several commandos were discovered nonchalantly putting razor-edges on their knives;<sup>57</sup>.

Early 14 August the troops boarded again, and at 1030 "Sitka" Assault Force sortied from the Gulf of Ajaccio to make the much-disputed, on-again, off-again landings in the South of France.\* Shortly after noon C-in-C Mediterranean\*\* passed through the convoy's lines, signalling "good luck".<sup>58</sup> The ships were not spotted by the enemy on passage, and had only one presaged excitement while navigating the approach by surface radar. CTU 86.3.3 (in PRINCE DAVID) signalled HMS DIDO at 1741:

"Reported that two enemy chasseurs patrol in approximate position 165 degrees [from] Cape Cavalier 2 and One-half miles. Request [USS] GLEAVES approach to within 4 miles of this position about two miles 090 degrees from craft of main Romeo assault."

DIDO replied at 1819:

" . . . concur. GLEAVES should sink them by gunfire using flash-less propellant [sic] if they appear likely to sight landing party."<sup>59</sup>

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\*The British were opposed to Operation "Dragoon", thought its resources should have been applied in Italy or further east. Some said Churchill renamed the move "Dragoon" because he had been forced into it, but the British Prime Minister denies it. However, what he wrote about his review of an American troop convoy bound for southern France on 11 August, applies equally well to PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY, and all ships dedicated to "Dragoon": " . . . they cheered enthusiastically. They did not know that if I had had my way they would be sailing in a different direction." (Churchill VI, p. 94, also p. 66; "Command Decisions", chapters 10 and 16).

\*\*Admiral Sir J. H. D. Cunningham, KCB, MVO, RN.

Next morning proved it was well that these last-minute warnings were mooted, and provisions made, as will be seen.

Operation "Dragoon" enjoyed better weather than "Neptune" had. The ten "Sitka" troop-carriers made their stealthy evening approach to the French coast in conditions that were

" . . . perfect for an operation of this type; sky was . . . clear, sea smooth with a very slight swell. A slight haze was apparent toward land and visibility was of 5 or 6 miles."

When night fell, it was the most perfect dark, with no moon. By 2210 "Romeo" unit of PRINCE DAVID, PRINCESS BEATRIX, and PRINS ALBERT had formed up in line abreast, stopped, and been joined by a cluster of American PT-boats. They were about ten miles directly east of the 6.5 inch Nazi guns<sup>60</sup> on Ile de Levant, and an equal distance from their mainland objectives. The rest of "Sitka" Group carried on due west and stationed themselves 7000 yards off Levant and Port Cros islands by 2300.

As Appendix "P" explains, none of "Sitka's" advance landings depended on any of the others. They would succeed or fail independently-- probably simultaneously as well, since all the incursions were planned for 0130.\* An "unseen and silent knifing of [enemy] guns crews"<sup>61</sup> were prescribed for all three units. "Able" and "Baker" on the two islands and "Romeo" at Cap Nègre on the mainland. If any German radar installations were discovered, they could be usefully smashed up.<sup>62</sup> "Romeo" unit was also to seize the main road to Toulon so that no reinforcements could arrive by that route on D-day. While the whole operation called "Sitka" thus broke and held the enemy's right flank, isolating the beaches and neutralizing their strongest defenses, for the morrow's attack, another force far to the east was similarly cutting the enemy off on his left.\*\* This account will first follow PRINCE DAVID, and see how "Sitka"- "Romeo's" landing progressed.

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\*That is, the principal landings. Each was preceded by a reconnaissance party one hour ahead.

\*\*This other midnight landing has been the subject of some confusion, and is sketched in Appendix "Q".

The advance guard was sent in first, HMS PRINCESS BEATRIX providing 75 Free French commandos and three LCA's piled high with rubber dinghies.

PT-boats

" . . . carried the men and towed the landing craft which were, in turn, to tow the rubber boats from a point 3000 yards off-shore . . . .<sup>63</sup>

to within a half mile. From there, the men with knives would paddle. They planned to slink ashore, at Cap Nègre and at Rayol beach two miles east of there, at 0030. The Rayol reconnoiters were to establish the beach's advisable limits, and mark them with two muted signal-lamps slyly shining to seaward, so the principal assault wave would have something to steer by in the pitch black. The scheme was well-honed, pretty (the lights were of different colours), and pretty intricate, complex even: as likely to fail in execution as it was difficult to make work in practice. These navigational arrangements did in fact collapse, but the failure caused no significant hurt.

Immediately the initial force of 75 had been gotten safely away, the three Landing Ships disembarked the remaining 750 commandos. PRINCE DAVID lowered six LCA; PRINCESS BEATRIX and PRINS ALBERT each about the same number of craft. Each landing craft towed a rubber boat in which a few of the commandos rode. In three lines twenty-five yards apart,<sup>64</sup> they moved off at 2240 astern of a PT-boat provided as guide and escort. The invasion beach was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours away. Under the distant light of pale stars, coxswains strained their eyes against the night to keep station and dressing, and nicely calculated the speed at which the rubber rafts could be dragged through the water without quite swamping. Otherwise, on the long run in, their seamanship was uncomplicated. Gentle undulations of the warm inland sea washed them easily onwards to--to what? What would be their reception this time, to compare with the Sixth of June? We can now realize that the Canadian sailors should have thoroughly relaxed and enjoyed their picturesque midnight cruise in the romantic Mediterranean--the air fine; the pleasant symphony of muffled engines and lapping wake; the swarthy strange accents, even more muffled, from their unusual passengers; the long black line of land gradually becoming less the

horizon, and more their foreground, with the occasional light twinkling, or the skyward sweep of headlights mounting some rise on the road they aimed for--an exotic and intriguing excursion, and all at the Government's expense! But these feelings, in them, were generously mixed with a stalwart, tensile expectancy, and were modified by their recent vivid memory of the smashed boats and bodies of Normandy. We know the night was a shield hiding their approach from the sleeping and unfortified enemy; to them, it could as readily hold fatal as pleasant surprises.

At 0100 they arrived three-quarters of a mile off the beach. The rubber boats now probably paddled ahead. The coloured lights had not been sighted, nor any guide met. They were already a little late, so pushed on regardless, and just before 0200 the seventeen or so craft beached together about a mile west of where the advance party had established a beachhead and was waiting. The error

" . . . made no difference to the operation since the landing was unopposed and the beach was rather an easier one on which to beach craft than the beach which had been chosen."

Within a few minutes most of the French commandos had melted away inland, where they captured their objectives, and the landing craft were headed seaward again. Of PRINCE DAVID's LCA's, only 1373 stayed behind, to assist in landing of supplies.

The others, withdrawing, soon passed a squadron of four Landing Craft Mechanized coming in. PRINCE DAVID and PRINCESS BEATRIX had each lowered two of these boats at 0015, and sent them off to the beach loaded with motor transport and other miscellaneous equipment.\* PT 218 guided them to where LCA 1373 was waiting to show them the way in to the wrong beach, that is, the one where the main body had landed. The only untoward incident arising from the faulty navigation now occurred, when the French Beachmaster refused to let the transport craft unload their gifts. The records indicate that the matter was taken up with some heat between the Canadian Boat Officers and their

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\*From PRINCE DAVID, for example, LCM 185 carried three jeeps, a motorcycle, and beach netting. There were also medical stores, water containers, grenades and other ammunitions, etc. (DN Inf. photo and caption PD 515, in file "Mediterranean--PD").

obstinate ally; unfortunately, a divergence in language prevented a meeting of minds, and the arguments of each side remained largely conjecture to the other. The LCA were to land the goods and get clear before first light; but the beach party had discovered that their accidental lodgment had no good exits whereby the equipment could be moved inland. Enemy fire that now began to spatter the seashore nearby hastened the termination of these less than calm deliberations. The beachmaster relented somewhat, and accepted light stores from the LCM's; who hurriedly pushed off well before dawn still carrying the major part of their loads.

HMCS PRINCE HENRY's landing craft operations went off with even more perfect smoothness. The Canadian ship, with US Ships OSMOND INGRAM, ROPER, GREENE and BARRY had stopped off Ile de Levant at 2252. One of the Americans sent away the first few assault craft, whose troops were to go ahead of the main body and spy out the land.

"... Landing craft towed the rubber boats to within 1000 yards of the objective and from there the boats, led by a scout on an electric surfboard of ingenious design, were paddled in to land their troops with perfect stealth. These troops then prepared the way for the craft landing with their stores and heavy equipment."

Then the main assault wave, comprising about three dozen LCA's, a gross of rubber boats, and 1400 commandos, was prepared. By 2350 PRINCE HENRY had lowered and sent off her six assault craft. Two LCM's remained on the ship, waiting for 0300 before leaving for the beach with preloaded heavy equipment.

"The rubber boats of PRINCE HENRY's unit Baker, after being towed to within a quarter of a mile of their beaches by the LCA's, touched down as ordered at 0130, 15th August, on four small beaches along the southeastern shore of Levant island . . . . The island was less than a mile across, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles long, but was difficult country for fighting, being rocky and mountainous . . . . The landings . . . were virtually unopposed; one of PRINCE HENRY's craft was fired on by a machine gun, but no one was hit."

After the rubber boat armada had melted into shoreward darkness, No. 528 Flotilla had time on its hands until first light, when they were to land stores. One craft had been detailed as a communications number, and busied itself taking a signals party of US Marines wherever they wanted to go. The other five LCA's alternately idled and drifted in the warm water. For the time, all was silent from the island under attack. Distant surveillance of

the shore was as steady as it was unrevealing; however, the absence of commotion seemed to indicate it had fallen into Allied hands.

"The Landing Craft from the American Army Personnel Destroyers had orders to get back to their ships before daylight and two of PRINCE HENRY's LCA's therefore took on all their stores, mainly ammunition, which increased their loads up to at least seven tons--perhaps a record for LCA's."

After 0300 dull, distant rumbles of gunfire could be heard, probably from La Ciotat and Antibes to the west and east, where naval feints were making diversionary pyrotechnics to draw enemy attention from the real target area. Then the new moon rose, to glint the gentle waves. Abruptly about 0500 a sudden flash and a crashing detonation split the night's reverie, close, within a few miles. These disturbances

" . . . came from the direction of PRINCE HENRY's transport area and, after an exchange of tracer, the ship that had been hit and was burning blew up with a fierce explosion. For over an hour the white-hot hulk gleamed on the water . . ."

Disaster was perceived, but to whom it had happened the combined operations personnel could only wonder. Dawn, glimmering agreeably at 0545, ended their waiting game, and No. 528 Flotilla ran in to the island.

The so-called 'beaches' were almost inaccessible from inland, and were just about the roughest and most rock-strewn inlets even Newfoundlanders could imagine. Limestone rocks grew jagged and straight out of the water, so that some boats could not beach, but gently bumped their prows against the shore. The land was not high, but unharmonious; the shale, tilted upward, unevenly worn, fractured and faulted, made simple walking a scrambly, treacherous, mountain-goat business, and the transfer of supplies a most difficult proposition. The craft remained in these pleasant remote coves for some time, amid a bobbing school of the rubber boats that had made the initial assault, while the Flotilla Officer pondered the problem of de-supply, and measured his resources for the work. A few hands sent up the root-floored woody path that led into the centre of the island soon reappeared with a small squad of American and Canadian commandos, and under their guard--answer to an unloader's dream--a number of Germans just taken prisoner. Herrenvolk was aptly applied to the situation, and our new-found friends stumbled the more

manageable munitions over the rocks, encouraged by ample supervision. This brilliant labour-saving device soon half-emptied the boats. The heavier materiel was retained for later off-loading.<sup>65.</sup>

The fight for Levant was going well. Several of the "gun" emplacements thought to threaten the "Dragoon" transport areas proved to be dummies of wood and stove pipe. By 0700 the First Special Service Force had taken about 240 prisoners, and lost two wounded. Meanwhile, the horrid thunderous cacophony of the Allies' softening-up bombardment burst over the sleepy Riviera. From 0610 until the main landings at 0800 the guns, planes and rockets did not let up. During this overture, the Canadian flotilla ran down the shoreline of the island to a good beach near the southern tip, to put off the rest of their supplies. PRINCE HENRY's two LCM's found the same place, and unloaded three jeeps, a trailer, eighteen miles of signal wire, the CTU 86.3.2, and other paraphernalia. By 0900 all craft had returned to the ship, intact after their second invasion. They were pleased to learn that the ship they had seen destroyed in the darkness had not been one of ours.

During the night of 14/15 August, PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID lay offshore and experienced a repeat of Normandy D-day's suspended animation. "From the ship very little activity could be seen in the assault area ashore . . . hours passed without any knowledge of what was taking place." Both ships witnessed the pre-dawn gun duel, but in the strict radio silence enjoined, they too could not learn what had happened. At 0610 the fire in the burning vessel apparently reached the magazine, or fuel tanks, or both, and she blew apart and sank. According to plan, PRINCE DAVID about the same time shifted a couple of miles to the east, and at 0630 hoisted the returning flight of five LCA's. An hour later, US PT-boats 216 and 217 came alongside PRINCE HENRY with 65 German survivors, and one corpse. The news was that two hostile ships\* had been destroyed by USS SOMERS. Nine survivors were brought

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\*The fast escort ESCABURT and a corvette designated as UJ-6081 (ex the Italian CAMOSCIO, taken over by Germany)--Bulkley, p. 324.

to PRINCE DAVID. Half of those saved were

" . . . terribly burned, the burns made worse by the salt water into which they'd jumped to survive.<sup>66</sup>

"Shortly after the nine survivors had been taken aboard PRINCE DAVID, a second PT-boat returned with their bag of prisoners, survivors from the same ship. Being time for us to leave that area we directed them to another ship and left. The prisoners must have outnumbered the crew of the PT-boat two to one and were closely guarded by the crew who were armed with automatic weapons.<sup>67</sup>

Captain Kelly went to look for his three overdue craft. Closing the shore, he met them coming out at 0653. Although the LCM's still had most of their load, they were all hoisted by 0725, while the colossal intimidation of the pre-invasion bombardment was tuning up to a peak. The principal "Dragoon" assault at 0800 was successful; then the LCM's were dipped into brine to try the beaches again. Their difficulties continued. The forenoon's first four attempts discovered ". . . no suitable beach not already required for higher priority unloading." Meanwhile, a sizeable portion of "Sitka" Force hung fire waiting for the Canadian ship, their only amusement a cruiser that steamed past in a fantastic camouflage outfit of 41 dark and light horizontal stripes, proving that the French, even in exile, are au courant with fashion.<sup>68</sup> About noon, a receptive beachmaster in the Baie de Cavalaire finally waved the Canadians in to land. At 1315, swinging in the davits, the two craft had completed in twelve hours a task for which less than half that time had been allowed in the schedule.

PRINCE HENRY spent the day close offshore Ile de Levant, while her landing craft worked between ship and shore.<sup>69</sup> Returning from the assault excursion they had reported that the island was a pushover, but later on had sterner news,

" . . . not as favourable as previously reported. The enemy were offering very determined resistance and further casualties were being inflicted on our troops. As many of these as possible (65, 26 of whom were not cases) were brought aboard HMCS PRINCE HENRY.<sup>70</sup>

Operation "Dragoon": after the main assault

Nine German Army prisoners were also embarked from the land. The number of wounded became more than the medical facilities on board could properly cope with.\* Naturally, first claim to available services was allotted to the Allied hurt.

"But **seamen** and stokers who scarcely had slept in the 36 hours before, during and after the landings came straight off watch to help with the Germans . . . snipping with little scissors, salving, bandaging, or just holding a man's hand, trying to make our enemies comfortable."66.

At 1600 the landing craft were hoisted in, and PRINCE HENRY, having ordered the rest of "Sitka" Group to return to Corsica, herself moved towards the Baie de Cavalaire. US LCI(L) 666 took off 33 naval and 9 military Prisoners of War--all the healthy ones--to a shore stockade being erected. By 1700 she was clear of the assault area, and course was set for Ajaccio.

The return convoys safely reached their Corsica base during the night of 15/16 August. The "Princes" spent the next two days under the gigantically barren brown hill that dominates Ajaccio. The wounded and the invasion headquarters personnel were disembarked. Then they each made two more trips to the Baie de Cavalaire, carrying French North African troops. German resistance had been pushed back from the beachhead, and all was pretty peaceful over there. On the last of these trips PRINCE DAVID lifted seven hundred men--the largest number she ever carried. It was indeed almost twice as many as she had room for, but one hundred and fifty less than PRINCE HENRY's load of 20 August, and less than half of the crowd her sister-ship embarked in Grecian waters four months later. These Free French units, composite of many forms of African humanity, negro and white, had their own quaint charms for the Canadian sailors:

"Both ships had trouble with the French Colonial Goumes until these children of the Prophet were shown by a demonstration the purpose and use of the ship's heads, after which the Goumes' delight in such a novel experiment knew no bounds."

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\*Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander G. E. Large, and Surgeon Lieutenant H. A. McDougall, RCNVR, were ship's doctors. Also embarked was an Army Medical Unit from the First Special Service Force which "rendered invaluable aid and carried out most of the major surgical work . . ."

PRINCE HENRY (Senior Officer), PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE ALBERT and PRINCE BAUDOIN left the "Dragoon" area on 24 August, and arrived at Naples at 1100 the 25th.\* The Canadian ships could look back on a most fruitful Operation "Dragoon". The South of France assault was unique among the great amphibious operations of the Second World War in being more of an end than a beginning. Its smoothness and strength was the culminated harvest of an impressive series of Mediterranean landings stretching back to "Torch", although the strategic seeds it sowed were probably planted in the wrong garden, as Churchill thought. What cannot be denied is the invasion's professionalism. Allied expertise has been emphasized in this account of RCN participation, dwelling, as it has, too long upon: 1. landing on the wrong beach, and 2. a mix-up and delay in landing stores. Because every major aspect of the operations turned out so successful--all dovetailing together powerfully to the enemy's vast discomfiture--these unimportant quirks stand out a little, exceptions proving the rule of Allied mastery. In the whole of "Sitka" Group's activity, only one craft was damaged by the enemy.\*\* Writing up his evaluation, all that PRINCE DAVID's captain could find to criticize, aside from a couple of suggestions for improving equipment, was there had been too many briefings on the complicated orders, and not enough time to study them.\*\*\* Captain Godfrey had kudos for everyone. The operation had the one unmistakable sign of overwhelming naval success: ease of accomplishment. Many might agree with Mr. Churchill (who had watched the whole thing), that it had been a "dull day".<sup>70</sup>

"The invasion of southern France was carried out on a very much smaller scale than the invasion of Normandy. Two months had hardly sufficed to land our armies in the north but in the south the job of ferrying troops was practically completed in two weeks, though the haul was five times longer."

PRINCE HENRY carried altogether 1,493 soldiers to the Riviera beachhead, and PRINCE DAVID 1,448, compared with the figures of 3,724 and 1,862, respectively, during Operation "Neptune". These statistics, and the fact that PRINCE HENRY

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\*Passing under C-in-C Malta and central Mediterranean Vice-Admiral Sir L. H. K. Hamilton, KCB, DSO, RN.

\*\*An LCA from PRINCE BAUDOIN was struck by a mortar shell off Port Cros Island.

\*\*\*In this ship the Flotilla Officer, Lieutenant R. G. Buckingham, RCNVR, was gazetted Distinguished Service Cross in March, 1945. "... for services in the successful invasion of the South of France." (COND O-10090).

was a flagship in "Dragoon", and a unit commander in both assaults, compel the conclusion that thus far since the ships had come out from Esquimalt at New Year's, she had played a more important role than her sister-ship. Her lead in total numbers transported she was always to maintain. But PRINCE DAVID, on her voyage to Athens of 15 to 17 October would level, if she did not reverse, the considerations of prestige.

On 25 August, PRINCE HENRY went directly into dockyard at Castellammare for a three-week boiler-cleaning session, while PRINCE DAVID waited at Naples for her landing craft flotilla to catch up. Six LCA had been required to stay behind in France to help assault the island of Porquerolles on 22 August. They arrived in a Landing Ship Dock on the 27th, the crews bringing tales of a Riviera holiday to turn the messdecks green. The enemy they were to have attacked had surrendered to big guns, so no assault had been necessary. Waiting for transport, thirty-four seamen and stokers had pitched camp in their craft, while the five officers made Wardroom in a villa one hundred yards from the shore. It was smashed, but stylish. For old hands in combined operations, as were most of the flotilla personnel, living off the land brought back memories of the good old days, and disinterred ancient skills of the "rabbet" and the "scrounge". The week had been spent

"... occasionally visiting nearby villages, swimming constantly in the Mediterranean, lounging in the sun, on a few occasions acting as marine traffic cops."<sup>71</sup>

Both ships took a cue from these returning commandos, (bronzed, and not blooded), and for the rest of 1944 operated in areas where the war had been settled, from bases ever closer to the sun.

PRINCE DAVID arrived at Taranto from Naples at 1100 3 September.\*

There she joined remnants of the Italian Fleet that had been tossed aside like toys into the giant cupboard of the *Mar Grande*, out of harm's way since they had quit fighting the Royal Navy. The most interesting units were 2-man submarines like the ones that had struck HM Ships QUEEN ELIZABETH and VALIANT behind the Alexandria boom;<sup>72</sup> one surviving ship\*\* of eleven "Aviere" Class

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\*Passing under the orders of Flag Officer, Taranto and Adriatic Rear-Admiral C. E. Morgan, DSO, RN.

\*\*The ASCARI.

super-destroyers, whose listed speed of 39 knots careless rumour easily augmented to 47; and the three-masted, full-rigged training ship CHRISTOFORO COLUMBO.<sup>73</sup> The first mission out of Taranto was a false alarm, when with His Hellenic Majesty's Ship SACHTOURIS,\* PRINCE DAVID was hurried to Brindisi and back for no apparent reason on 11/12 September.

Her next five days were devoted to Operation "Aplomb". During darkness 15/16 September a force of 530 men (British 9th Commando) was to be landed on Kithera at the southern tip of Greece. They embarked in PRINCE DAVID on 13 September. Contrary to widespread and expert misinformation,<sup>74</sup> these commandos' descent--and not another operation farther north two or three weeks later--was the first Allied step in liberating Greece. Their main tasks were to initiate the flow of relief supplies, and to harry and hasten the German withdrawal. The Germans were abandoning Greece anyway, as the Russian advance into the Balkans' northern tier tended to suck and sweep them out. Since HMS WHADDON,\*\* after a reconnaissance on 12/13 September, had reported the enemy gone from the island,<sup>75</sup> PRINCE DAVID's party did not expect they would have to fight their way ashore. Still,

"... the possibility of isolated pockets of resistance was accepted because of the difficulties the enemy would undoubtedly have in withdrawing all his forces . . . and a few miles to the northward there were Germans on the outstretched southern fingers of the Peloponnese."

In these uncertain circumstances, the raiders took a wide and flexible variety of goods and chattels with them: food, for instance "... had to be sufficient for several weeks, not enough to hinder a fast advance and yet enough to give to Greek friends."<sup>76</sup> On the 13th of September alone, their landing list swelled from 40 tons to an elephantine 100. Working parties from the 2nd Commando stuffed all of this into PRINCE DAVID, and when Senior Naval Officer Kithera, his three helpers, and nineteen W/T ratings with a complete shore radio station had also come on board, "Aplomb" was ready to be launched.

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\*Corvette, one 4-inch gun, 17 knots, formerly HMS PEONY. A sister corvette, HMS COREOPSIS, won fame after a spell as HHMS KRIEZIS by being cast as the ship in the motion picture of Montserrat's The Cruel Sea.

\*\*"Hunt" Class destroyer, four 4-inch guns, 27.5 knots.

At 1930 14 September HMCS PRINCE DAVID sailed from Taranto. Next day, escorted by HM Ships QUANTOCK, TENACIOUS and WILTON (destroyers), she passed in "full view" down the west Peloponnesian coast. When, at 1800, rendezvous was made with the six ships of the 5th Minesweeping Flotilla, while HM Carrier KHEDIVE wheeled with the Polish destroyer GARLAND\* in the vicinity, providing air cover, PRINCE DAVID became the centre of a respectably large force. Perhaps no other Canadian warship of the Second World War ever had, exclusively devoted to its protection, so flattering a number as eleven vessels, plus aircraft, and all from other countries. Flag Officer Levant and Eastern Mediterranean\*\* had warned that a U-boat prowled across PRINCE DAVID's path; 77° and mines--the weapon which eventually did write a hiatus in her annals--had been plentifully sown in narrow Kithera Channel. The passage of this strait was made safely, however, in the first two hours of darkness. At 2000 the escort swung away while PRINCE DAVID darried on northward up Saint Nikolo Bay.

"It was a clear, dark night, and the few lights and fires which could be seen ashore showed up brightly. A freshening southeasterly wind was blowing onshore and there was a moderate swell which was making the ship roll. Her craft were swung out and ready for lowering . . . two jeeps and two 75 mm. guns and trailers [had been loaded] in the port LCM that gave trouble. It began swinging more and more violently as the ship rolled in the swell until the steadying lines running from the craft could take the strain no longer and broke. The craft then began careening madly to and fro until the after lifting arm was twisted off at the root and the craft dumped its cargo into the sea; no one was aboard. From the forward fall the craft remained suspended partly in and partly out of the water."

If there were Germans in Saint Nikolo, this accident severely impaired the commandos' ability to shoot it out with them, or run them down. The timetable insisted that the ship keep right on. When the dangling landing craft filled with water and began to bend and twist the one davit still holding it, the forward fall was cut. LCM 185 sank in 17 fathoms of water.

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\*Ex-HMS, three 4.7-inch guns, 36 knots. Three days later, these Poles performed the remarkable feat of sighting, at eight miles range, a slight wisp of smoke from a submerged U-boat's schnorkel, which led to the destruction of U-407. This was probably the enemy against whom PRINCE DAVID was warned, still on patrol in the same waters. (Roskill III (II), p. 107)

\*\*Vice-Admiral Sir H. B. Rawlings, KCB, OBE, RN, until 30 October, 1944. Then Vice-Admiral W. G. Tennant, CB, MVO, RN.

At 2128 the ship anchored a discreet half-mile offshore. The seven-craft assault wave was sent away at 2140, while PRINCE DAVID's "gun crews closed up to give covering fire if necessary."<sup>78</sup>

"The Flotilla Officer's LCA led the way into the long narrow cleft in the rocks that forms the harbour of the fishing village of Saint Nikolo. Bren guns were mounted on the deck of the craft along either side, and the ship's Chaplain had found room behind one of them. The first two craft crept in on silent engines ahead of the others to see if the harbour was defended but they touched down unopposed at the head of the harbour, the only possible landing place. After a look around the other craft were signalled in."

The villagers of the place soon flocked around in their small droves, and many gave a hand with unloading of stores. The plan called for PRINCE DAVID to be clear of the shore by daylight 16 September, in case of enemy air reconnaissance. However, the great last-minute increase in the commandos' gear, the loss of one landing craft, and the disabling of another on a submerged obstacle early in the operation, rendered so speedy a departure unlikely. All night the sailors and soldiers, with diminishing civilian help, made a college try. The headlights of a jeep--one which the Canadians had not jettisoned--illuminated the wharfside scene. The six usable craft made about ten runs each from ship to shore, and the work was finished two hours after daybreak, at 0700 the 16th.

At 0715 she sailed, soon met HMS WILTON, and shaped course for Brindisi. PRINCE DAVID's gunners were closed up all morning against a potential German air appearance, but the day's only disturbance was the hammering of the Lunenburg County shipwright who, with his bosun's chair slung over damaged LCA 1432, applied the fabled skills of the east coast port to patching up the craft's stove-in bow and wrecked ramp.<sup>79</sup> Brindisi was reached at 0800 the 17th.

After collecting 32 bags of stray mail at Brindisi, PRINCE DAVID sailed around the Heel of Italy on 21 September. At Taranto she found her sister-ship, whose rested officers and men had steamed her out of Castellammare dockyard five days earlier. PRINCE DAVID went through the canal into the Mar Piccolo for repairs to the twisted davit. PRINCE HENRY, after ten days' further respite, was given an Adriatic itinerary, as she ferried landing craft

around for HMS HAMILGAR. This base was located at Messina in Sicily, and ran a pawn shop for combined operations equipment in the central Mediterranean: new, or newly-patched craft, for old. PRINCE HENRY began ferry duty on 2 October, after sending away her own Flotilla, under skeleton crews, to PRINCE DAVID.

She made two runs from Messina aiding HAMILGAR in its distributions and collections, to Bari and Ancona on Italy's east coast, and Sarande in Albania. The Flotillas transported are listed in Appendix "R". During this period, she made one troop lift, when 557 officers and men, mostly New Zealanders, were taken to Ancona from Bari on 9-10 October. This work was a change of pace---a speed up---for the Canadian landing ship. She steamed 2400 miles in ten days. The ports she called at were new to her company, and therefore interesting. And by virtue of being in the vicinity on ferry duty, she became peripherally involved in an operation of active war against German forces---the last such of her career.

On 10 October, at Ancona, PRINCE HENRY received a change of plans from FOTALI\* which diverted her across the Adriatic to Sarande, Albania. British forces had been hopping southward along the Yugoslavian coast and ended up attacking the German garrison that was covering the line of retreat from Corfu. The first landings at Sarande (Operation "Mercerised") had taken place two weeks earlier. At that time it was thought that four hundred commandos would be plenty for successful harassment, but

"Bad weather hampered the preliminary movements of the Army, and the operation developed into a more lengthy affair than had been anticipated, lasting well into October and involving the landing of a further four hundred troops."<sup>80</sup>

Now Naval Force Commander "Mercerised" wanted to trade four LCP's\*\* he had for four LCA's, and would PRINCE HENRY please provide. She anchored off Sarande at 1400 11 October, and struck a bad bargain. The craft requested were sent away\*\*\* without an exchange being received.

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\*Flag Officer Taranto, Adriatic and Liaison Italy--Rear-Admiral C. E. Morgan, DSO, RN.

\*\*The American version of the assault landing craft.

\*\*\*Four craft of No. 561 LCA Flotilla which she had aboard to deliver from Ancona to Messina.

"It was impossible to hoist the LCP's on the davits fitted, as their spread was 27' 3" and the spread of the LCP's was 20' 5" and there were no spreaders carried on board. After several unsuccessful attempts to improvise some means of hoisting these craft . . ."

PRINCE HENRY weighed anchor at 1600 without them, and proceeded straight to Taranto. There No. 528 Flotilla, which had done nothing noteworthy in the meantime, was reclaimed from PRINCE DAVID's keeping.

Both PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID were now assigned--for several months, as it turned out--to a land of sects and schisms. Over most of the fall and winter of 1944-5, Greece was the main object of their operations. Greece, emerging from an occupation by three hostile powers, to find and prove it was its own worst enemy; where the Cold War first came, hard on the heels of the Hot, making the fabled land an international "apple of discord"\* which correctly represented internal disharmonies. Greek history of this period is little known, and does not properly belong to the World War; that Canadian ships were closely involved is often unsuspected; thus the account may bear for many the charm of revelation. The attraction is doubly reinforced: by the para-military, kaleidoscopic variety of the work which the "Prince" ships performed in those waters; and by the intrinsic enchantments of the very un-Canadian scene--the climate equable, but not the people; politics composed of equal parts theology and thuggery; quiet chaos reigning over the whole land except Athens, where the antagonists perversely measured their arms to the issue upon the only few acres in the country that left no room for warfare. In general, Allied, that is British policy towards Greece was: 1. to speed the enemy's withdrawal without fighting more than necessary; 2. to protect the Greeks from the worst effects of poverty, disorder, and political volatility. When the threatening civil war did break out, we find PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE DAVID intervening on one side of it. This intimate participation--not to say meddling--in Greek affairs served, save for a humanitarian aspect, no declared or obvious Canadian interest. But the United Kingdom's aim was, in befriending the Greek people, to bolster the (legitimate) Government returning-from-exile against its communist foes; Russia had finally

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\*Woodhouse, C. M., Apple of Discord, London: Hutchinson, 1948.

given her consent that the country should be a British sphere of influence;<sup>81.</sup> and the Canadian Government had placed these RCN ships under British operational control in the Mediterranean with no restrictions as to their employment.

PRINCE DAVID had already, of course, begun this phase of activity when she landed the first of the liberation forces on Kithera on 15/16 September. While PRINCE HENRY was off making her ferry runs, Commander Kelly's ship had been required for a continuation of Operation "Aplomb". "Fox" Force of the 9th Commando, the unit deposited on Kithera, had not been idle, nor stood still. The 60th Motor Gunboat Flotilla and the 29th Motor Launch Flotilla had moved over to the Peloponnesian island as soon as it was secured,<sup>82.</sup> and with this and other water-transport the British soldiers had

"... prowled among the many islands lying along the approaches to Athens, giving an occasional nudge to German garrisons which were slow in departing. By October 8 they had established themselves on Poros in the Gulf of Aegina, and were contemplating an assault on the garrison which still held the nearby island of Aegina. For this purpose the commandos would require landing craft, and PRINCE DAVID accordingly . . ."

was ordered to make a hasty sortie to leave her boats at their disposal on the enemy's doorstep. She cleared from Taranto at 0700 8 October, escorted by HMS EGGESFORD.\* The only incident of PRINCE DAVID's voyage was when an Allied Liberator aircraft accidentally dropped a stick of bombs and near-missed her just outside the Italian Singapore. "PRINCE DAVID did not take the miss amiss." At noon next day she arrived at Poros, twenty-five miles from German-held Athens, and received a "tremendous, heart-warming welcome" from the local folk. She disembarked her seven landing craft and their crews that afternoon, and sailed for Taranto again at 0600 10 October.

The Canadian ships' next duty was operation "Manna". This movement of occupation troops into Greece was the last giant coordination of Allied ships, men and material in which they participated in 1944. It was less hazardous than the two assaults on France, smaller in scope and probably less important; yet it initiated the most interesting period in these two "Princes'" wartime careers.

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\*Improved "Hunt" Class destroyer, 4-inch guns, 27.5 knots.

"Manna" brought them onto a unique historical stage, and left them there long enough for their companies to begin realizing how directly diplomacy, politics and social upheaval impinged on their day-to-day duties. Ten thousand troops, mostly British with some Greek units, had been poised since 11 September,<sup>84.</sup> ready to rush to Athens the moment the Nazis left. The D-day sign was finally given for 15 October--four years to the day after the dictator of Italy had decided on the aggression that brought the Second World War into the Balkans. One hundred and seven ships were provided for the naval side of "Manna", headed by the 15th Cruiser Squadron,<sup>\*</sup> four escort carriers, and seven Landing Ships, of which PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY were the largest. Also in the armada, besides several small Greek units, were His Hellenic Majesty's Ships GEORGIOS AVEROFF, ADRIAS, AETOS, IERAX, PANTHER, SPETSAI and IONIA.<sup>85.</sup>

As these forces were being prepared for "Manna" in Malta, Italy and Egypt, PRINCE DAVID's landing craft were in Grecian waters preparing the way. The flotilla, as has been told, was left at Poros on 9 October. Four days were spent undergoing artillery barrages from AEGINA, and planning attacks on that island and on Phleba.<sup>86.</sup> Then word was received that the Germans had withdrawn from these objectives, and from the capital. At 0100 14 October No. 529 Flotilla sailed to spearhead the seaborne landing at the port of Athens. Also in this first liberation convoy were two Royal Navy Landing Craft Tank,<sup>\*\*</sup> with the 9th Commando and 200 ranks of the Greek Sacred Brigade embarked. When one of the assault craft was sent ahead to scout Piraeus and choose the best place for beaching, the Canadians became the first Allies to enter Piraeus harbour since 1940.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> They found blockships and demolished wharves, so led on at 0600 to

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\*HM Ships ORION (flag of Rear-Admiral J. M. Mansfield, RN), AJAX, AURORA, BLACK PRINCE and SIRIUS.

\*\*Numbers 561 and 619.

\*\*\*But they were not the first Allied troops in the area. Some of the 2nd Parachute Brigade had jumped onto Megara airfield several hours previously, and the commando unit that had been in Patras on 4 October had also arrived, having fought its way across the northern Peloponnese at twelve miles a day. (Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, pp. 284-5).

Zea harbour east of the Piraeus. Here the British and Greek troops were landed--but they had to fight their way to shore! The reception of friends put a greater strain on the landing timetable than the defenses of Normandy or the Riviera had done.

"From the shores ahead a wave of cheering billowed out across the water . . . The battered dockside, the harbour area, the streets behind it, and the long road winding up toward Athens all were black with seething masses of people . . . 'Ingleesh! Ingleesh! Ingleesh! rolled deafeningly along the waterfront, mingled with the joyous, stacatto syllables of the Greek tongue."<sup>87</sup>

Many Greeks clambered into boats, which swooped out to greet the liberators in mid-harbour.

". . . cursing, grinning coxswains manoeuvred to avoid the scores of caiques, rowboats and craft of every description . . . Every flodable object in the harbour came bearing down, loaded to the swamping point with shouting, waving Greeks. Reckless of nautical precept, the welcomers swept in to hide the flotilla in a swirling naval rout. Boats steered in among the landing craft, collided with them and with each other, backed off and came in again . . ."<sup>87</sup>

Especially plentiful and prominent in that makeshift riotous fleet were Greek flags, and Greek women. The crew of LCA 1115, for instance, unable to navigate further through a sea of punts and smacks, had to take way off their craft. They were immediately beset and boarded en masse by patriotic revellers. This Canadian landing craft could afterwards boast of perhaps the greatest proportion of females ever known to White Ensign vessels in a war zone. The camera has preserved the whole mob, men, officers and other ranks (that is, civilians) exuberantly intermixed, at one end of the boat. By actual count, there are about fourteen women and girls making them half again as numerous as the men in evidence. Other photographs taken about 0800 show naval craft pushing towards the shore, or lying alongside the sea-wall, with every available inch of deck space occupied by excited citizens standing about congratulating themselves on freedom regained, and hardly a sailor in sight.<sup>88</sup>

When some of the tumult died, the flotilla got to work. With the widespread destruction of regular port facilities, very many of the relief and supply ships arriving had to anchor instead of tying up, and wanted to send their goods ashore by boat. Until the 16th, PRINCE DAVID's were the only minor landing craft in the harbour. So they operated most of the day and night: ferrying, guiding, carrying messages, and surveying the harbour for usable

wharves. When the crews could snatch a few hours, they slept in their boats at the Royal Yacht Club, Piraeus, or in the Club itself.

Meanwhile, No. 529 Flotilla's parent ship, HMCS PRINCE DAVID, and the PRINCE HENRY, were at Taranto getting ready to follow after. For PRINCE DAVID, "Manna" was a state, practically a vice-regal, occasion. The motley host of passengers she embarked for this passage had a gilded upper echelon. Prime Minister of Greece Georgios Papandreou headed the list, the new statesman whom unrest in the Greek armed forces had raised to the top of exile politics six scant months previously. He embarked with a retinue of twenty-five, including his son, Cabinet ministers and senior government advisors.\* PRINCE DAVID had received this preeminent honour by accident, since her senior sister PRINCE HENRY had been boiler cleaning at Castellammare when the operation orders were first written. (The voyage might in fact have been a regal procession, but at the second-last moment the King of the Hellenes, George II, had bowed to his government's pressure that he not accompany them home, and stayed behind in London where crowned heads would rest more easily than in faction-rent Athens.)<sup>89</sup> Another luminary of the passage was British Ambassador to Greece Rex Leeper, who was to achieve a determined dignity two months hence by dwelling in his embassy on the very front lines of the civil war, and lived to tell and joke about it in his When Greek Meets Greek.<sup>90</sup> A small American diplomatic party, headed by Ambassador Shantz; a bevy of brigadiers; three charming FANY's;\*\* and over 300 assorted officers and men completed the roster of PRINCE DAVID's 384 passengers for this epochal lift.

". . . the number of distinguished personages rather overtaxed the ship's accommodation resources. The Ambassador and his Secretary were given the Captain's cabin; the Prime Minister shared the Executive Officer's; but when it came down to the Chief of the Greek Naval Staff, Admiral Alexandris, and the Co-Director of the Bank of Greece, they found themselves bunking with the Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant, while members of the Greek diplomatic service were making themselves comfortable in the Sergeant's Mess."

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\*The Greek governmental group included: Admiral C. Alexandris, Chief of the Naval Staff; D. Londos, Minister of Social Welfare; A. Svolos, of Finance; P. Dragovmis, Foreign Affairs; D. Helmis, P. Rallis and E. Sophovlis, without Portfolio.

\*\*The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry was a woman's organization founded in 1907, and absorbed into the British Women's Army Corps as the Women's Transport Service during the Second World War. The three ladies in PRINCE DAVID were attached to III Corps Headquarters. (Encyclopedia Britannica (1955), v. 23, p. 710b; DN Inf. photo and caption PD 711 in file "PD--Med.").

By the afternoon of 15 October, all these troops and personages had come on board PRINCE DAVID. PRINCE HENRY had embarked a total of 408 Army personnel, including a Parachute Brigade Headquarters and the band of the Queen's Own Hussars. At 0200 the two Canadians steered for Athens together, escorted by HMS WILTON.

An interesting manoeuvre was executed in PRINCE DAVID during this voyage. The Greek Cabinet, holding daily sessions<sup>91</sup> in the wardroom, was determined to rewrite the calendar. Their consternation stemmed from the fact that General Scobie\* had unalterably scheduled their triumphant entry into Athens for tomorrow, the 17th of October -- a Tuesday, and Tuesdays were held to be notoriously unlucky ever since Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453--on a Tuesday. This curious frivolity, found in Canadian records, could be dismissed as an undeserved aspersion on intelligent men because they happen to be foreigners, were it not that Ambassador Leeper, in closest touch with Mr. Papandreou and his men and indisposed to the baser sorts of prejudice, confirms that the Greek government's deliberations indeed concerned the day of the week. He gives three pages of his book to the topic,<sup>92</sup> and also tells how they managed to postpone the arrival until Wednesday, although the whole ponderous efficiency of "Manna" was pushing toward the earlier day. Thus these politicians antedated a risqué Greek post-war movie, but changed the title to Never on Tuesday!

Mr. Leeper has described the approach to the Gulf of Athens early on the 17th of October.

"I was on the bridge at dawn . . . as we steamed up the east coast of the Peloponnese. It was a sight never to be forgotten. With the help of a chart I made out the islands which loomed out of the distance on our starboard until the island of Hydra came into sight on our port side. This bare, rocky and mountainous island . . . was one of the foremost centres of resistance more than a century ago in the war against Turkey. We skirted it closely throughout its length, and then turned into the Bay of Poros. It was eight o'clock in the morning when we anchored in the bay within a mile of the town of Poros, looking clean and inviting with its white houses and green pine trees."<sup>93</sup>

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\*Later Sir Ronald, nominated by the Supreme Allied Commander Italy as General Officer Commanding Forces in Greece (Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, pp. 284-5; Leeper, pp. 70-1).

WILTON and PRINCE HENRY carried sensibly on to Piraeus, where at 0930 the latter ship began to unload her troops

" . . . by landing craft running to the small harbour of Heracles west of Piraeus, underneath the rocky brow from which the Persian king watched his fleet scattered by the Greeks in the most famous of the naval engagements of ancient times."

PRINCE DAVID's purpose at Poros was to transfer the Greek Government to one of their own warships, for a proper arrival at the capital. HHMS GEORGIOS AVEROFF\* had come up from Alexandria, and was waiting at anchor. Mr. Papandreou and his colleagues were in no rush, however—not on Tuesday. A swarm of small craft put out from shore and surrounded the Canadian ship with cheers and singing, greetings which the Government members acknowledged from the gunwale, while closing their ears to the cries of "We want the King". Then various local dignitaries came alongside in launches and caiques and embarked, led by the Bishop of the Orthodox Church, who impartially bestowed bearded ceremonial kisses on unwary Canadians who were trapped in his path. After the blessing and the bussing, "there was so much to say that it was lunch time before it was all said."<sup>94</sup>.

PRINCE DAVID's flotilla was not seen in the harbour at Poros, having gone on to Piraeus three days before. By 1130 Prime Minister Papandreou had addressed the Canadian ship's company from the after oerlikon platform and disembarked, with his Cabinet, for the flagship. At 1215 the GEORGIOS AVEROFF hoisted the Greek battle ensign, let out a huge column of smoke—not on purpose,<sup>95</sup> and moved off in the wake of HMS BICESTER.\*\* PRINCE DAVID brought up the rear of this little fleet. They proceeded especially slowly on this last short lap,

\*Cruiser, flagship, four 9.2-inch guns, 22.5 knots (now considerably less)—thus Jane's in 1944. Leeper says ". . . seaworthy, though her speed could not safely be stretched beyond ten knots." (p. 74) RCNMR, in its article on the liberation (#43) credited this ship with having "broke[n] the blockade at the Dardanelles", which is exactly the reverse of GEORGIOS AVEROFF's famed actions when she was a young ship in the Balkan Wars. For ten months in 1912-3, led by the AVEROFF, the Greek fleet bottled up the exits from the Black Sea against the Turks emerging, and drove them back the five times they appeared. (Hythe, editor, The Naval Annual 1914, pp. 150-168).

\*\*Improved "Hunt" Class destroyer.

equally on account of GEORGIOS AVIEROFF's senility and the danger of mines, for on the first day of Operation "Manna" a 3000-ton ship and three smaller vessels had been sunk by mines as they shaped course for Athens, and two other ships damaged.<sup>96</sup> It was perhaps prophetic of what would befall PRINCE DAVID herself, in these same waters, two months hence. This time, however, she made it safely at 1530.

When the ships had anchored off Piraeus, the Greek Government decided it was too late in the day to go ashore, and so postponed the official return to their capital, until the morrow. The move surprised no one who was privy to their superstitions. For her part, PRINCE DAVID made a quick turn-about. At 1600 the landing craft from PRINCE HENRY came alongside and started the twelve-hour job of unloading men and stores.

From time to time before night fell, different ones of PRINCE DAVID's own flotilla boats could be seen moving about the harbour, but they did not return to their parent-ship until next dawn, when all the goods consigned for shore had been moved by PRINCE HENRY's craft. Instead, they carried on with their irregular tasks--among which, as every old hand of Liberation would agree, the most bounden and honourable duty was celebration.

"On their last evening, a Greek merchant presented the men of the flotilla with fifty bottles of champagne, one each. The flotilla rejoined their ship at 0600 on the 18th, very fond of Greece."

At 0721 18 October the United Kingdom Ambassador was sent ashore in MGB 860, where he joined the Army and Mr. Churchill's roving Mediterranean delegate Harold Macmillan in trying to prop up Papandreou. They would succeed, until New Year's. By 0730 the two Canadian ships had formed up with HMS EGGESFORD to return to Italy.

On arriving at Taranto on 19 October, PRINCE DAVID went into dockyard for two-and-one-half weeks for steam line repairs, and sent the crew off to a rest- (leave-) camp. PRINCE HENRY kept on bringing reinforcements to Pireaus, leaving Taranto on 24 October and 2 November with 460 more officers and men.\*

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\*During this period she passed under the operational control of Flag Officer Levant and Eastern Mediterranean (FOLEM) Vice-Admiral W. G. Tennant, CB, CBE, MVO, RN.

From 26 to 30 October was the ship's first prolonged stay in Greece, when she

"... remained at anchor at Piraeus. Libertymen were permitted ashore each day from 1300 to 1700 and most of the ship's company were able to visit the city of Athens."

PRINCE HENRY's men now discovered what PRINCE DAVID's landing craft crews had known at Kithera and Poros, and at the outset of "Manna", that the Greek citizens had conceived a powerful and effusive friendliness towards their liberators. All fall, when Canadian naval personnel had occasion to go ashore, they were feted and greeted as heroes, amid only gradually diminishing clamour and exuberance. Strolling through the streets they met "Well Come Brave Allies" blazoned on every side. When an RCN title was described, the greeting often was "Canada!! It was your wheat that kept us alive!"

"If you want to start a public gathering ask a Greek the way--he doesn't speak English but he has a friend who does and whether he's a foot or a mile away he'll get him. Meanwhile another appears who has a few words of English and might help--then another and another until a man who really knows comes along and insists on walking most of the way with you to be sure your're headed right."<sup>97</sup>

No Allied serviceman could pay on the trams, and traffic was stopped for them. Every attention was paid them, every praise heaped, little or nought denied--although it is not clear from the records that every man had the same type of offer as the British Ambassador did.<sup>98</sup> One certainly "had to use all his will to do his work because the Athenians were doing all in their power to entertain him."<sup>99</sup> Later, when the civil war began, their popularity did not so much wane as take on a new dimension: those Greeks that were not shooting at them, still loved them.

Next, most of PRINCE HENRY's November was taken up by Operation "Kelso". This manoeuvre was intended "to stabilize conditions in Salonika by ... establishing a British military force . . ." on the heels of the departing enemy. "Kelso" was very much a balancing match for Operation "Aplomb", which PRINCE DAVID had executed in mid-September. The first was at the southern tip of mainland Greece, the other in the north. While "Aplomb" was the liberation's first step, "Kelso" was its last.<sup>100</sup> Thus it took a month and a half to see the Germans out of Greece, and the Canadian sisters one each were neatly involved

at either extremity of the campaign. "Kelso" was, however, on a much grander scale than PRINCE DAVID's earlier excursion, on which she had been the only ship. On 7 November a total of thirty-one vessels large and small\* anchored off Salonika with three to four thousand troops for the occupation. PRINCE HENRY had embarked 381 soldiers and 75 tons of supplies for the voyage from Piraeus.

"Next morning, because of the danger of mines to the larger ships and because more troops were rather urgently needed ashore, it was decided to unload the convoy by landing craft without moving it in to Salonika Bay. This meant that landing craft had to make trips 15 to 18 miles in open waters along swept channels which, in the approaches to the harbour, narrowed down to five cables in width. PRINCE HENRY's craft were in the first flight and they left their ship at 0600 . . . No craft in the assault flight came to grief on the many mines which certainly remained in the harbour and for the troops as well as the landing craft it was the most innocuous D-day on record. The assault flight troops stepped ashore on beaches carefully prepared and were received by an efficient beach organization already functioning. Overhead, the only aircraft were passing back and forth over the town shovelling out leaflets from G. O. C. Greece, Lieutenant-General Scobie, to tell the population the good news that the last Germans had finally been driven from the mainland of Greece."

PRINCE HENRY waited at Salonika for the next two weeks while her flotilla was steadily employed off-loading supply ships which could not go alongside because of extensive demolitions and 43 blockships.<sup>101</sup> On 13 November, a show of force parade was planned for which three platoons of PRINCE HENRY's seamen and stokers drilled conscientiously. The orders were: 1. "Your object will be to impress EAM";<sup>\*\*</sup> 2. no offensive action was to be taken against any Greeks except to protect British lives.<sup>102</sup> On the day, however, only contingents from HM Ships ARGONAUT and SIRIUS were landed.

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\*Commander of the expedition was Captain E. W. Longley-Cook, CBE, RN, in HMS ARGONAUT (cruiser). PRINCE HENRY was Vice-Commodore of the Assault convoy that sailed from Piraeus at 0600 5 November, which also included HM Ships ULSTER QUEEN, THRUSTER and MAINE, SS ENNERDALE, SS ORION, 6 LCT's and 6 LCI's and one Landing Craft Headquarters. Escort was HMS EXMOOR and HHM Ships CRETE, THEMISTOCLES, and IONIAN. A smaller convoy sailed for "Kelso" from Italy, comprising SS SAMFLEET and six smaller vessels.

\*\*A communist controlled political movement. The causes for the tension in Greece that resulted in the civil war of December-January 1944/5 are outlined in Appendix "S", along with the rationale for British (and Canadian) intervention, and a sorting out of the sea of initials in which the rebellion's history is bathed.

There were no clashes and indeed, throughout the troubles that soon spilled not a little blood in Athens, Salonika remained uneasily pacific.<sup>103.</sup>

Leave was allowed from the 14th. After a gale on 17/18 November that stranded 94 officers and men ashore overnight, PRINCE HENRY weighed at 0745 the 20th and escorted SS PRONTO, a small "Norwegian freighter who had neither radio nor charts of the area" back to Piraeus. Leaving that candidate for dereliction off the Greek port, the Canadian continued on to Taranto and arrived there in the evening of 22 November.

HMCS PRINCE HENRY now performed another odd job for HAMILCAR, in continuation of the ferry duty she had done during October's first half. Then the transfer of No. 564 Flotilla to Messina had begun. The tail of this outfit was still waiting to be transported, and had managed to work along the coast sixty miles from Bari to Brindisi. There PRINCE HENRY hoisted the seven boats on 25 November after leaving all but one of her own craft at Taranto. She returned from Sicily to her mainland Italian base two days later.

PRINCE DAVID had been operating apart from her sister ship throughout the month. Emerging from Taranto shipyard on 6 November, she proceeded to Piraeus next day with HHMS PINDOS and SS ALCANTARA\*, where on the 11th and 12th 422 ranks of the Greek Sacred Brigade were embarked, with their stores. PRINCE DAVID arrived at Syros at 1000 next day. The Germans had pulled their garrison from the Aegean island several weeks earlier,<sup>104.</sup> so there was no question of resistance. When the ship first pulled in to anchor off the seawall, a crowd of mildly curious onlookers gathered along the foreshore of the little town; when the unloading of supplies began they soon drifted away. PRINCE DAVID

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\*PINDOS—"Hunt" Class destroyer, four 4-inch guns. ALCANTARA—22,000 tons, British registry. By an unhappy chain of circumstance, PRINCE DAVID's career had once before intertwined with the ALCANTARA's. Until 1943, ALCANTARA had been armed with eight 6-inch guns, and commissioned RN as an Armed Merchant Cruiser. She was the first Allied warship to succeed in finding a German disguised merchant raider at sea, on 28 July 1940 in the South Atlantic. Her action with the diminutive THOR (3,862 tons), however, was no success. The German's six 5.9-inch guns outranged the British ship's by a mile; ALCANTARA was repeatedly hit, and the raider escaped with light damage. Five months later, THOR gave a similar beating to the AMC CARNARVON CASTLE; then in April 1941, still at sea, she sank the AMC HMS VOLTAIRE, whose wreckage PRINCE DAVID picked up. (See pages 25-7 above; also Woodward, pp. 111-122 and Southern Oceans, pp. 31-34, 51-54, 73-74).

completed the operation with some dispatch, considering that only two craft at a time could discharge goods at the main quay.<sup>105</sup> By 1615 that evening she was back in the Piraeus, fuelled, and ready for new duty.

It was a week before her next assignment. She was told off for two lifts of Greek army personnel to Preveza on the west coast north of the Gulf of Corinth. On 20 November, 181 officers and men were embarked from SS ERIDAN\* at Piraeus. PRINCE DAVID sailed around the Peloponnese in bad weather on 22-23 November,\*\* and set the troops ashore at Preveza early on the 25th. Then the operation was repeated, 276 more soldiers being delivered at the end of the month.

PRINCE DAVID's sailors found Preveza nestling in hills at water's edge, like Syros looking seaward, but better kept up. A local "discovery" was a fellow-countryman from Montreal,\*\*\* who had taken an American commission and been sent into Greece on intelligence duties.<sup>106</sup> For seven months he had lain undercover behind enemy lines, but now was out in the open frequenting the cafes and welcoming Allies. The Greek soldiers\*\*\*\* which the Canadian ship had been brought from the capital were a well-uniformed and well-equipped body of men, but by Christmas they had fought and been beaten. PRINCE HENRY evacuated them during the Greek troubles.

At Athens during the month of November political incompatibility had intensified, and public order deteriorated, to the point where PRINCE DAVID was next required to help concentrate forces there for a test of strength between the government and its opposition. Sailing from Preveza at 0620 the 1st, she

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\*10,000 tons, French registry.

\*\*The Germans departing had blocked the Corinthian canal, necessitating this long way round. It was not cleared for some months. (Leeper, p. 88)

\*\*\*Lieutenant H. R. Q. Hotchkiss of the U.S. Army Air Force.

\*\*\*\*Of 11th Battalion and the Greek Reconnaissance Regiment.

passed down inside of Lenkos Island and arrived at Patras at 1520. About the same time, twenty miles across the Gulf of Patras, the ferry from Missolonghi struck a mine and sank quickly with a loss of over one hundred lives.\*

At Patras, "114 gendarmie [sic] embarked. The only supplies are dried beans and 1 small case of canned goods."<sup>107</sup> Recognizing the difficulties and dangers now impending, these police wanted to bring much more with them, but

"... because of lack of suitable accommodation, passage had to be refused to the wives and even poultry which some of them wished to bring on board."

Another detachment of armed men for the Prime Minister was to be collected at Kalamata in the south. PRINCE DAVID arrived there at 1750 on 2 December. She found that the men she was to have embarked, tired of waiting, had decamped for Athens by road.

The Canadian ship arrived back at Piraeus at noon 3 December. After weeks of growing, growling discord, on that day Communist intransigence and Government determination set off the six-week clash that enables the Cold War to be antedated to 1944. A general strike had been called in the capital, and as PRINCE DAVID came to anchor the first armed clash between police and civilians was occurring outside the apartment building where the Prime Minister lived.

"Because of the civil unrest then prevailing ashore, disembarkation of the gendarmerie was delayed until early in the morning of the 4th, when there were few persons in the streets."

The landing craft sneaked the Patras contingent ashore with as little commotion as possible during the first hour of light, while rifle and mortar fire could be clearly heard from the city. The insurgents were seizing the police stations, while loyal and British forces grimly prepared for a siege and cordoned off the city centre, their food dumps, and the airfield.<sup>108</sup> The fighting did not reach

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\*The EMPIRE DACE, 700 tons, British registry. If the Greek rebels had planted the mine, as was suspected, these were the civil war's first casualties. (NOIC Patras to SBNOC 011630B December 1944--in PD 018-1; Sea War, V, para 2461)

down to the water-front during the morning, and no incident marked No. 529 Flotilla's shuttling operations bringing more than 400 passengers\* for Italy from shore out to the ship. PRINCE DAVID sailed at 1700, and joined PRINCE HENRY at Taranto at 0740 on 6 December, 1944.

The excitements of June, August and the fall were surpassed in December, after which utter monotony, that hallmark of naval success, drifts like a grey fog across the few-weeks remnant of this history. Of the Canadian units involved in the salvation of Greece, three--No's 528 and 529 Flotillas and HMCS PRINCE HENRY--were to witness some unusual scenes and take part in noteworthy events, amid danger, pathos, and challenge. Before the middle of the month, however, and just arriving on the scene of the action, PRINCE DAVID was to have ill luck that took her away quickly from the stir and the passion. For the casualty-free wartime career of the three "Prince" ships had by now stretched too tight: to over eight ship/years in commission. Although they had sailed some very hazardous waters, no hostile raider, U-boat or aircraft had yet succeeded in striking any of them. With the active war against Germany actually behind them, irony intervened. The sea-road to Athens had once been very heavily mined; despite repeated sweeping and careful routeing, five more ships had gone down while on Grecian operations since the six that struck mines on 15 October, and have already been mentioned.<sup>109</sup> PRINCE DAVID was to join the luckiest of these unfortunates--damaged but slightly with no casualties--when a passive weapon left skulling about from more dangerous days put an end to the Canadian "Princes'" blemishless record.

Captain Kelly's ill-fated PRINCE DAVID was preceded out of Taranto by PRINCE HENRY. The latter ship sailed for Piraeus at 0730 7 December with 335 ranks of the Essex Regiment (British Army), and stores. At 1400 next afternoon she was approaching Phalerum Bay, just south-east of the Piraeus. Fighting

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\*383 Italian prisoners-of-war and 29 ranks of the RN Beach Signal Section.

in Athens and vicinity was in its sixth day; both sides were pretty well organized now, and getting dangerous:

"While the ship was entering harbour, it was observed that HM Corvette LA MALOUINE was engaged in bombarding Piraeus with 4-inch and Anti-aircraft armament from the direction of Salamis Bay with HMS EASTON also bombarding from the direction of Phalerun Bay. Sporadic firing from the forces engaged ashore could also be heard. Soon after PRINCE HENRY anchored, 'overs' from HMS LA MALOUINE's 4-inch guns and AA weapons began to fall uncomfortably close to the ship and after one salvo had straddled the bridge it was decided to weigh and shift berth to a healthier position further to seaward and clear of the firing areas.\*

An officer from the Essex Regiment was brought out to the ship, and plans were laid to land the troops next morning. At 0600 the 9th, after a night punctuated by occasional gunshots, PRINCE HENRY closed the land; disembarkation was completed by noon without incident.

HMCS PRINCE DAVID, meanwhile, had been heavily loaded for her last 1944 mission. The expanding Greek hostilities lent added urgency to the British build-up of men and munitions. On 6 December she moved to No. 1 Berth in Taranto's Mercantile Harbour, where

"... on late into the night the work of loading stores and a cargo of 92 tons of 75 mm., 35 mm. and small arms ammunition continued. As much as possible of the ammunition was stowed in the ship's magazines, and the rest on the upper deck.

Also embarked were 311 troops, mostly of the (British) 2nd Parachute Brigade. On 8 December at 1430 HMCS PRINCE DAVID sailed for Piraeus with SS EASTERN PRINCE and MARIGOT, escorted by HMS BEAUFORT.\*\* At 0955 on Sunday the 10th, while the convoy was passing abeam of Aegina island only ten miles from its destination, the Canadian ran onto a mine:

"... an underwater explosion lifted the bow of the ship some three or four feet. From the bridge, no flash or spray was visible, although eyewitnesses who were on the upper deck report seeing a column of spray some 15 or 20 feet high on the port side just forward of the bridge. The shock of the explosion was sufficient to throw several men who were standing on the forward section of the upper deck off their feet.<sup>110</sup>

but nobody was hurt. All hands were relieved to note within a few minutes that the ship was not sinking.

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\*Quotation is from HMCS PRINCE HENRY, Report of Proceedings. LA MALOUINE--French corvette, British-built and (1944) British-manned, one 4-inch gun, 15.5 knots. EASTON--improved "Hunt" Class destroyer.

\*\*EASTERN PRINCE--11,000 tons, British registry. MARIGOT--4,047 tons, French registry. BEAUFORT--Improved "Hunt" Class destroyer.

"A survey of the damage was carried out but although several compartments were under pressure, the real extent and seriousness of the damage could only be conjectured, as it was below the water-line and inaccessible from inside the ship."

PRINCE DAVID kept right on for Salamis Bay, where PRINCE HENRY, who had intercepted the messaged report of the mining, was watching for her with some concern. She limped in and came to anchor shortly after 1100, "under her own power and slightly down by the bows." Damage control confined the flooding to ballast tanks, a leak in the forward magazine, and eighteen inches in the central stores flat. On 12 December HMS ORION spared a diver, who found ". . . a small hole on the starboard side forward, and a large hole some 17 by 12 feet on the port side of the bow." PRINCE DAVID had been in the main cleared channel when hit, and FOLEM had immediately caused the channel to be re-swept, with no results. Therefore it seems clear that PRINCE DAVID's injury depended upon purest, evil chance. It was concluded that a solitary mine must have drifted into the Gulf of Athens from some other area still unswept, which the Canadian ship, with unerring aim, struck. The possibility of (Communist) sabotage in Italy where she had loaded was not entirely ruled out.<sup>111.</sup>

Meanwhile the landing craft were fully and dangerously employed offloading PRINCE DAVID and other ships. On shore, the rebels had gained, and could now bring many parts of the waterfront under fire. The boats of No. 529 Flotilla, landing RN and Royal Hellenic Navy personnel from SS ERIDAN on 11 December, were favourite targets; they were thankful to be armoured, as the standing order was not to shoot back.<sup>112.</sup> All night and day from the 9th of December the Canadians heard intermittent firing "ashore and by ships", with the sweep of searchlights adding colour to the din between dark and dawn. About 1500 on 11 December PRINCE HENRY was struck port side by a stray .25 rifle bullet. Her log records for the first watch that evening (2000-2359) "No unusual activity ashore"<sup>113.</sup>—a perplexing observation, considering the circumstances, which leaves you to guess if all was calm, or calamity. During the hours of darkness that night, PRINCE HENRY's craft were busy unloading the

two transports which had arrived with PRINCE DAVID. They discovered that the enemy was not the only enemy: "Craft were fired at on two occasions by small arms, presumably from our own ships."

On 14 December PRINCE DAVID withdrew from Greek waters to find repair facilities in quieter surroundings. Her combined operations outfit was left behind, to help cope with the "present emergency",<sup>114</sup> which grew hourly as street after street in the capital fell to Communist insurgents. PRINCE HENRY would accommodate the crews and maintenance party of No. 529 Flotilla, while Piraeus Harbour Control Officer directed the eight craft. PRINCE DAVID was escorted out of Piraeus by HMS WOLBOROUGH,\* and arrived at Bizerta on the north African coast with 177 passengers from Malta on 18 December. She entered Ferryville Drydock, and passes out of our story for a time. There is little to say about her Tunisian stay except that the repairs effected were only temporary, the convalescence took four weeks, and her officers and men sweated through very un-Canadian weather during their North African Christmas and New Year's. But they enjoyed their respite from operational routine--foretaste of a rapidly-approaching peace.

The while, the Canadian sailors left in Greece embraced different sections of the population in alternate hostilities and civilities. From 10 December on, PRINCE DAVID's combined operations personnel saw the civil war through to its end; PRINCE HENRY and her commandos had to pop off to other duty after the worse half of the struggle was over. For PRINCE DAVID's unit, this holiday season war around Athens was their third, last and longest period of detached duty: the Communist snipers whose pellets they dodged were the last hostile forces to engage any of the "Prince" ships or flotillas thereof. If, however, No. 529 Flotilla's fashion of beginning the mission had become also its manner of carrying on, PRINCE DAVID's fighting career would have been ended for her on a distinctly sour note. In the first sixteen hours after the mother-ship's departure, three of the eight boats were put out of commission. This rate would have wiped the flotilla out completely within two days. At the same time, one of PRINCE HENRY's boats was lost. Fortunately, the trend was halted.

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\*Trawler, 459 tons.

The tasks which the Canadian landing craft performed during the Greek civil war were varied. They: 1. offloaded ships; 2. carried bombardment spotters; 3. ferried casualties and ELAS prisoners of war; 4. did reconnaissance; 5. supplied Phalerun seaplane base, the Yacht Club, and other posts from time to time cut off by the rebels; 6. shifted artillery pieces; 7. made small-scale beach assaults; and 8. among all these regular duties, ran many ordinary errands, and some special missions.

The dangers they faced were the enemy and the elements. ELAS could only threaten them with pot-shots from the shore; its miniscule naval arm is described in Appendix "S". The weather proved more formidable, and was responsible for the gap torn in the Canadian formations on 14/15 December. PRINCE HENRY's log shows, on 14 December: "1030 occasional showers---glass dropping. 1130 rain". During the middle watch that night there were "Squalls increasing in force and frequency".

It was in this weather, on the evening of the 14th, that three of PRINCE DAVID's boats and one of PRINCE HENRY's were told off for an invasion. A friendly radio station on the shore of Phalerun Bay was besieged by ELAS, and begged assistance. The landing craft embarked troops at Port Mahomes, and made passage in a strong 25 knot wind that threw up choppy seas and drove spray like hail. Even in somewhat sheltered waters, conditions were clearly marginal for such light craft which, tossed roughly about and a prey to every gust of wind and slop of sea, nevertheless bucked along bravely and dashed in through a terrific mad-cap surf about 1900. Two of PRINCE DAVID's craft\* broached to on the beach; despite the best efforts of their crews, they could not be pointed properly seaward again before high breakers rolling in rocked them over or filled them with water. Nobody was hurt, and the soldiers got off to their objective all right, but the shipwrecked sailors had to abandon their craft without salvage, which was "impossible under the circumstances." They boarded LCA 1432 to return to PRINCE HENRY.

By the time this raiding party reached the ship, two more Canadian boats had been beaten up by the weather. PRINCE HENRY's davits were, of course, crowded with her own outfit of landing craft, so during the days that PRINCE

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\*LCA's 1373 and 1375.

DAVID's flotilla paid attendance on her, the extra boats were assigned hitching-space at the quarter-booms. About 2000 that night No. 529 Flotilla's LCA 1346, to which the host-ship's motor cutter was secured, came free of its mooring. It was swiftly borne away on the flood, bobbing and tossing on the warm, black, stormy water. When a search found the two derelicts, they had washed ashore and been swamped, and could not be recovered in the raging combers.

The next mishap struck PRINCE HENRY's LCA 1396. Lieutenant J. A. Flynn, RCNVR, had taken her out from Port Mahonnes to catch up with the 4-craft assault party previously mentioned. An Army group headed by a Forward Observation Officer,\* was aboard. By 1945, even more off-schedule than when he set out, he brought the boat alongside LA MALOUINE. During a 30-minute conversation with the Bombardment Liaison Officer embarked in that ship, the wind and waves worsened.

"I informed the Army officer that it would be impossible to take my craft through the surf without endangering the lives of all aboard."

LCA 1396 was made fast astern with 2-inch wire rope. At 0405 the Canadian officer was shaken awake and told his craft was bouncing about badly--he sleepily rushed up top in time to see her capsize, snap the hawser, and carry a cargo of Army gear down to a five-fathom bottom.

At 0700 on 15 December PRINCE HENRY's Flotilla Officer left his ship on a dismal tour of inspection: the stranded crew of LCA 1396 were picked up from LA MALOUINE; and a survey was made of salvage prospects for PRINCE DAVID's two craft on the radio station beach. Their situation looked hopeful, and on the fourth day they were both recovered. LCA 1373 was so badly damaged, however, that she was hung up semi-permanently in PRINCE HENRY's spare davits. Efforts to salve the two drifters were but half as successful. Both were righted, bailed, and towed off the beach on the 15th; and PRINCE HENRY's cutter was recovered safe and sound. But the landing craft was badly holed in the stern. As two other craft towed it between them out to the ship, it endangered its rescuers, and had to be cut free just before the falls could be hooked on.

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\*FOO--the hero of a D-day messaged pun, "Many are called, but FOO are chosen."

LCA 1436 sank right alongside PRINCE HENRY in 90 feet of water. Captain Godfrey was grateful there ". . . was no loss of life in any of these accidents to craft which were caused by adverse weather and the high seas running."

Another picturesque evolution on the 15th was the Piraeus blockade. One of PRINCE HENRY's landing craft embarked a Royal Navy boarding party in St. George's harbour. All day until 2 o'clock next morning they drew a cordon about the port of Athens and boarded fourteen small vessels "suspected of running ammunition to ELAS." PRINCE HENRY, at the same time, was becoming an RN depot. In the first dog watch of the 15th "Six officers and 27 ratings joined from Navy House", and in general a ". . . great many additional personnel whose quarters ashore had been captured or damaged by ELAS forces were victualled on board during the period."

The makeshift local war then went through a dull phase of several days, while the two Flotillas' maintenance parties grabbed the chance to do some of the engine repairs and tune-ups that had fallen behind. In official reports, both PRINCE HENRY's captain and Flotilla Officer laid greatest praise upon the "continued loyalty and hard work" of their dutiful mechanics; marvelled that No. 528 Flotilla's motors could be kept in condition to run  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day, 16 days in a row. In and about Piraeus, they dhugged 3,600 miles in this time--stretched out as the crow flies, the distance would have taken some of the Canadians home to Glace Bay; and PRINCE DAVID's landing craft miles easily extended the itinerary out to New Westminster. A complaint voiced was against senior officers in British cruisers who hung out IMMEDIATE signals for transport while their own ships' cutters lay idle in the water, forcing the Canadian landing craft to drop such work as the evacuation of wounded out to the hospital ship MAINE.

On the 21st of December the shooting once again achieved respectable intensity. The log says

"0230 Heavy firing ashore. Stray bullets passing and hitting the ship."

In the dead of night on 21/22 December all thirteen operational craft of the Canadian Flotillas delivered their last concerted assault of the Year of

15-22 December 1944

Invasions. The scale was three battalions; the target Piraeus harbour's north shore.

"H-hour 0300. No opposition was expected nor was it encountered initially. The object was to land the troops undetected, and all craft made their approaches and beachings skilfully and quietly. The initial advantage of surprise was achieved on all beaches and was a great help to the army. Satisfaction with the work of both major and minor landing craft was expressed by General Scobie. At about 0600, sniping from the north shore at the loading jetty started and made work there very unpleasant for about three hours. Slight damage was done to [the craft skippered by Lieutenant G. Hendry] . . . Later in the morning, mortaring started but was inaccurate and ineffective. Craft were employed evacuating wounded and dead and some hundreds of ELAS prisoners during the remainder of the day and similarly during December 23rd.

This completely successful blow against the rebels was part of a development during December's last two weeks that gave to the British side of the civil war first the initiative, then an upper hand, in Attica. Next day, in the true spirit of the first Christmas, PRINCE DAVID's combined operations personnel were turned out of their quarters---(no room in the inn) PRINCE HENRY was ordered to raise steam with all dispatch and proceed to Preveza to take charge of a disaster happening to General Napoleon Zervas in that west country port. She hoisted her own landing craft and sailed at midnight. No. 529 Flotilla, homeless, spent the night of 23/24 December bobbing up and down in Piraeus water. By Christmas eve space had been found in British naval barracks for them. Thus---scooting about the anchorages; vigorously dodging the guerilla insurgents' diminishing fire; cowering in GEORGIOS AVEROFF's lee when artillery was aimed at them; visiting their sole casualty\* in the MAINE---the detached Canadians of PRINCE DAVID's commando outfit spent the holy and happy Seasons quite interestingly. In the New Year, ELAS was everywhere pushed back, and duties lightened. The rule of all work and no play could be honoured in the breach. Most of the civilians among whom they dwelt were unarmed, and not hostile---even the Communists referred to Britain and her Commonwealth consort as "our great ally".<sup>115</sup> These weeks were the era of the "Canada Club---Pireus Branch"<sup>116</sup>. first established by PRINCE HENRY's combined operations personnel. This sign on a rude tar-paper shack proclaimed that here some of the lads rested on shore from their naval exertions, voluntary ambassadors of the proposition that the Royal Canadian Navy was not at war

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\*Lieutenant D. F. Graham, RCNVR, who was injured by accident on 23 December.

with all Greeks, but only with some of the men. On 5 January "practically all fighting stopped in the Piraeus area." In the last week before they reembarked in their parent-ship on 18 January, only two boats at a time were required, and the sailors' schedule became 24 hours on, 72 off.

In her mission to Preveza, HMCS PRINCE HENRY set records. As we have seen, she sailed from Piraeus in a hurry at 2330 on 23 December. Passage was made around the Peloponnese, and at 0830 Christmas Day she was anchoring in Preveza Roads two-and-one-half miles from the town's main jetty. Captain Godfrey had been appointed Commanding Officer Preveza, and accompanied the Flotilla on its first run-in over the shallows. As his orders had indicated, conditions were desperate, and getting worse.

"It was ascertained that the ELAS troops were closing in on Preveza and that the situation was rapidly deteriorating. There were some 3000 refugees in the town waiting to be evacuated."

The landing craft immediately began their lengthy shuttle-service--in a rough sea and a 20-knot wind<sup>117</sup>.--lifting a wretched humanity from the quays out to the ship. A visit to General Napoleon Zervas' Headquarters in the town revealed that his EDES army formed a shaky perimeter against the advancing Communists some twenty miles away, but would soon run out of ammunition. Naval forces were concentrating. By noontime, His Hellenic Majesty's Ships PANTHER (Greek Naval Officer in Command) and THEMISTOCLES, and HMS LIDDESDALE,\* had arrived.<sup>118</sup> Soon after, the British Landing Ship Tank BRUISER also joined, inauspiciously grounding in a narrow part of the entrance as she came in. She was refloated, undamaged, in three hours. PRINCE HENRY's Captain, conferring with these ships and the British Naval Liaison Officer in the port, directed an evacuation of civilians first, and EDES later, who would in the meantime hold the ring against ELAS as best they could. The Adriatic minesweepers were ordered to open the south Corfu channel, while ships detailed to transport refugees to the island port of Corfu began to load up.

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\*PANTHER--"Aetos" Class destroyer, three 4-inch guns, 32 knots.  
THEMISTOCLES and LIDDESDALE--"Hunt" Class, four 4-inch guns, 27.5 knots.

All day from 1030 until dark PRINCE HENRY embarked haggard Greek civilians from her bounding boats.

"They were all terribly sea sick but since the heavy weather made it impossible to hoist fully laden craft, those that could were made to climb aboard via jumping ladders. It was a pitiful sight which greeted the eyes of the ship's company. Seasick men, women and children with belongings of all kinds, including livestock (goats, sheep, chickens and dogs) milled about the upper deck, an undisciplined mob . . . Directions, amid the babble of excited chattering was made possible because several of our ratings spoke Greek and with the help of some few Greek men who spoke passable English they, by dint of much shouting, made our orders understood . . . Men refused to be separated from wives and families and women from their bundles, everyone of them wanted to crowd into the same space no matter how small it was. The men particularly were bound that they should make themselves comfortable and leave the women to do the toting of bundles if anything was to be done. This was too much for the ship's company and so with more or less gentle persuasion the men were induced to carry their gear below and stow it."<sup>119</sup>

The last trips were completed shortly after 2000.

"By this time the sea was calm and the craft were hoisted loaded to be later secured for sea. The evacuees had been on the jetty since morning in a state of suspense and the frightened look on their faces as the craft were hoisted was something not to be forgotten."<sup>119</sup>

On the first humane passage from Preveza to Corfu PRINCE HENRY's officers and men played purser to 1100 unfortunate souls. This was well over double the number their ship was designed to accommodate; but astounding as it was, it would be surpassed twice before Preveza was empty. With the heavy responsibility of non-combatants filling his vessel's bowels, Captain Godfrey preferred to voyage the unfamiliar, mined waters by daylight. Thus PRINCE HENRY laid over the night. The galley came up with bully beef and bread for the ruck of refugees, and hot soup for children and nursing mothers.

". . . This distinction at once precipitated a minor row as the men rushed in to literally steal from the mouths of babes and sucklings. The padre and other officers however 'weren't having any of this' and soon settled it by refusing to feed anyone unless they sat still where they were. There was also the inevitable, threatened, impending interesting event as two of the women were sure their time was near . . ."<sup>119</sup>

She weighed anchor at 0630 the 26th. The course, laid for the port of Corfu by the outside of the island, was covered without new additions to PRINCE HENRY's already over-strained population. She arrived at 1500 the same afternoon; the landing craft were employed setting the refugees ashore; within three hours

PRINCE HENRY was on her way back to the mainland to bring across the rest of the town.

PRINCE HENRY made her second call at Preveza from 0900 to midnight 27 December. HMS BICESTER\* (Captain E. C. L. Turner, RN) was now posted there, and had become Commanding Officer Preveza. There were only 365 townspeople to board the Canadian Landing Ship, so she began to remove Zervas' troops from the jam they were in. Gunnery Officer Lieutenant-Commander J. B. Bracken, RCNVR, led thirteen duffle-coated sailors ashore as a beach party and to maintain order,<sup>120</sup> while over 1300 of the defeated Greek soldiers lined up to board the craft. About 1500 the Flotilla began to deliver up PRINCE HENRY's ladders

"... quite a lot of the Greek irregular army, who demanded cabin space. This demand was laughed off . . ."<sup>119</sup>

It was harder to laugh off "the casual way they handled grenades which were hanging at their belts."<sup>121</sup> In a 2130 hub-bub the EDES contingent discovered three German deserters among their number, who were quickly rescued by the Canadians, interrogated, and "given single accommodation for three behind bars".<sup>119</sup> PRINCE HENRY weighed at 2355 with 1700 passengers--by far the greatest load ever carried in either of the Canadian LSI(M)'s--and made a night passage to Corfu by the same route as before. She arrived at 1015 the 28th, finished disembarkation by 1400, then lent the Flotilla to THEMISTOCLES for four hours while the Greek ship discharged the folk she had brought across.

During 28 December the Greek troops loyal to the Government fell back on Preveza. When PRINCE HENRY returned there for the third and last time on the 29th, it was a very restricted beachhead from which she plucked 1500 rag-tail personnel, with the help of LCI(L)'s which had arrived from FOTALI (Taranto). During the afternoon, the beach party selected and sent out to the ship 823 EDES soldiers, 542 Italian prisoners of war, 50 more refugees, and 50 Russians in civilian clothes, whose appearance just here, just now, was a mystery to everyone.

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\*Improved "Hunt" Class destroyer.

Artillery heralded ELAS, pressing towards the port from the suburbs of Preveza, while a last desperate few hundred still awaited evacuation on the jetties. At 1630 HMS PENTSTEMON\* sent over 116 bags of mail and a new Paymaster, both forwarded for PRINCE HENRY from Britain---well---regulated navies keep up their routines even at panic stations. The Canadian ship got underway at 1830. Preveza fell to ELAS next morning, empty, HHMS NAVARINO\*\* covering the evacuation of the last escapees with a bombardment of the advancing Communists. PRINCE HENRY delivered her last load of Greeks to Corfu on 30 December, and took the Russians and Italians with her to Taranto.

The evacuation of Preveza was hastily improvised with whatever British naval authorities, clinging by their fingernails at Athens, had on hand or could muster. It was a surprising success. No serious casualties to ships or sailors were incurred, and in six days a total of 10,731 persons, "besides stores, mules and vehicles, were taken off."<sup>122</sup> PRINCE HENRY was the principal transport involved. Of those rescued from Preveza, she lifted one-third of the soldiers, and one-half of the civilians and prisoners; she was responsible (disregarding mules and stores) for forty per cent of the evacuation. It was the Canadians' Christmas party, and they were Santa Claus:

"The men willingly gave up their quarters to the Greek refugees and showed great kindness and thoughtfulness in looking after the comfort and well-being of the women and children on board. Everyone worked with a will on Christmas Day in spite of the fact that, of necessity, no leave could be granted [from 5-31 December]."

"It was an assignment not unworthy of the season and the Maple Leaf boys feel that they did their "Stuff" with a good heart despite the fact they still have to fire a shot in anger, unless the battle against bugs and lice with AL63, which began the next day, can be counted."<sup>119</sup>

Approaching Taranto on the last day of the year, after four weeks at Piraeus and Preveza, PRINCE HENRY received an emergency signal instructing her

". . . to proceed forthwith to the assistance of HMS BRUISER which had carried away a bow door in the heavy seas and was unable to make headway. Course was immediately altered to the position given and full speed ordered. However, before arrival in BRUISER's estimated position, a further signal was received from FOTALI that the destroyer HMS CLEVELAND\*\* had been sent and ordered to stand by BRUISER and relieve PRINCE HENRY."

\*Corvette, one 4-inch gun, 17 knots.

\*\*Ex-HMS ECHO, destroyer, four 4.7-inch guns, 36 knots.

\*\*\*\*"Hunt" Class destroyer, four 4-inch guns, 27.5 knots.

PRINCE HENRY deposited the 600 Italians and Russians on the Taranto quay after entering harbour at 1620 31 December. Keeping active, she next day embarked 247 officers and men, mostly New Zealand Army. With them she passed to the most easterly point in the Mediterranean which any of the "Prince" ships were to reach in their war-time career. She left Taranto at 1630 2 January, 1945, and arrived at Alexandria on the 5th at 0800. There she settled for a six-week period of boiler-cleaning and general maintenance. At the same time, her sister-ship the PRINCE DAVID was still in Ferryville Drydock, a thousand miles west along the North African littoral, repairing mine damage. With both of them temporarily immobilized, it will be convenient here to look and see what sort of future Ottawa way laying in store for the two Landing Ships.

In May 1944 Naval Service Headquarters had asked Admiralty its opinion as to whether money devoted to the further improvement and modernization of PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY would be well spent, or wasted.<sup>123.</sup> The British answer, given at the time of Normandy, was that all three "Prince" ships were "definitely required" for the war against Japan,<sup>124.</sup> once the business with Hitler was finished. The Greek operations, which by January 1945 were pretty well over, were the last duty in Europe for vessels of their type; and they might very handily have gone from there straight through Suez to the eastern war had not Ottawa let off a rocket. Coincident with "Manna", the Canadian government decided to restrict the scope of its naval hostilities against Japan to the Pacific Ocean, and to 13,000 men.<sup>125.</sup> But it was in the Indian Ocean, which Prime Minister Mackenzie King had placed off limits, that the Admiralty had hoped to use the two ships, in Operation "Dracula".<sup>126.</sup> Therefore the British authority asked if they might borrow PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY and put Royal Navy crews on board.<sup>127.</sup> It was so arranged.<sup>128.</sup>

Then PRINCE DAVID came a cropper in the Gulf of Athens. The Ferryville Dockyard found that for complete repairs to her, and a good refit, three months would be required.<sup>129.</sup> Admiralty wanted the work done in Canada to ease the pressure on United Kingdom yards;<sup>130.</sup> and also desired improved communications installed in the ship. It was settled that Britain would pay for alterations.

Canada for the refit, and that PRINCE DAVID would be sailed to Vancouver to be taken in hand.<sup>131.</sup> Thus the position in mid-January was that PRINCE DAVID would go home for a while, and both ships would turn over Royal Navy to join Lord Louis Mountbatten's Indian Ocean war against Japan.

HMCS PRINCE DAVID emerged from drydock on 12 January, fit to make the ocean passage home.<sup>132.</sup> The first item of business was to recover her landing craft and personnel from Piraeus. Thither she sailed 16 January--the day after the civil war her men had helped to fight was brought to a successful armistice. Soon after arriving in the Piraeus at 0930 on the 18th, PRINCE DAVID hoisted on board a battered--about 75% remnant of No. 529 Flotilla's boats. Next day HHMS SALAMINIA\* accompanied her to Taranto, where 390 ranks of the Highland Light Infantry that the Canadian had borne for passage, were set on shore. On 22 January she was sent to Messina to trade in her landing craft at HMS HAMILCAR.\*\* She lay over there for a week. A new engine was put into LCA 1375, which was retained; the rest were sent away, while seven renovated craft were embarked. In the lull of a severe south-west squall that necessitated steam being kept on the engines anyway, she slipped from the Sicilian port before dawn 29 January, and sailed along the coast to Augusta. Ninety-nine RN personnel were lifted to Malta; then PRINCE DAVID returned to Augusta.

She spent the first two weeks of February at Augusta, while the ship's company toured the ruins<sup>133.</sup> and gloated over their Christmas cigarettes, which arrived on the 9th in 188 bags of mail. Then she sailed for the Panama Canal en route home, calling at Malta (14-16 February), Gibraltar (19/20th), and Curacao in the Caribbean (1 March).<sup>134.</sup> The reduced hazards of the Atlantic crossing touched the last leg of this voyage, but very slightly. Admiralty's regular intelligence message on 19 February counted up 42 U-boats patrolling the sea-lanes, "at least one west of Gibraltar."<sup>135.</sup> Next day PRINCE DAVID cleared Gibraltar and cut safely through this danger area. On the 22nd of February, U-300 was sunk by HMS RECRUIT\*\*\* right across the Canadian's track,

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\*Minesweeper, one 3-inch gun.

\*\*See page 133 above.

\*\*\*Formerly USS, "Raven" Class minesweeper, two 5-inch guns, 18 knots.

five hundred miles astern.<sup>136</sup> Transit of the Panama was made on 3 March; PRINCE DAVID arrived at Esquimalt on the 14th.<sup>137</sup> A week later she was placed in "care and maintenance".

PRINCE HENRY, following different paths, was active during 1945 for only a few weeks longer than her sister. She was worked upon at Alexandria until 12 February, while her company took generous sight-seeing leave. Her bottom was scraped; a party from HMS SPHINX\* cleaned the boilers; four of the Oerlikons were given gyro gun-sights; and some of the landing craft had their hulls patched up. As so many harassed car-owners find, the garage, while fixing some things will damage others: "They fixed it all right!"--in PRINCE HENRY's case, she was pushed roughly by the tug EMPIRE DOLLY when proceeding out of drydock on 13 January, was dented, and caused to seep. This damage too, was put right during the refit. On 13/14 February PRINCE HENRY was ordered out of port on an air-sea rescue operation. But she had no sooner arrived at the position, 130 miles north of Alexandria, than she was uneventfully recalled. On 15 February Winston Churchill's barge passed close alongside as he went up harbour for his last meeting with United States President F. D. Roosevelt, embarked in USS QUINCY.\*\*

Suffering a plague of tugs, PRINCE HENRY's departure from Egypt was delayed on 16 February when the EMPIRE HARLEQUIN, helping her slip, managed to wrap the towing wire around her starboard propellor. The British destroyer depot ship BLENHEIM sent a diver who quickly cleared the screw, and PRINCE

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\*A Royal Navy Shore Establishment at Alexandria, Egypt, 1941-46.

\*\*Heavy cruiser, nine 8-inch guns, 33 knots. The Yalta Conference with Stalin had broken up on February 10th, and FDR had gone to meet Middle East potentates at the Suez Canal, while Churchill, as he writes in his book, went to harangue the Greeks. He flew to Alexandria from Athens in the early hours of 15 February, and was accommodated in HM Cruiser AURORA. The day after PRINCE HENRY left Alexandria, Churchill gave a reception for Ibn Saud which is the subject of a good passage: he wrote "A number of social problems arose. I had been told that neither smoking nor alcoholic beverages were allowed in the Royal Presence. As I was the host at lunch I raised the matter at once, and said to the interpreter that if it was the religion of His Majesty to deprive himself of smoking and alcohol I must point out that my rule of life prescribed as an absolutely sacred rite smoking cigars and also the drinking of alcohol before, after and if need be during all meals and in the intervals between them." (Churchill, VI, pp. 390-398)

HENRY got away for Messina at 2100. HMS HAMILCAR took her two best LCM's, and gave in exchange two of the used assault craft PRINCE DAVID had turned in the previous month on her way west. PRINCE HENRY went to Taranto, and embarked there on the 24th 280 officers and men of the Royal Artillery, for Piraeus. On the 26th at 0800 she arrived at the port of Athens—all was peaceful now—very unlike the hectic hubbub and crisis of her last two-week call, in December. The next day Captain Godfrey paid his respects to Rear Admiral Mansfield in HMS AJAX, and accompanied the admiral to Ambassador Leeper's evening reception "held by His Excellency at his home in Athens." Also on the 27th 376 more artillerymen were embarked. On 1 March they were delivered to Salonika, and some of the Essex Regiment took their place in PRINCE HENRY's troop-spaces. At 1530 the 2nd she secured at Volos, half way back to Athens, put the soldiers on shore, and took aboard 200 "Hostages". These were Greek civilians whom ELIAS had suspected of anti-communism during the troubles, and had captured and transported. Now they were being returned home, those that survived. About two hours after she cleared from Volos early on the 3rd, an ominous vibration started to emanate from the starboard High Pressure turbine. Speed had to be reduced to ten knots; she did not let go anchor at Piraeus until 2140.<sup>138</sup> On 4 March the hostages disembarked. The following afternoon while the landing craft brought 162 British military and naval personnel to the ship, PRINCE HENRY's shaky machinery was studied.

"Ship has serious defect in starboard main engine necessitating this engine not being turned. Coupling is being broken to ensure this. Maximum speed 13 knots."<sup>139</sup>

At 1510 on 5 March PRINCE HENRY left Piraeus for the last time. As she limped off southward, the "Prince" ships' six-month connection with the volatile Greeks, an association which had much of the stuff legends are made of, was terminated.

At noon 7 March she arrived at Taranto, and disembarked the troops alongside. She sailed for repairs to Malta on the 9th, lifting a varied list of 38 passengers who were going that way. She remained amid the industrious chaos of that war-torn port until 15 March.

"During her stay in Malta, the High Pressure turbine was by-passed and the starboard shaft coupled up in order that the starboard engine might be used to take some of the strain off the port engine. "

When she left for Gibraltar, Malta Dockyard messaged ahead of her that "Defects in starboard main engine have been repaired";<sup>140.</sup> during the passage, Captain Godfrey hastened to explain that "only emergency repairs" had been completed, that the engine was "unreliable", and his ship could only do 15 knots.<sup>141.</sup> PRINCE HENRY arrived at Gibraltar on the 18th, and another six dozen sailors and airmen joined the 270 she was taking home from Malta. At 1500 the 21st she slipped to join MKS 90\* for Britain; a thirty-knot northeasterly and a rough sea<sup>142.</sup> made her adieu to the Mediterranean as keenly invigorating as had been the varied exploits she had known in the inland sea.

PRINCE HENRY reached England on 27 March. She spoke an old friend, HMS ULSTER MONARCH whom she had led to the beaches of Normandy,<sup>143a</sup> as she came through Sheerness boom at 1530. Commander-in-Chief Nore\*\* was not happy to see her: his message to Admiralty complained that he had only been told to expect her on the 26th, and was not informed she had "over 330" passengers-- "including invalids"--until London telephoned at noon on the day she arrived. Onward transportation for the home-coming servicemen could not be laid on in an instant, so he had PRINCE HENRY disembark her people into already over-crowded Chatham barracks.<sup>143b.</sup> On 29 March she got underway for the last time as an RCN warship, making a short passage up the historic Thames to secure at East India Docks. The bulk of her company were drafted to HMCS PEREGRINE\*\* for leave and disposal on Friday, 6 April, and left by train for Greenock and home.<sup>144.</sup> The previous day, the Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and his wife, came on board for the last "pusser" Divisions at 0930.

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\*MKS convoys were the slow convoys bound for the United Kingdom from Alexandria, Naples and Gibraltar. During 1943-4 PRINCE ROBERT's duty had been escorting the fast sections on this route (see Part II, page 64, and Appendix D).

\*\*Admiral of the Fleet Sir J. C. Tovey, GCB, KBE, DSO, RN.

\*\*\*The RCN Depot at Halifax.

"The grey camouflaged vessel stirred slightly as Right Honourable Vincent Massey . . . inspected the crew of more than 350 drawn up beneath the four-inch guns and the gaily-coloured landing craft slung overside.<sup>145</sup>

The turnover to a Royal Navy maintenance party occupied the next week. On 15 April, 1945, PRINCE HENRY became the first of the "Prince" ships to close her war career when she paid off at noon, and was commissioned in the Royal Navy by Lieutenant-Commander A. F. C. Gray, RNR.

By mid-April 1945 then, (although they were being readied for a third round against the enemy), the war was over for both PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY. As Landing Ships Infantry (Medium), they had been in active commission for fifteen months. PRINCE DAVID, discounting 75 days in refit and repairs, had been at sea on 42% of those days.<sup>146</sup> PRINCE HENRY was both more infirm--140 days in dockyard; and more steady: spending 48% of the time possible at sea.<sup>147</sup> Together they had ferried 22,000 troops wherever the exigencies of the service required--for D-day, "Dragoon", the liberation of Greece, and et cetera. The activities of PRINCE DAVID's landing craft while detached to Porquerolles, Poros and the Piraeus added irregular splashes of colour to the already varied record; while PRINCE HENRY's habitual station as leader--commodore of convoys, overseer of evacuations, and flagship (including the first occasion when an American admiral commanded from an RCN ship)--insured a proper dignity. Many friends had been made, all of them good: war correspondent Gerald Clark, who "relaxed as comfortably" as on a "pleasure boat about to sail up the Saint Lawrence"<sup>148</sup>. while waiting for D-day in PRINCE DAVID; the Canadian Scottish troops PRINCE HENRY embarked for the same enterprise, who felt themselves "especially fortunate"<sup>149</sup>. to be in a ship where many of the naval personnel were from their own home towns; the American officer who felt that if one had to land on a hostile beach in the dark (Operation "Dragoon"), the "Canadians were 'cream of the crop'"<sup>150</sup>. for getting you to it; the Admiral who spent ten days in PRINCE HENRY and messaged in departing:

"It is hoped that our paths will cross again soon. On behalf of myself and staff I again wish to express thanks for your thoughtful and efficient service rendered. Good luck and happy landfalls".<sup>151</sup>

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And the Greek government, who gave PRINCE DAVID a loving cup "in remembrance of the journey of liberation";<sup>152.</sup> and the poor people of Preveza; and all the soldiers embarked on all the

"... pre D-day nights when you went in toward your rendezvous, wondering whether it was this time that you'd get it,"<sup>153.</sup>

and all the officers and men who were taken homeward again; and even the enemy, the three or four dozen German sailors, human cinders, who were plucked from the burning sea, swathed, soothed, and gently brought to Corsica from the south of France. On many campaigns half way around Europe in that 1944 year of invasions, the two "Princes" had touched lives and touched history, and proved themselves worthy of the Maple Leaf, and earned, from those in contact, heaping praise and appreciation. The fullest gratulation was from the 81st Fighter Squadron of the United States Army Air Force, whose men had boarded PRINCE HENRY in Southampton--fittingly enough on July 4th--and were taken to Normandy on the vessel's third "Overlord" crossing:

"... this comfortable ship . . . very pleasant trip . . . what could have been a nasty crossing. Our men had only the highest praise for the extreme cleanliness of this ship and the courteous manner in which her officers and crew carried out their assignment. They left no stone unturned in providing not only for our safety, but for our comfort as well. Throughout the many months in the mud and dust of France that followed, we cherished the fond hope that after V/E day we might return to America on this same ship."<sup>154.</sup>

There was but one exception from the chorus of unanimous acclaim. The author of the monograph "Canadian LSI's in the Mediterranean", which has been of so very much value to this present history,\* was on board PRINCE HENRY

"... during Operations "Manna" and "Kelso" . . . left the ship at Salonika on 8 November [1944] to return to London."

Lieutenant George was far from saying our two ships had not done their duty, but he felt that their special capabilities could be put to greater use. After observing PRINCE HENRY and making notes for three and a half weeks, he submitted certain recommendations to CNMO:

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\*See note 48.

"In the Canadian LSI's, the ratio of ship's company to passengers is seldom better than 1 to 1 . . . opposite end of the scale from Red Ensign LSI's like the LANGIBBY CASTLE [sic] who with a crew of less than 200, frequently carried more than 2500 troops . . ."155.

To risk the crew each invasion for only an equal number of troops did not seem well thought out. Operating costs, he said, were \$100,000. per month, or about \$1. for carrying each soldier one mile--"perhaps the most expensive rate in the world for operating costs alone."155. His conclusions were: the RCN should either 1. turn PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY over to the merchant marine. Then the crew, not responsible for fighting the ship, could be reduced to 140, and 1000 troops could be carried; or 2. keep them Navy, but take out the guns and anti-U-boat equipment. Reduction in complement would be 10 officers and 64 men; or 3. bargain with Britain--the Royal Navy to get the two "Princes", and Canada to have ownership of HM Ships already manned by RCN personnel. In part, Captain Godfrey agreed with these views:

"It is obvious that more troops could have been carried on each passage to the beaches, both in Normandy and the South of France, if the ships had not been equipped with the existing main armament . . . in these two operations the ship's armament was redundant since the troop-carrying LSI's were protected by many escorts and strict orders were issued to the effect that ships were not to fire their armament unless directly attacked."156.

The discussion went no further; and soon war's end made the proper outfit of invasion troop-carriers a topic of merely academic concern. As we have seen, the authorities by January, 1945, had decided on the two ships' next employment--in the Royal Navy--and it was thus something like Lieutenant George's third choice that was being applied.

In April 1945, PRINCE HENRY went into refit at Harland and Wolff, North Woolwich (London).157. In June, PRINCE DAVID followed suit on the West Coast, paying off on the 11th and taking PRINCE ROBERT's place in Burrard Dry when the refurbished anti-aircraft cruiser sailed for the Japanese war.158. But the conflict closed before any of the "Princes" could get in any more hostile licks. Although over the summer PRINCE DAVID officially became a

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Royal Navy ship like her sister, \* unlike PRINCE HENRY she never really passed into British hands. Both ships were still in their respective dockyards when Japan gave notice she was quitting the war.<sup>159</sup> That same day, NSHQ halted the work then nearing completion at Vancouver, and cabled London to ask if Admiralty still wanted the two Landing Ships.<sup>160</sup> This was mulled over for three weeks, before Admiralty replied no;<sup>161</sup> Ottawa was quicker, declaring them surplus to RCN requirements (along with 39 frigates, 12 corvettes, and two dozen assorted other vessels) long before the ink had been put to the official declaration of peace in Tokyo harbour.<sup>162</sup> What was left for PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY, in the Navy, was mostly paper work; then the former liners would return to normal--that is, to civilian, occupations.

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\*The precise date in 1945 on which PRINCE DAVID was turned over to the Royal Navy cannot be ascertained. The RCN List shows her manned (in refit) in July; the British List has her on 29 September, under Lieutenant-Commander R. M. Miller, RN, who is not, however, marked "in command". The Admiralty's 061241b July to NSHQ re PRINCE DAVID reads: ". . . Request you suggest a date for transfer on loan to RN". The earliest specific date of an RN officer's appointment to the ship is 29 July--Sub-Lieutenant (E) J.W. Allen, RNVR; the transfer was likely effected by message about mid-July. Probably none of the nine British officers appointed to the ship ever even saw PRINCE DAVID, as she did not leave the West Coast, nor move again except under tow--and the United Kingdom early in September expressed its disinterest in her. On 9 October 1945 RCN officers were again appointed to her. (NSS 1926-102/2; NHS 8000 PD v.1).

PART IV: Post-war disposition of the Prince ships.  
Evaluation of their naval career.

After the war, a few last naval services were performed by the "Prince" ships before they were sent back to "civvy street". On the West Coast, the tugs HEATHERTON and GLENDEVON towed PRINCE DAVID to Esquimalt from Vancouver in September, 1945, where for three or four months she was an accommodation ship, tender to NADEN. Amid the hubbub of that fall's demobilization, she witnessed PRINCE ROBERT's return from Hong Kong on 20 October, and the fanfare of welcome extended to the Canadian ex-prisoners of war she brought home with her. The outfit of eight landing craft PRINCE DAVID had carried from the Mediterranean--(one, LCA 1375, was a survivor of her original issue, having weathered the worst that D-day, "Dragoon" and Greece could do)--was removed and placed in reserve against future possibilities. The Prince ships themselves had been declared surplus to RCN requirements. In January, 1946, both PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE ROBERT were towed over to the mainland side, and laid up in Lynn Creek, North Vancouver. There the War Assets Corporation showed them to prospective buyers.<sup>1.</sup>

The first vulture that came hovering about had a paternal air. One thought the Canadian National Steamships would have been 'happy in 1940 to unload their white elephants--"Sir Henry Thornton's last extravagance"--onto the Naval Service, even at a loss of \$1½ million per ship.<sup>2.</sup> But perhaps the feeling was that there could be no more money lost on the Prince ships, so much having gone down the drain already. At any rate, here again at the end of 1945 was the government steamship line, applying to get its ships back. The Navy gave them the runaround. First, CNR President R. C. Vaughan wrote to the Minister of National Defence:

"Shortly after the outbreak of the last war the Navy commandeered the SS PRINCE ROBERT and the SS PRINCE DAVID . . . serious consideration is [now] being given to one or two additions to the fleet. Before finally proceeding with our plans I would appreciate a statement from you as to whether or not the PRINCE ROBERT and the PRINCE DAVID are likely to be released by the Navy and, if so, would it be the Government's intention that they should be reconverted to their former condition as passenger carrying ships, or would this be entirely impracticable?"<sup>3.</sup>

The Minister in reply sent him to the War Assets Corporation, who referred him back to the Deputy Minister of the Naval Service, who said that COPC was the man to see.<sup>4</sup> No doubt Canadian National Steamships finally burst through this paperwork curtain, and got a chance to survey the ships that were their pre-war pride and despair. The ships' filial duty would have insisted upon that. But the re-purchasing agent apparently did not like what he saw. The two Princes, returning prodigals, were disowned by their progenitor, and stayed in the display case until the autumn of 1946.

Across Canada and over the Atlantic, PRINCE HENRY's interim disposition was somewhat similar in nature to PRINCE DAVID's, but more exciting. CNMO, Admiralty and the Canadian Army's Quartermaster General had all suggested she carry troops home to Canada; then a duty with greater priority arose. When she proceeded on the last naval mission performed by any of the Princes, her prow still pointed in the late foe's direction. HMS PRINCE HENRY (Captain J. O. Davies, DSC, RNR) sailed out of the Thames on 3 December, 1945, and cleared Portsmouth on the 12th bound for Wilhelmshaven. Flag Officer, Western Germany\* was based there, and had need of an accommodation and headquarters ship. Ottawa had been asked to extend the Canadian ship's loan to the RN for this purpose. On 14 December the PRINCE HENRY came to a semi-permanent mooring at the chief German North Sea naval station.<sup>5</sup> Helping to administer the British zone of occupied Germany was, no doubt, highly agreeable to the ship with the Canadian memories: of blockades, Pacific pursuits, French invasions, and many other varied duties, all undertaken with just this consummation in mind.

Actually, PRINCE HENRY never did get back to Canada. She was released from her headquarters ship duties at the beginning of February, 1946,<sup>6</sup> and was soon disposed of by British authorities (on WAC's behalf)

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\*Rear-Admiral F. E. P. Hutton, CB, RN.

after her return to the United Kingdom. The British Ministry of Transport paid half a million dollars\* for her--the same price Clarke Steamships had paid in 1938 when they had made her into the NORTH STAR. This time she was renamed the EMPIRE PARKESTON, "was fitted out early in 1948 for trooping",<sup>7.</sup> and went on with work very similar to her 1944-5 employments.

For their part, the PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE ROBERT were sold in September 1946 to the Charlton Steam Shipping Company Limited of London, subsidiary of the Greek Chandris concern. By February, 1947, both these ships had been sailed for Britain, there to undergo conversion of super-structure for passenger service.<sup>8.</sup> PRINCE ROBERT became the CHARLTON SOVEREIGN and PRINCE DAVID the CHARLTON MONARCH. In their work they half-girdled the globe, running from the United Kingdom out to Australia, enjoying thus a wide-ranging freedom of the sea which they too had helped to secure. "Extensive work for the immigrant trade"<sup>9.</sup> was carried out on the CHARLTON MONARCH at Antwerp in 1950. Then PRINCE DAVID reached the end of her voyages, prematurely, and was scrapped in 1951. The reason lies in the record set out in the foregoing chapters. Before the war she had decayed for half a year aground and abandoned at Bermuda; the RCN in 1940 took her over "suffering from neglect"; the next year she was again in the mud at Bermuda; in 1942 she clipped an uncharted submerged wooden pile at Kodiak, Alaska;<sup>10.</sup> and these mishaps were capped with damage by mining off Piraeus in December, 1944.\*\* Peace and war alike had thus been harder on her than on her sisters, and so

"The CHARLTON MONARCH was a constructive total loss . . . [although] prior to this we did not regard the vessel's five year war service rendering the ship less suitable for merchant work."<sup>9.</sup>

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\*That is, £112,866. 16s. 4d. at a rate of \$4.43; plus \$700. (£174. 14s.) for spare parts. The Naval Service had acquired PRINCE HENRY from Clarke Steamships in 1940 for \$638,233.86. (Letter British Ministry of Transport to the Naval Historian 21 January 1965--NHS 8000 PH; "The Three Prince Ships 1930-9" narrative in NHS 8000 Prince Ships General)

\*\*See above, pages 3-5, 24-25, 53, 148-50.

In April, 1952, Charlton Steamships disposed of their CHARLTON SOVEREIGN ex-PRINCE ROBERT. She was sold to the Fratelli Grimaldi Line of Genoa (Sicula Oceanica) for about \$1,367,000.<sup>11</sup> The price was almost twice what it had cost the RCN to acquire her twelve years earlier, and indicates the extent of her refit and care since 1947. Renamed LUCANIA, she now came into ever further affluence--you might say, her ship really came in. She was lengthened, her appointments were refurbished, and two swimming pools were put into her. Five easy, fruitful, declining years she spent plying out of Naples on luxury cruises to La Guaira, the port of Caracas, Venezuela. Did the passengers realize, or care, that in the ship where they sought leisure, men once served duty? that from these well-groomed promenades and games decks sailors had then scanned the sky for enemies, scoured the seas, and fought the ship? Why should they care? But PRINCE ROBERT was the same ship--her new owners found that "SS LUCANIA had a very heavy balance":<sup>11</sup> the same quick and unpredictable roll that PRINCE ROBERT's gun-loaders and layers had first noted with a frown in 1940.\* In 1958, at the age of 28, she was retired--"laid up at Naples", where she was "heavily damaged by a violent sea-storm".<sup>11</sup>

PRINCE HENRY, meanwhile, as EMPIRE PARKESTON, continued all through the 1950's to serve the British Government.

"Her managers were the General Steam Navigation Company Limited. She operated on the Harwich--Hook of Holland route apart from a spell in the eastern Mediterranean during the Suez emergency and during her last year of trooping service, when she made voyages between Tilbury, Leith, Folkestone, Cardiff, Plymouth and Southampton."<sup>12</sup>

She wore out at the same time as PRINCE ROBERT, and the two sisters had a final reunion in a breaker's yard near Genoa in 1962.<sup>13</sup>

It remains only to make some overall evaluation of the three Princes' five years each of war service with the Royal Canadian Navy. In one way, these ships were more typical of the wartime Navy than were any others. They symbolized its personnel. When the balloon went up, they shouldered part of the necessary naval burden--interrupting their chosen pursuits because there was need, and they were there, and because some of their characteristics could

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\*See above, pages 18, 48-9, 56-7.

be made to suit the ends of a Navy that believed "A ship underway is worth three on the stocks". It was the same with the officers and men--essentially civilians, hastily recruited in the emergency to be later on let go just as quickly. At peak strength, of 93,005 RCN serving personnel (November 1944<sup>14</sup>), a mere 4,314 were regulars--less than five per cent! All the rest were Wrens and reserves to whom, as to the Prince ships, the ways of war were but third nature, not second. Most of HMC Ships were built specially for war; among ocean-going vessels, only the Suderoy minesweepers, fifteen Armed Yachts,<sup>15</sup> and PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE ROBERT had this in common with the companies that manned them: they too were by and large "Volunteer Reserve". The Princes, and the men that sailed them, were all ploughshares at heart, roughly improvised into swords for the duration. Between the ships and the mass of the men, there was thus a rapport that stemmed from a similar need to adapt, and a deficiency in experience of naval ways that good spirit more than made up.

On the other hand, the Princes were by no means typical of the ships in the RCN. Instead, they stood out. Because of their civilian origins, they were sometimes called upon to perform tasks which ships designed as war-ships could handle better. This was most true in the earlier part of the war, and whenever they were sent to hunt submarines. In these cases, they stood out by possessing only marginal utility. Also, they were much bigger than the other ships. Ours was a small ship Navy; and not until the 8000-ton cruiser UGANDA entered the lists, in October 1944, was there another Canadian fighting ship\* that displaced even a third of a Prince ship's 6,892 tons.<sup>16</sup> Besides being the only big ships for most of the war, the Princes gave the RCN something of a modern look it otherwise would not have had. This statement needs a little elucidation, in view of the disparaging comments just made about their efficiency. The Second World War saw two aspects of seapower and its exercise improved upon more than any others. These aspects were: combined operations

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\*HMC Ships PRESERVER and PROVIDER (both 4,670 tons), commissioned in 1942 as Motor Launch depots, had no heavier armament than merchantmen, and were not intended to engage the enemy.

landings on a hostile coast; and the use of aircraft in sea-war.\* By war's end, the Prince ships were the only ones in the RCN specifically and best equipped to play roles in these new, or newly-much-improved, features of naval action--PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY were Landing Ships and PRINCE ROBERT was an anti-aircraft cruiser.\*\*

Doing these duties, and earlier as Armed Merchant Cruisers, the three ships made the Service more flexible, gave greater balance to its operations, more variety and interest to its annals. Consider that each Prince had two separate employments during the war, and that each one was an innovation as far as the RCN was concerned, so that among them they established three different sets of precedents. Consider the romantic circumstance of South American blockade, of Greek and Chinese liberation. Consider the far-flung geography of their cruises--Port-of-Spain, Kingston and Martinique in the West Indies; Valparaiso and Puerto Montt in Chile; Easter Island; New Zealand; Sydney, Australia; the Admiralty Islands; Hong Kong; the Aleutians; les Iles d'Hyeres off Toulon; Bizerta; Piraeus; Alexandria. Plot and join these dots, and most of the navigable world is blocked off, except for the Indian Ocean from which the Government had by policy excluded Canadian ships anyway.

In all of this steaming there was, of course, much that was quite routine, even dull, and almost no encounters with the enemy. The record must be kept in perspective. As Lieutenant (SB) J. Schull reported from PRINCE DAVID in 1944, things were ". . . embarrassingly peaceful . . . they seemed a little resentful that they hadn't been more frequently shot at".<sup>17</sup> Except for the German planes that PRINCE ROBERT probably hit with her ack-ack, and the merchantmen captured or scuttled, no enemy unit was damaged in action with a 'Prince'

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\*Perhaps a third development was as important as these two: the use of Fleet Trains of tankers and supply ships as mobile bases. The United States Navy in particular brought this idea to a high perfection, in the Pacific. It certainly seems true now (1965), that in any future all-out naval war, no other type of naval base is liable to be at all secure.

\*\* (NABOB and PUNCHER, the Canadian-manned carriers of 1944-5, were commissioned HMS.) As is pointed out in the opening paragraphs of this narrative (Part I, pages 1-2), the Prince ships' AMC role was a return to past principles of war against trade. Their functions in 1943-5, by contrast, looked more to the future.

ship. These large cruisers are diminished in certain specific ways when an account of their operations is compared with the typical, desperate work of a cold and damp, run-of-the-mill little corvette chained to Fifty North. A big Prince ship's officers and men were warm and dry, comforts assured them from the size of their vessel and the relative ease of the tactical burdens laid on them. They did not function as did the bulk of the Canadian fleet, who like rooks of the chess board were rushed without respite back and forth from one side of the ocean to the other, all their movements sharpened a sense of crisis because the unrelenting U-boat held our commerce in check, and was reaching for mate. The Princes did not regularly have to turn about before they had gotten their spring-ropes out; they could get a boiler-clean without having to threaten dire and utter breakdown in justification of it. Completing the chess analogy, they were the knights: liable to move in several directions; usually allowed to rest a bit in each theatre; keeping a leisurely hop ahead of or away from humdrum dangers--such as were so real and ever-present in the North Atlantic. While the Navy's backbone--vital corvettes and frigates--with bone-tired complements went about their grim, narrowly specialized duties, the Prince ships found a wider scope, their war was less important, and much more pleasant. Pressures were fewer, hazards less. They saw more of the war, but less of the enemy. While many a submarine-hunter failed to return, the Princes always turned up. They had little damage, and few casualties. Some of their important deeds were PRINCE DAVID's not shooting at the ADMIRAL HIPPER, and PRINCE ROBERT losing her games of hide-and-seek with the raider KOMET and the Japanese Pearl Harbor fleet. PRINCE HENRY left Preveza before the enemy stormed it; when she arrived at Salonika, the Germans had already left, and when she got to Wilhelmshaven, they no longer opposed. Operating in many battle-areas, the Princes saw the war more as a whole than did the hard-pressed littler vessels unremittingly giving escort to convoys. But the latter were likely to remark only that the Princes had never attacked a proven U-boat echo.

In short, for the type of naval war to which the Royal Canadian Navy was dedicated, the Prince ships were not really needed. Going about their unusual tasks in places Canadian ships did not go; forming a little navy apart,

Evaluation of the Princes: out of the main stream of RCN operations

whose specialists were not asdic and depth-charge men--highly irregular! warding off raiders or aircraft instead of U-boats--most unorthodox! poking about in far, foreign waters wherever the British Admiralty had an interest to defend or an invasion to do, instead of longing for leave in dismal St. John's like the rest of the fleet; often swamped in a sea of RN and USN without seeing home or countrymen for long stretches--is it any wonder they don't quite fit in? But their career, which was distinctly and admittedly a sidelight in the story of the RCN in the Second World War, was an important sidelight. The Princes often provided for Canada a naval entry onto wider stages than the North Atlantic. They generated good publicity of a type the parochial Halifax-Iceland-Londonderry route could not provide; helped to keep NSHQ involved in the whole picture of global strategy; and showed the Canadian version of the flag in many ports it would not otherwise have seen. If they did not take their share of the strain of battle, nevertheless they plugged some gaps in the Allied world-wide sea-arsenal. In the first years, like unfortunate HMS VOLTAIRE whose wreckage PRINCE DAVID found, they dared to chase a foe whom to catch would probably mean taking a beating, or worse; throughout, they kept on keeping on. If circumstances refused their proffered heroism, still they were dutiful; steady, if not staunch for every purpose--should any more be asked of vessels which before 1940 had worn only a house flag?

In their exotic tours of several oceans, the three Princes built a naval tradition upon civilian foundations, and did it very well. There had been previously but a single warship bearing one of their names: the fifth-rate HMS PRINCE HENRY (about 36 guns<sup>18.</sup>) of 1744-66, named for George III's third brother, whose first captain was dismissed the service "for misconduct at the Havannah."<sup>19.</sup> The sole predecessor, during a twenty year career half filled with major wars, achieved no battle honours; her nominally less warlike Canadian descendants leave a prouder record. Nobody was broken in them for dereliction, and future ships of any Commonwealth nation that choose one of these names may boast the Canadian ships' laurels:<sup>20.</sup>

PRINCE DAVID--NORMANDY 1944  
--SOUTH FRANCE 1944

PRINCE HENRY--NORMANDY 1944  
SOUTH FRANCE 1944

PRINCE ROBERT--ATLANTIC 1943-4

Evaluation of the Princes; battle honours

Actually, this tradition is not likely soon to be passed on to another Canadian warship bearing one of the Prince ships' names. Canada, a young monarchy, leans away from monarchical designations for her men of war, preferring to remember a cross-section of Canadian localities in the vessels that bear our emblem afloat. Besides the Princes, very few ships have carried a regal flavour: PRINCE RUPERT, QUEEN CHARLOTTE, QUEEN, ROYAL ROADS, ROYAL MOUNT, REGINA, NIOBE, POUNDMAKER--some of these are in fact geographical, and the others scarcely apply. Nor has the Armed Merchant Cruiser, the Anti-Aircraft Cruiser, or the Landing Ship yet reappeared in the Canadian fleet. The Princes --twenty years after--leave no progeny.

As long as memory, or history, last, perhaps progeny would be superfluous. The Prince ships, if not with glory, covered the Maple Leaf with honour sufficient for their time, and still so. Their peculiar account, jammed full of diverse and original assignments, novel encounters, and duty faithfully done, can be safely left long without facsimile or imitation. The highlights of their scattered, centrifugal, unusual service are not entirely forgotten.

PRINCE ROBERT remembered the taking of WESER in prize, and the wretched inmates of ShamShuiPo, even if her Caracas-bound voyagers of later years could not. PRINCE HENRY's operation that ended in the scuttling of HERMONTHIS and MUENCHEN will always repay study by naval tacticians, as a model of the pursuit of scattering blockade-runners. The hills and ports of northwest Greece may long spin legends about the ELAS lunge to Préveza at Christmas, 1944; and of the middling-sized grey vessel from far away that took off to Corfu practically the whole town and countryside, and an army, in a few days of hectic operations, right under the Communists' collective nose. PRINCE DAVID's landing craft, strewn on the Normandy shore, was once her monument, and the finest; but the Memorial de Débarquement dedicated by French President Charles de Gaulle on August 15th, 1964, will be more permanent. On Mont Faron, near Toulon, an old fort which looks eastward to the scene of action will now forever recall and record the Allied landing.<sup>21</sup> Its mementoes, in the Canadian room, show that

at the "crossroads of strategy"<sup>22.</sup> which Operation "Dragoon" was, as at so many other junctures of the war, Prince ships were present, and active, and forward, against the foe.

An interesting letter was sent to National Defence Headquarters just fifteen years to the week after the Allied descent on Levant and Le Rayol which the Prince ships led. It is worth an extensive quotation:\*

"In HMC Dockyard, Esquimalt, there are a small handful of LANDING CRAFT ASSAULT, commonly known as LCAs or Landing Barges to those who do not know better.

One of those Landing Craft, namely Number 1033, took me to several "Hot Spots" during World War II. She saw me through the Assault on D day, June 6th, 1944. Again in the 1st Wave of the Pre-Invasion Attack on islands off the southern coast of France on August 15th, 1944. She and I then spent some time in Italy, Albania and Greece: At Pireus, Greece I lost her and instead was given a lumbering old sea cow in the form of an L.C.M. I never saw LCA 1033 again until two years ago, when I was up at the Sea Cadet Camp in Comox. There she was . . . evidently she had come to Canada with H.M.C.S. PRINCE DAVID in 1945: she had sat around rotting for several years, and then she was put into use as a Garbage Boat, and later to take Libertymen ashore in places like Comox. In the past two years "My Old Girl" has not been doing much, but I understand that she is rotting away in Esquimalt this day.

What a glorious ending for a small landing craft, one which saw more actual fighting service than probably any other unit or ship in the RCN today: well do I remember the shells which went through her bottom on D day--However she gallantly got off the beaches, and wandered back to her Mother Ship, H.M.C.S. PRINCE HENRY: The carpenters said that "she had had it", but she came back to life once more . . . now all that is forgotten as the Modern Sailor has no time nor use for Combined Operations, and less for the lowly "Landing Barge".

Sir, I would like to buy LCA 1033. I do not know just how much she is worth to the RCN or to the Department of National Defence, but I some-how doubt that it is very much in Dollars and Cents: I would be willing to buy her with or without engines, but I want my Old Lady back, so that I can look after her . . . she can take me around and be useful to me for a good many years to come.

Please, Sir, . . . I know the RCN has no use for her . . . if some one else buys her it will be for a song, and for the metal that is around her wooden shell: I want her for sentimental reasons."

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\*James A. Flynn to Major General G. R. Pearkes, VC; 19 August 1959 (NHS 8000 Landing Craft General v.1). He wrote too late, however; LCA 1033 had been sold to the Haney Garage Limited, Haney, British Columbia (Memo A/DM(R) to the Minister's Private Secretary, 1 September 1959--NSS 8000-30 v.6)

Honourable Angus L. Macdonald, Nova Scotia's tribune who directed the great Second World War Navy, was right, then. They do return to the land, the Volunteer Reserve seafaring men, never to quite completely escape the sea's spell. They do carry with them the image of gallant ships, large and small, such as those that have been the subject of this history.

NOTES

Unless otherwise indicated, information and quotations are taken from the Report of Proceedings rendered at the time by the ship concerned, and from documents appended to these Reports. The "Prince" ships' Reports of Proceedings are located as follows:

PRINCE DAVID                   --in NCR           --NSS 1926-412/1 v.1  
                                  --held by Naval Records Centre (previously) now  
                                  in NHS  
                                  --PD 4-X  
                                  --PD 015-5-1  
                                  --PD 015-5-2  
                                  --PD 015-5-3  
                                  --PD 018-1  
                                  --CS 155-10-3  
                                  --8800-412/1  
                                  --in NHS    --see NHS 8000 PRINCE DAVID

PRINCE HENRY                   --held by Naval Records Centre (previously) now  
                                  in NHS  
                                  --CS 155-15-3  
                                  --C 8800-412/2  
                                  --in NHS    --see NHS 8000 PRINCE HENRY

PRINCE ROBERT                 --in NHS    --see NHS 8000 PRINCE ROBERT  
                                  --8800-314/3 vols. 1 & 2 (filed  
                                  NHS 8000 PR)  
                                  --1926-314/3 v.1 (filed NHS behind  
                                  CR 1870-7)

Key to abbreviations used in the notes:

ANALYSIS                   Anti-U-boat Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty, Analysis of Anti-U-boat Operations in the vicinity of Convoys SL 139/MKS 30 and SL 140/MKS 31.

BATM                       British Admiralty Technical Mission.

BR                         Admiralty, Book of Reference  
                              --Number 1337: "British and Foreign Merchant Vessels Lost or Damaged by Enemy Action During Second World War".  
                              --Number 1907(49): "Interrogation of Survivors from German A/S vessel W 1404".

BS                         Historical Section, Admiralty, Battle Summaries  
                              --Number 13: "Actions with Enemy Disguised Raider, 1940-1".  
                              --Number 39: "Operation 'Neptune'", 2 vols.  
                              --Number 43: "Invasion of the South of France".

BEATSON                   Beatson, R., A Political Index (London: 1806).

BULKLEY                   Bulkley, Captain R. J., USNR, At Close Quarters (Washington: Naval History Division, 1962).

CFHQ                      Canadian Forces Headquarters, Ottawa.

CINC                      Commander-in-Chief

CNEC                      Chief of Naval Engineering and Construction.

CNMO                      Canadian Naval Mission Overseas (United Kingdom)

CNS	Chief of the Naval Staff (Ottawa)
COPC	Commanding Officer Pacific Coast
CTO(N)	Chief Treasury Officer (Navy)
CABELDU	Cabeldu, Brigadier F. N., "Battle Narrative of the Normandy Assault" (NHS 8000 PH v.1)
CHURCHILL	Churchill, W. S., <u>The Second World War</u> series, six volumes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948-53)
COMMAND DECISIONS	Greenfield, K.R., editor, <u>Command Decisions</u> (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1960)
CLOWES	Clowes, W. L., <u>The Royal Navy</u> , seven volumes (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1897-1903)
CLARK	Clark, G., "D-day Anniversary", <u>Weekend Magazine</u> , 5 June 1954 (NHS 1650 "Neptune", v. 2).
DNC	Director of Naval Construction
DND	Department of National Defence
DN INF	Director of Naval Information (since 1964 merged into the Canadian Forces Directorate of Information Services)
DE GAULLE	De Gaulle, C., <u>War Memoirs</u> , three volumes (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1955-59)
DICTIONARY	De Kerchove, Rene, <u>International Maritime Dictionary</u> (New York: Van Nostrand, 1948).
EG	Escort Group
FUEHRER	The Secretary of the Navy, Washington, <u>Fuehrer Conferences on matters dealing with the German Navy, 1943</u> (held NHS)
HRO	Historical Records Officer, on staff of CNMO.
HASHIMOTO	Hashimoto, M., <u>Sunk</u> (London: Cassell, 1954)
KINGSLEY	Kingsley, Captain H., RCN, "Originally Peaceful Mission Changed in Time of War", <u>Daily Colonist</u> , 31 May 1964, pp. 10-11 (NHS 8000 PR)
LEWIS	Lewis, M., <u>The Navy of Britain</u> (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948)
LEEPER	Leeper, Sir R., <u>When Greek Meets Greek</u> , (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950)
MACLEOD	MacLeod, Malcolm, "The Royal Canadian Navy: Operations Against Japan, 1941-5" in NR (July 1965), pp. 232-40.
MANNING & WALKER	Manning, Captain T. D., and Walker, Commander C. F., <u>British Warship Names</u> (London: Putnam, 1959)
MORISON	Morison, S. E., <u>United States Naval Operations in World War II</u> series, 15 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1947-62)
NA(PP)	Naval Assistant (Policy and Plans)
NHS	Naval Historical Section (Ottawa) merged in October 1965 into CFHQ Directorate of History.
NOIC	Naval Officer in Charge
NR	<u>Naval Review</u>
NSHQ	Naval Service Headquarters (Ottawa)
NZNB	New Zealand Navy Board

NAVAL AVIATION	Historical Section, Admiralty, <u>The Development of British Naval Aviation 1919-45</u> , two volumes.
NICHOLSON	Nicholson, Lt. Col. G. W. L., <u>The Canadians in Italy 1943-5</u> (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957)
PD	HMCS PRINCE DAVID
PH	HMCS PRINCE HENRY
PR	HMCS PRINCE ROBERT
PUGSLEY	Pugsley, Lt. (S) W. H., <u>Saints, Devils and Ordinary Seamen</u> (London: Collins, 1946).
RCNMR	Royal Canadian Navy <u>Monthly Review</u> (held NHS)
RCN/RCAF	RCN/RCAF <u>Monthly Operational Review</u> (held NHS)
ROSKILL	Roskill, S. W., <u>The War at Sea</u> , four volumes (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954-61)
ROY	Roy, R. H., <u>Ready for the Fray</u> (Vancouver: Evergreen, 1958)
SCFOO	Senior Canadian Flag Officer (Overseas)
SCNOL	Senior Canadian Naval Officer (London)
SCHULL	Schull, J., <u>The Far Distant Ships</u> (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1950)
SEA WAR	Historical Section, Admiralty, <u>The War at Sea</u> (preliminary narrative), six vols.
SOUTHERN OCEANS	Turner, L. C. F., Gordon-Cumming, H. R., and Betzler, J. E., <u>War in the Southern Oceans</u> (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961)
STACEY	Stacey, Col. C. P., <u>Six Years of War</u> (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955)
TUCKER	Tucker, G. N., <u>The Naval Service of Canada</u> , two volumes (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1952)
USNIP	United States Naval Institute <u>Proceedings</u>
VIAN	Vian, Sir P., <u>Action This Day</u> (London: Muller, 1960)
WA	Western Approaches
WAC	War Assets Corporation
WIR	<u>Weekly Intelligence Report</u> (held NHS)
WATERS	Waters, S. D., <u>The Royal New Zealand Navy</u> (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1956)
WOODHOUSE	Woodhouse, C. M., <u>Apple of Discord</u> (London: Hutchinson, 1948)
WOODWARD	Woodward, D., <u>The Secret Raiders</u> (London: William Kimber, 1955)

1. Roskill I, pp. 46, 111-2, 270-1, 604-5; II p. 481.
2. Draft narrative "The Three Prince Ships 1930-9", p. 3 (NHS 8000 PH).
3. Ibid., p. 4.
- 3b. Ibid., p. 7; CTO(N) Memo 30 November 1945 (NS 8000-412/1 v. 1).
4. Draft narrative "Conversion of the Princes 1940", p. 7 (NHS 8000 PRINCE SHIPS GENERAL).
5. Operations cards, RCN ships (NHS).
6. Particulars of Canadian War Vessels, February 1942.
7. Roskill I, p. 550.
8. Ibid., pp. 277, 604-5, 607; Waters, p. 161.
9. TIME 4 December 1950 (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
10. Treasury Board Minutes, 19 December 1940 (NS 8165-716/253).
11. NSHQ Press Conference No. 5, 2 October 1940 (NHS 1270).
12. Vancouver Province "B.C. Magazine", 22 October 1955, pp. 18-20 (NHS 8000 RAINBOW, v. 2).
13. Pugsley, p. 76.
14. NS 8165-716/253. WESER being captured, the German supply ship REGENSBURG went to Ailinglapalap in her place, and met ORION 10 October (Woodward, pp. 86-7).
15. WIR #40, p. 27.
16. Waters, pp. 137-50.
17. Senior Officer Halifax Force to NSHQ 061657 January 1941 (NSS 18700-412/1, v. 1).
18. Tucker I, p. 58.
19. Thompson, F., "The Hound of Heaven", in Pertwee, E., The Reciter's Treasury of Verse (London: Routledge, 1924), p. 509.
20. CINC A & WI to CNS 241622 February 1941 (NS 18700-412/1, v. 1).
21. Same to same 191431 March 1941 (Ibid.).
22. Same to PD 051212 April 1941 (Ibid.).
23. BS #13, pp. 6-7; Roskill I, pp. 384, 604; Woodward, chap. IV.
24. Roskill, ibid.
25. WIR #65, p. 31.
26. Extract from CINC A & WI's War Diary (NS 8000-412/1).
27. Adams biography 20 January 1958 (NHS 4000-100/14 ADAMS).
28. Photo E-6583-1 (NHS photo file PD, v. 1). On January 27, 1945, the British Embassy in Athens was asked to forward the cup to PRINCE DAVID, who had departed Greek waters while the engraving was being done. By that July, the trophy had been deposited for retention in RCN College ROYAL ROADS (NHS 8000 PD v. 2).

- 28b. This success was not publicly revealed in Canada at the time for fear of repercussions regarding American neutrality (Hamilton Spectator, 19 January 1944 - NHS 8000 PR v. 1). A couple of the German prisoners, when interrogated, interestingly recalled their capture: "The GARFIELD stopped. It was at 2 p.m. and we are already to eat dinner. My friends were lying on the Courts and having a nap. I went to take a promenade, and when I come out I see the passengers all looking through glasses. I looked too and saw a ship coming. I thought they would strike us. I could see it was not an ordinary ship and was coming up fast towards us. It came nearer and nearer and when it turned broadside I saw it was a warship. When I saw it was a warship I run down to tell my comrades. They rushed to put their clothes on. The PRINCE ROBERT made a turn and circled astern. Then it came on the windy side and they stopped us. Then I heard that someone speak in a loudspeaker from the PRINCE ROBERT. I did not know what they said. The GARFIELD answered but I still could not understand what it was they were talking about. Then I see the ROBERT was lowering a boat. The boat went around the stern and there was one officer in it and sailors. Then I saw another boat is being lowered and many more men on it. I saw that they were armed with revolvers. We were standing on deck and wanted to see what it was. We knew right there it was English sailors and they were after us." Another replied to the question, Did you think they were going to shoot you? --"Oh no. When I see them (the warship) far away I packed up my baggage." ("Interrogation of Prisoners" filed NHS 8000 PR).
29. NZNB to PR 271200 July 1941 (PCC 8700-314/3).
30. Board of Inquiry Minutes (NSS 1155-A 490, microfilm reel 75-7B).
31. Roskill I, pp. 284, 544-7; BR 1337, pp. 55-6; BR 1907 (49), pp. 14-17; US Division of Naval Intelligence, Post Mortems on Enemy Ships, Serial No. 2, p. 5; "The Disguised Commerce Raiders of World War Two" in NR (1951), pp. 396-405; Waters, pp. 158-60; Woodward, pp. 154-6; "Southern Oceans", p. 82.
32. Hamilton, J., "The All-Red Route", in British Columbia Historical Quarterly (January-April 1956), pp. 89-90; NHS 8001 TROOP CONVOYS).
33. "Tag with the Enemy", in Crowsnest May 1954.
34. USNIP October 1961, pp. 113-15; Hashimoto, pp. 30-37.
35. Chiefs of Staff submission to the Minister 19 February 1942 (NSS 1014-1-3, v. 1).
- 35b. "Results of Pearl Harbour" in NHS 8000 PH v. 1; NHS 1700-902 "Particulars of 31 Fishermen's Reserve vessels".
- 35c. Nelles to the Minister 30 October 1935 (NS 1017-10-18 v. 1).
- 35d. Hashimoto, pp. 30, 37; NHS History of HMCS QUESNEL, p. 3; NHS 8001 MERCHANT SHIPPING A-F; HMCS EDMUNDSTON and TIMMINS, Reports of Proceedings; MacLeod, p. 233.
36. COPC to CNS 20 August 1942 (NHS file OPERATIONS "ALEUTIANS"). This "summary of events leading up to the despatch of auxiliary cruisers and corvettes to Alaska" gives a full resume of policy and negotiations between the USN and the RCN.
37. RCNMR August 1947 has a first-hand account of the Prince ships in Alaskan waters. No RCN ship had ever before navigated these parts except the tiny trawler-minesweeper THIEPVAL in 1924, when she laid seaplane moorings and gasoline dumps for a British Round-the-World flight (Canadian Defence Quarterly, v. II, pp. 108-18; official Report of the Naval Service 1925, pp. 24-49).
- 37b. NSS 1000-5-10, v. 13 (held NHS).
38. Naval Staff Minutes 27 August 1942 (NS 1057-16-11, v. 1).
39. Memo by Deputy Secretary (Staff) 31 August 1942 (NHS 8000 PRINCE SHIPS GENERAL).
40. Naval Board Minutes 21 September 1942 (NS 15000-314/3); CNEC Memo 12 January 1943 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).

1. MacRitchie, Lt. (SB) P., "HMCS PRINCE ROBERT on Convoy Duty" (wartime press dispatch) in NHS 8000 PR, v. 2.
2. The camouflage paint job probably also helped to make Captain R. I. Agnew, formerly Commanding Officer PRINCE HENRY, "completely unaware [at a range of three or four miles] of the identity of HMCS PRINCE ROBERT when seen underway on a clear day."
3. Via the Northwest approaches to the north of Ireland. The more usual southwest approaches were closed to regular traffic from June 1940 until convoy SL 167/MKS 58 used these waters in late August 1944.
4. HMS EXCELLENT (Portsmouth), Report on Gunnery arrangements in HMCS PRINCE ROBERT, 2 September 1943 (NSS 1926-314/3, v. 1).
5. PR, Report of Attack by enemy aircraft (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
6. FOIC Glasgow to Admiralty 151825 September 1943 (Ibid., v. 1).
7. Admiralty to CINC Plymouth 182302a October 1943 (Ibid.)
8. Throughout the war until July 1943, the Allies were losing at sea more merchant ship tonnage than could be replaced by new construction. (Roskill II, p. 379).
9. Ibid., pp. 205-6. The ten-centimetre radar set first began to be used against the U-boats in January 1943. It was the first microwave set, using a wave length of about four inches instead of over four feet as previously; its nature was one of the war's best-kept secrets. For a long time the Germans were unable to even discover what their problem was, let alone start finding a solution. The statements made at the highest level during this period show their perplexity: Doenitz, May 1943: Doenitz, May 1943: ". . . we are at present facing the greatest crisis in submarine warfare, since the enemy, by means of new location devices, for the first time makes fighting impossible and is causing us heavy losses." July: "So far, there is no indication that the enemy is using a new radar system. Our present difficulties may be due to the inability of our old receivers to register the flash fix." August: [Radiations from our German 'Metox' search receiver] "may explain all the uncanny and unsolved mysteries of the past, such as the enemy avoiding traps set for him, and losses on the open seas while comparatively few U-boats were destroyed during convoy attacks because the Metox was always turned off then." December: "At the end of last year and the beginning of this, one development became very obvious which long ago, even in peace-time, had been feared: that the enemy might deprive the U-boat of its essential feature--namely, the element of surprise--by means of radio-location. With these methods which he introduced in April of this year, he has conquered the U-boat menace . . . So it was not superior strategy or tactics that gave him success in the U-boat war, but superiority in scientific research." ("Fuehrer", pp. 66, 86, 127; WIR 209, supplement "The Battle of the Atlantic", p. 25).
10. Contrasting favourably with 1942's average monthly figures of 129 merchantmen lost and only 10 U-boats sunk. (Roskill II, p. 378).
11. Losses of submarines had risen from 13 to 30 per cent of those at sea (Doenitz' report to Hitler, "Fuehrer", p. 71).
12. On 8 July Doenitz "in regard to the general situation of submarine warfare . . . reports to the Fuehrer that he has transferred the submarines from the North Atlantic after it had to be abandoned as a result of the lost battle in May." (Ibid., p. 85).

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13. "Hegenuk" replaced "Metox". The latter was thought by the Germans for a time to be responsible for our improved ability to locate the submarines, but it was wash't. (Ibid., p. 136--10 September 1943).
14. Radar decoy balloons.
15. Doenitz to Hitler, 8 July 1943: "Professor Krauch of the I. G. Farben is convinced that he will soon find some material with which a one hundred per cent absorption of radar waves can be obtained. As a result of the di-electric absorption, reflection will be practically nil and this will effectively nullify radar location." (Ibid., p. 86).
16. There were two varieties: "Falke" (12 knots) and "Zaunkoenig" (18 knots). They were countered by the Canadian Anti-Acoustic Torpedo (CAAT) gear and the British "Foxyer". Allied nickname for a German acoustic homing torpedo was "gnat".
17. "Fuehrer", p. 74 (31 May 1943) and p. 134 (29 August 1943); "Naval Aviation" II, pp. 89, 129-30; Roskill, III(I), p. 30.
18. Again two types: the Hs 293 and the Fx 1400. Hs 293 had its own propulsion which could deliver 1100 lbs. of explosive at 300 to 400 knots. It was released at heights up to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The Fx 1400 had no engine and was a true glider. Dropped from 2 to 4 miles, its 3000 lbs. of explosive had about the same rate of speed on impact as did the Hs 293. (Roskill III(I), pp. 30, 168). The first Allied vessel struck by Hs 293 was HMCS ATHABASKAN on 27 August 1943, off Spain. HMS EGRET was sunk in the same action. (HMS BIDDEFORD had been damaged by a Glider/Bomb two days earlier, by a near-miss. A member of the Naval Historical Section, Ottawa, was in the BIDDEFORD at the time, and to this day testifies to the horror and helplessness of being under attack by this uncanny weapon). On 13 September 1943 off Salerno, USS SAVANNAH and QUEBEC (then HMS UGANDA) were both damaged in the first employment of Fx 1400 against our ships (surrendering Italian ships ROMA and ITALIA had been attacked with it four days earlier). (NHS, Histories of ATHABASKAN, pp. 11-12, and QUEBEC, p. 3; Roskill III(I), pp. 168, 177).
19. "Naval Aviation" II, p. 137.
20. Memo by Director of Operations Division 21 August 1943, "Allocation of 5th Escort Group to CINC W. A." (NHS 8440 EG-5).
21. Record of interview with Captain Hope 24 April 1944 (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
22. "The first Italian transport to reach Britain's shores since the capitulation of Italy". The Germans had previously claimed to have sunk some of these vessels. (MacRitchie, P., "HMCS PRINCE ROBERT on Convoy Duty", NHS 8000 PR, v. 2).
23. In 1943, it was Lieutenant MacRitchie, in 1945, Commander. Pre-war, he had been a news editor for the Globe and Mail, Toronto. During the last half of the war, PRINCE ROBERT being a large, a well known, and in the RCN, a unique ship, Special Branch officers were appointed. Among other things, it was Cdr. MacRitchie's duty to submit, for newspaper publication to the folks back home, suitable accounts of what the Navy was doing, as he saw it. (Globe and Mail, 3 February 1944; in file 19-4-2).
24. MacRitchie, op. cit.
25. None was sunk (Historical Section, Admiralty, Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping 1939-45, Vol. 1A, p. 263).

26. Captain Hope had posted from his pocket twenty dollars to be won by the man who would first sight and report an enemy aircraft. It was won during this passage by AB Robert Broadhead of Edmonton. (MacRitchie, op. cit.)
27. Ground-based aircraft from the United Kingdom and Gibraltar could not reach a several-hundred mile section of the north-south convoy route. For two years, 1941-3, Britain negotiated with Portugal for an airfield in the Azores to close the gap. The agreement was made on 18 August 1943, that after 8 October bases could be developed on Fayal and Terceira. PRINCE ROBERT's inaugural on this run coincided with the first air cover from these new fields, around the end of the month. Britain had anyway determined to take what she could not bargain for, because Portugal's neutrality, timid of Nazi reprisals, actually favoured the Germans until this time. The U-boats loved to meet, refuel and hunt in the area immune from air attack, and called it their "black pit" (Roskill, II, p. 207).
28. A hurried dawn departure: ". . . the sailors cast a longing look at Horta. Some of them had reason to be sad. They had left their Christmas gifts in the Horta stores . . . to be parcelled up and called for tomorrow. And they had paid for them, too." (MacRitchie, op. cit.)
29. This was operation "Stonewall" (Historical Section, Tactical and Staff Duties Division, Admiralty, Principal Naval Events, 1943, p. 30).
30. MacRitchie, "Operations of HMCS PRINCE ROBERT" (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
31. Roskill III(I), pp. 46, 49-50.
32. CINC W. A. to 31st Striking Force 201745z November 1943: "In the major concerted attack now in progress on SL 139 I have the greatest confidence you will continue your successful work and take every opportunity to achieve a record bag. Warmest congratulations to fifth escort group on this kill." Same to CINC Plymouth 200031a November 1943: "Request PRINCE ROBERT to join SL 139/MKS 30." (NHS 8440 EG-5; 8000 PR, v. 1).
33. The following paragraphs, covering the passage of SL 139/MKS 30, are based unless otherwise noted on Analysis of Anti-U-boat Operations in the vicinity of Convoys SL 139/MKS 30 and SL 140/MKS 31 (Anti U-boat Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty) and the account by Roskill in his III(I), pp. 49 (map) - 53).
34. NENE was then HMS, and did not commission in the RCN until spring 1944.
35. Combined Admiralty and Air Ministry Communique, p. 3 (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
36. Of five ships--HMS BENTINCK Senior Officer, and BAZELY, BYARD, CALDER and DRURY.
37. Some of these were the same submarine, and some were non-sub.
38. ". . . one of those crisp autumnal days when the clouds hang low but are broken with flashes of sunlight." (Lt. (SB) Nott, H. J., RCNVR., "Into Action Aboard HMCS PRINCE ROBERT", NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
39. There were always three, and sometimes four, Allied planes in the vicinity during the period of action 1500-1700. These Liberators and Sunderlands claimed, probably with no excess of modesty, that they bored through our own ships' flak to harass the enemy and downed two He 177's, damaged three other craft, and forced one to jettison his bombs.

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40. This account of the air action of 21 November is based on a variety of sources, which differ widely in completeness and accuracy. They are listed below, more or less in order of usefulness:

PR, Report of Proceedings for November (NSS 1926-314/3, v. 1); Report of Attack by Enemy Aircraft and covering letter (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3); Deck Log 15 September to 11 December 1943;

Cdr. MacRitchie, P., "Prince Robert Action" (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3); interview titled "Operations of HMCS PR" (Ibid.);

Analysis;

HMS EXE, Report of Proceedings (extract) in NHS 8000 PR, v. 3;

Lt. (SB) Nott, H. J., "Into Action Aboard HMCS PR" (Ibid.);

"Proposed signal on PR's anti-aircraft action covering convoys MKS30 and SL 139 (Ibid.);

Combined Admiralty and Air Ministry Communique (Ibid.); anonymous (handwritten) Report on the A/A Action on November 21st, 1943 in which HMCS PR took part (Ibid.);

WIR 208, p. 11;

RCN/RCAF December 1943, pp. 33-4;

NHS, Narrative "A" (second draft), p. 194;

"Naval Aviation" II, p. 137;

"Sea War" IV, 1660;

Roskill III(I), pp. 49 (map) - 55.

41. The German planes did not come to very close range, in fact, throughout the action. They dropped their bombs from 5000 to 8000 feet, and the He 177's did not even have to come over the target, but sent off glider-bombs from ranges out to 6 miles.
42. One crew member was lost, who abandoned ship prematurely.
43. Four officers were killed, including the captain, and several of the men were injured. The ship was eventually coned into port by a squad of officers from the stricken MARSA.
44. Glider bomb Hs 293 had a red light in its tail, by which the German officer guiding it remotely kept it in sight. The light was not switched on until the glider was ready to be dropped from under the wing. One tactic the Allies used against the Hs 293 was to shoot red lights into the air and confuse the enemy aimer.
45. See page 71 above. Number of rounds fired was: 4-inch--333; pom poms--330; oerlikon--180. When clouds got in the way of the shooting, PRINCE ROBERT obtained ranges from her #285 radar. (PR, Report of Attack by Enemy Aircraft; anonymous (handwritten) Report on the A/A Action . . . etc., both in NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
46. This seems exaggerated. But many of the ships in the convoy and the escort had only Low Angle guns, not much good against aircraft.
47. Except during air raids while in port (see page 76 below).

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48. The last KMF-MKF convoy to be attacked was KMF 26, in the Mediterranean late November 1943. Compared with the slow convoys, KMF-MKF convoys were more valuable targets but, having fewer ships, were smaller ones. They were strongly protected because of their military character, greater speed made them more difficult to locate and catch, and they only sailed once a month instead of every week-and-a-half. These facts together must explain the fast convoys' relative immunity from attack.
49. Quoted in Morison I, p. xvi.
50. Pugsley, p. 45.
51. She once sighted a German plane at sea during this ten-month period, while escorting KMF 28 in 16-23 January 1944. It did not attack. (SCNO(L) War Diary for January 1944, Part II, p. 2, NHS 1700-193/960).
52. Major repairs necessary, and where obtained:
- |               |  |          |
|---------------|--|----------|
| December 1943 | to the asdic   | Plymouth |
| January 1944  | leaking fuel tanks   | Plymouth |
| February      | to steam-driven dynamos  | Plymouth |
| May           | major defect in port engine  | Belfast  |
| July          | steering gear breakdown  | Plymouth |
|               | collision: HM Drifter EDITH<br>CAVELL "punched a hole in the<br>ship's side". Five hours<br>repairs. | Plymouth |
| August        | to the asdic   | Plymouth |
53. Mr. Massey visited on 14 January 1944, with Captain F. L. Houghton, RCN, SCNO(L). Rear-Admiral Nelles inspected on 24 March, while PRINCE ROBERT was tied up alongside the doomed ship ATHABASKAN.
54. Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Ralph Eastwood, KCB, DSO, MC. This second ceremony was performed in May.
55. Montreal Daily Star 9 September 1944 (clipping in NSS 19-4-2).
56. Pugsley, p. 219. ATHABASKAN was torpedoed, and sank within fifteen minutes, about 0420-0440 29 April.
57. NSHQ to Admiralty 281758z October 1944 (NSS 19-4-2).
58. NOIC Esquimalt to COPC 132331z October 1944 (NSC 8705-314/3).
59. The following paragraphs are based upon:
- Canadian Naval Staff Minutes of 11 September, and 6 and 27 November, 1944;
- Memo DNC to CNEC 15 November 1944;
- Messages (all in NHS 8000 PR); and
- Messages in NSS 19-4-2.
60. Forwarded from our chief office for liaison with the RN, CNMO. The DNC, Constructor Captain A. N. Harrison, RCN, suspected that the advice Ottawa received was misrepresented by CNMO as emanating from Admiralty, and that actually "the proposals for conversion . . . arose from the ship and CNMO". Page 61 above tells of the interest of PRINCE ROBERT's officers in their ship's armament and gear. DNC argued that the Admiralty were not spending great sums of money on their own Armed Merchant Cruisers, and were unlikely to advise Canada to do something they would not do themselves.

61. PRINCE DAVID had been ordered to Vancouver to provide accommodation for these ratings for the few days before they joined PRINCE ROBERT. (COPC to PD 171701z May 1945, NHS 8000 PR).
62. Formed in December 1944 at Trincomalee, for service against Japan, the first British battle fleet to be built around aircraft carriers. Among Canadian ships, only PRINCE ROBERT, ONTARIO, UGANDA and ALGONQUIN were allocated to this force; only the first three of these ever joined, and only UGANDA saw action. Appendix "J" describes the British Pacific Fleet's operations during the spring and summer of 1945. CINC BPF was Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, KBE, CB, RN. BPF was based on Sydney, Australia, with an intermediate base at Manus and an advanced anchorage at Leyte. When on operations, the Fleet stayed at sea for several weeks at a time, replenishing the meantime from a 92-vessel Fleet Train. (Roskill III(II), pp. 202-3, 430; Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope, A Sailor's Odyssey (London: Hutchinson, 1953), pp. 614-5; Historical Section, Admiralty, War with Japan, VI, pp. 277-80).
63. Commander MacRitchie (see pages 65-66 above), and Lcdr. (SB) Max Newton, RCNVR.
64. CINC BPF to NSHQ 030451 July 1945 (NHS 8000 PR).
65. "Industrial Section, District #12". Captain Creery soon noted with dismay that his new guns would not elevate above 55 degrees, and were therefore of limited use against aircraft.
66. Two Task Groups were formed 12 August for the relief of Hong Kong and Shanghai, under Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt in HMS INDOMITABLE and Rear-Admiral R. M. Servaes in BERMUDA, respectively. They were first designated and sailed from Sydney as 111.2.6 and 111.2.7, but were retitled Task Groups 111.2 and 111.3 on 18 August. PRINCE ROBERT was assigned to TG 111.2. The other ships in this force were: HM Ships INDOMITABLE and VENERABLE, carriers; ANSON, battleship; SWIFTSURE and EURYALUS, cruisers; KEMPENFELT, URSA, WHIRLWIND, TYRIAN, TUSCAN and HMAS QUADRANT, destroyers; HMA Ships BROOME, BATHURST, MILDURA, WAGGA, CASTLEMAINE, STRAHAN and FREEMANTLE, minesweepers; HMS MAIDSTONE, submarine depot ship; HM Submarines SILENE, SUPREME, SIDON, SPEARHEAD, SOLENT, STUBBORN, SEASCOUT and SLEUTH; and Hospital Ship HMS OXFORDSHIRE. ("Sea War" VI, 3113; WIR 286, pp. 1-2).
67. A Michigan chiropractor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Molthen. They had been interned there since the war began. (DN Inf. photo and caption PR 411 in file HMCS PR--Kowloon). In this Hong Kong segment of PRINCE ROBERT's history, the hundreds of photographs taken by RCN photographers at the time and now on file with the Naval Historian and the Director of Naval Information, are a valuable source.
68. Lieutenant John Park of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, a Prisoner of War.
69. Creery to MacLeod 22 August 1965 (NHS 8000 PR v. 3).
70. "Sea War" VI, 3117.
71. DN Inf. photos and captions PR 410, 439, 440, 442, 443, 450, 456, 461, 525, 539 (in file HMCS PR--Kowloon).
72. Rear-Admiral Creery, "Notes re Lt. MacLeod's Questions" (NHS 8000 PR, v. 3).
73. DN Inf. photo and caption PR 436 (in photo file PR--Kowloon).
74. "Sea War" VI, 3117; WIR 288, p. 4; WIR 239, p. 7; Kingsley; NHS, History of HMCS ONTARIO).
75. Kingsley.

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76. DN Inf. photo and caption PR 510 (photo file PR--Kowloon).
77. It was liberation--and it was unauthorized! PRINCE ROBERT's captain later wrote: "I personally do not know of another case of one of our ships being a member of a liberating force of POW's. Some of my officers were the first to reach the POW camp but they had no authority to go there! I heard later that their action had caused not a little displeasure to some senior RN officers but Admiral Harcourt (who was perfectly aware of what had happened) never said a word to me about it". (Creery to MacLeod 22 August 1965, in NHS 8000, PR, v. 3).
78. The EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA had arrived 5 September with 3000 men of the Royal Australian Air Force, who helped to provide a temporary garrison for the Colony. (DN Inf. photos and captions PR 466 and 468, in photo file PR - Kowloon).
79. WIR 286, pp. 2-3.
80. NHS, History of HMCS ONTARIO, p. 12.
81. WIR 293, p. 7.
82. A few hands were required as truck drivers carting coal to the power station.
83. The coolest temperature in PRINCE ROBERT's Deck Log at Hong Kong is at 0400 15 September--79 degrees Fahrenheit! Neither the ship, nor her Canadian complement, were adequately designed for tropical weather. Boiler rooms reached 124 degrees, mess decks 108. And "these temperatures were reached with the ventilation system in full operation".
84. Surgeon Lcdr. Hackney and Surgeon Lieutenant McClure, "Health of HMCS PR", appended to Reports of Proceedings for September 1945, in which the doctors also take a sly poke at the reputedly prim capital of British Columbia: "We have had no venereal disease in Hong Kong, after nearly two weeks; we had four cases in Sydney, which is promiscuous; none in San Francisco, which is not; and three in Victoria".
85. ONTARIO was part of Operation "Armour". This convoy sailed from Trincomalee 31 August, and consisted of HMS GLENGYLE and HMIS LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE with the 3rd Commando Brigade embarked; HMS SMITER with No. 132 RAF Spitfire Squadron; HM Ships VIGILANT, SUSSEX and a store ship; and ONTARIO ("Sea War" VI, 3119).
86. The Japanese signatories were Major-General Okada and Rear-Admiral Fujita. Only Rear-Admiral Harcourt signed with them, on behalf of all the Allies. Besides PRINCE ROBERT's Commanding Officer, the other official observers at the Hong Kong ceremony of surrender were Colonel Adrian Williamson for the United States, and Major-General Pan Hwa Kuo for China. It had been planned that all these representatives would put their names to the document, including Captain Creery for Canada, but

I don't know why but on the day the treaty was to be signed a change was made in the procedure in that only the U.K. representative was to sign. This was Admiral Harcourt and the rest of us simply sat at the same table and watched him do it.

Also present were Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, CINC BPF, who had sailed over from Tokyo in HMS DUKE OF YORK after the ceremonies there; the Canadian Military Attache to the court of Chiang Kai-Shek, Brigadier O. M. Kay; and Captain H. T. W. Grant, RCN, Commanding Officer of ONTARIO. Captain Grant was Senior Canadian Naval Officer Present by two years, but he had not arrived with convoy "Armour" until a week after the plans for the official surrender had been pretty firmly set on 6 September.

(Creery to MacLeod 22 August 1965, in NHS 8000, PR, v. 3; "Sea War" VI, 3110-19; Harcourt, War Diary, quoted in letter to the Naval Board, Canadian Naval Service, 11 October 1945 (NSS 1926-314/3 v. 1); DN Inf. photos and captions PR 552 and 555, in photo file PR--Kowloon).

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87. 34 Canadian soldiers, 10 British service personnel, and 15 Roman Catholic missionaries from Canada who had been interned during the war.
88. The average gain in weight among the repatriates, on the two-week voyage from Manila to Pearl Harbour, was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds.
89. Greery, "Notes re Lt. MacLeod's Questions" (NHS 8000, PR, v. 3).

Notes for pages 84 - 86

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1. CNEC Memo 12 January 1943 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).
2. NSHQ to PD 181515z December 1943 (NSS 8700-412/1, v. 1).
3. Particulars of Canadian War Vessels January 1944, p. 1.
4. "Boat Loading Table", 10 August 1944 (NHS 8000 PH 0-7); Lawrence, Lcdr. G., Press Release (NHS 8000 PH, v. 1).
5. FOLSU to Admiralty 091224a February 1944 (NHS 1650 "Neptune Juno").
6. FOLSU to PH, PD 131536 February 1944 (NSS 19-412).
7. Narrative "Ship's second commissioning and Clyde refit" (NHS 8000 PD); Narrative "B", Draft C, v. I, p. 26; SCFOO to PH 191150 February 1944 (NHS 8000 PH signals); SCNO to Naval Sec. 5 April 1944 (NHS 8000 PH, v. 1).
8. DN Inf. photos and captions F-1741 and F-1871 (NHS photo file PD General).
9. Various photos in DN Inf. files "PD--Med" and "PH--Med" (NHS photo files).
10. Combined operations personnel wore a badge comprising a close-stowing anchor and, imposed on it, an eagle and a Tommy-gun (Photo and caption X-31 in DN Inf. file Pre-Invasion Commando Training); Memo for Flotilla Officer (Brooke, Maclachlan) 5 October 1942 (NHS 1250, v. 1).
11. Commanding Officer PH to CNMO 20 December 1944 (NSS 1443-249/96).
12. Memo 19 February 1944 (NHS 8000 PD, v. 1).
13. "Sea War" V, 1945; BS 39, v. I, p. 65; Vian, p. 129.
14. BS 33, p. 51.
15. Mona Gould's poem, "This was My Brother at Dieppe".
16. PD Log, 30 May 1944.
17. CNMO to Naval Sec. 27 June 1944 "RCN's part in the Invasion" (NSS 1250-9, v. 1--filed NHS 1650 Operation "Overlord"); BS 39, v. I, p. 70.
18. DN Inf. photo and caption PD 344 (in file "Invasion--PD"); PH Log 5 June 1944.
19. Clark.
20. Roy, p. 207.
21. Clark.
22. Galt, J., "The Canadian Boat Song" (cf. Encyclopedia Canadiana 1958, v. 4, p. 314b).
23. Godfrey, "Operation Neptune" (CS 155-15-3).
24. CNMO to Naval Sec. 27 June 1944 Report (NSS 1250-9, v. 1--filed NHS 1650 Operation "Overlord").
25. Clark.
26. Crowsnest August 1964 (NHS 1650 "Neptune").
27. Churchill VI, p. 6.

28. NSS 1250-9, v. 1; photo PH 175 (NHS photo file PH); Roy, chapter VII.
29. Roy, p. 210.
30. CNMO's 27 June 1944.
31. Cabeldu.
32. Halifax Chronicle 8 June 1944 (NSS 19-4-2).
33. Roy, p. 212.
34. Anonymous, "The Story of the Invasion" (NHS 1650 "Neptune", v. 2).
35. "The Story of the Invasion" (NHS 1650 "Neptune", v. 2).
36. Halifax Chronicle 8 June 1944 (NSS 19-4-2).
37. NHS, Narrative B, Draft C, v. I, p. 95.
38. Clark.
39. Ibid.
40. PH Log 6 June 1944.
41. Halifax Herald 10 June 1944 (NSS 19-4-2).
42. CNMO to Naval Sec. 19 June 1944 (NSS 1250-9, v. 1).
43. CNMO's 27 June 1944.
44. FOND 0-18300 DAVIE.
45. CNMO's 27 June 1944.
46. "Interview with Commander T. D. Kelly" 15 May 1944 (NHS 8000 PD, v. 1).
47. Roy, p. 227.
48. The Canadian LSI's in the Mediterranean (in NHS 8000 PD, v. 1). This 19-page narrative was written by Lieutenant (SB) J. George, RCNVR, Historical Records Officer attached to HMCS NIOBE. RCN History in general owes much to his wartime work, and this account of the "Prince" ships (August to mid-November 1944) owes very much. He was an eyewitness to many of these events. Much of the information on which the following is based, and some of the quotations, came from this very important source, which will not again be credited.
49. Nicholson, p. 453.
50. Ibid., pp. 453-7, 666-71; Stacey, pp. 104-8.
51. De Gaulle II, p. 12.
52. DN Inf. photo and caption PD 529 (in file "PD--troop movements").
53. Interview R-Adm. Morison, USN with Lt. Platt, USN (in letter Nicholson to E. C. Russell 2 February 1956 (NHS 1650 "Dragoon").
54. DN Inf. photo and caption PD 516 (in file "Med--PD").
55. Scott Young in the Globe and Mail 27 August 1964 (NHS 8000 PD).

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56. Sub-Lieutenant Young, S., RCNVR, Press Release 8 September 1944 (NHS 8000 PH, v. 1).
57. DN Inf. photo and caption PD 516 (in file "Med--PD"); photo PD 532 ("PD--troop movements"); PH Log 13 August 1944.
58. PH Log 14 August 1944.
59. Signals in PD 015-5-2.
60. BS 43. Much of what follows on Operation "Dragoon" is based on this official publication.
61. CTU 86.3.3, Naval Order for Romeo Unit of SITKA Group (NHS 1650 "Dragoon").
62. Globe and Mail 20 September 1944 (NSS 19-4-2).
63. Bulkley, p. 324.
64. Interview R-Adm. Morison, USN with Lt. Platt, USN (loc. cit.).
65. DN Inf. photos and captions FR 12, 35, 47 (NHS photo file "PD--Med");
66. Young, S., "ICBM, Religion: A prayer to make one think" (Globe and Mail 6 September 1947).
67. DN Inf. photo and caption PD 538 (in file "PD--South of France and Mediterranean").
68. Ibid., PD 536 ("PD--General").
69. PH Log 15 August 1944.
70. Churchill VI, p. 95.
71. Press Release 4 October 1944 (NHS 8000 PD, v. 1).
72. Roskill I, p. 538.
73. Jane's Fighting Ships, 1943-4, p. 256; Sub-Lieutenant Young, S., RCNVR, "Story No. 31" (DN Inf. file "Med--PD").
74. Churchill VI, p. 285; ". . . in the early hours of October 4 our troops occupied Patras. This was our first foothold since the tragic exit of 1941." Roskill III(II), p. 115 and Leeper, p. 71 also spread false rumour. Even Woodhouse, which is the most comprehensive account of the Greek drama, ignores Operation "Aplomb" in the paragraph given to telling how the Germans were replaced by the Allies. "Sea War" V, paragraph 2266 has it right, but doesn't mention the Canadian ship.
75. "Sea War" V, 2265.
76. RCNMR 43, p. 20.
77. FOLEM to CINC Mediterranean 131421 September 1944 (PD 015-5-3).
78. PD Log, 15 September 1944.
79. Chief Shipwright B. Rhodenizer of Mosher Island, Nova Scotia (DN Inf. photos and captions PD 622 and 623 in file "Med--PD"); photo and caption PD 656 in ibid.
80. "Sea War" V, 2261-3.
81. Churchill VI, p. 227.

82. "Sea War" V, 2266.
83. Schull, p. 365.
84. Churchill VI, pp. 283-5; Leeper, pp. 72-3.
85. Memo 0321/14 September 1944 "Operation Manna" (NHS 1650 "Manna").
86. "Sea War" V, 2424.
87. Schull, p. 367. The official historian of RCN operations in the Second World War was not an eyewitness of this arrival, but had his impressions not from those who were, and himself visited Athens soon afterwards.
88. A valuable source, for the facts and more for the spirit of the dawn of new Greek freedom, is the photos in the DN Inf. series of files titled "Med--PD". Statements in this paragraph are based on the following photos and their captions: A2, A7, A9, A9a, A 11, A 12, A 16, and GM 2543. These files are now in NHS photo cabinet under PRINCE DAVID.
89. Churchill, V, Book Two, Chapter 13; Leeper, pp. 43-7.
90. When the Ambassador arrived in Athens, he had to ask the way to his Embassy. "The directions given me were 'first big pink house on the left.' Some people a little later on regarded the Embassy as neither sufficiently Pink nor sufficiently Left." (p. 79).
91. RCNMR #43, p. 21.
92. Pages 73-5.
93. Leeper, p. 74.
94. Ibid., p. 75.
95. Ibid.
96. "Sea War" V, para. 2426.
97. Schull dispatch, "Account of PRINCE DAVID in the landings in Greece", p. 5 (in NHS 8000 PRINCE DAVID, v. 2).
98. Mr. Leeper ". . . expressed my surprise to a Greek lady at the quality of clothes being worn. Her reply silenced me. 'We don't care if we are misunderstood. We've been going about in rags and saving up everything for this moment. We want to put up a good show to welcome the British and forget about the occupation, but you should see our underclothes.'" (p. 83)
99. RCNMR #43, p. 23.
100. Toronto Daily Star 31 October 1944 (in NHS 8000 PD, v. 2); Woodhouse, p. 204; "Sea War" V, para. 2435.
101. Woodhouse, p. 239.
102. Messages in NHS 1650 "Manna".
103. Woodhouse, pp. 218-9.
104. "Sea War", V, para. 2429.
105. DN Inf. photos and captions PD 762, 763, 764, 766, 767 (in file "Mediterranean--PD").
106. Ibid., PD 771, 774, 775.

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107. PD to NOIC 012114 December 1944 (in PD 018-1).
108. PD Log 4 December 1944; Leeper, pp. 100-104.
109. "Sea War " V, para. 2426-61.
110. PD, Report of Damage by Mining (in NHS 8000 PD, v. 2).
111. SBNOG to FOLEM 18 December 1944 (in NSS 18340-412/1, v. 1).
112. SBNOG to PD 111738 December 1944 and 111611 December 1944 (in PD 018-1).
113. PH Log 9-11 December 1944.
114. SBNOG to PD 111351 December 1944 (in PD 018-1).
115. Churchill VI, p. 318.
116. Photo PH 503 in NHS photo file "PH--Mediterranean".
117. PH, Log.
118. Report of Proceedings; message FOLEM to ADMIRALTY 251631b December 1944 (in NHS 8000 PH Signals).
119. Lcdr. Webber, X. O., "The Preveza Christmas Party" (RCNMR 38, pp. 65-8).
120. Photo PH 510 in NHS photo file "PH--Mediterranean".
121. Halifax Herald 20 January 1945 (NSS 19-4-2).
122. "Sea War "V, para. 2472.
123. NSHQ to C-in-C CNA 201553z May 1944 (in NA(PP) 104 filed NHS 1650-1, v. 1).
124. CNMO to NSHQ 011050b June 1944 (NHS 1650-1).
125. NSHQ to CNMO 131712 October 1944 (Tucker II, p. 466).
126. CNMO to NSHQ 241120 November 1944 (NA(PP) War Against Japan, v. 2, filed NHS 1650-1).
127. CNMO to NSHQ 181740 and 192348a November 1944 (Tucker II, p. 466).
128. Vide Cabinet War Committee Minutes 24 October 1944 (NS 8375-4, v. 1).
129. Caserta CCO to CNMO 232039a December 1944 (NHS 8000 PD, v. 1).
130. AD to CNMO 032032a February 1945 (NHS 8780, v. 1).
131. Messages in NHS 8000 PD, v. 1.
132. CNMO to NSHQ 151651a January 1945 (NS 18700-412/1, v. 2).
133. DN Inf. photos and captions PD 823, 824, 825, 827, 828 in file "Med--PD" (NHS photo file PD).
134. SBNO Curacao to Ad 011333z March 1945 (NSS 18700-412/1, v. 2).
135. Ad to COMINCH 191345 February 1945 (PD 018-1).
136. Messages in PD 018-1; "Sea War" VI, para 2699.
137. Messages in NSS 18700-412/1, v. 2.
138. PH Log.

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139. FOTALI to CINCMED 071905a March 1945 (NHS 8000 PH, Signals).
140. VADM MALTA to FOGMA 141040 March 1945 (Ibid.).
141. PH to FOGMA 161325a March 1945 (Ibid.).
142. PH Log.
- 143a. Ibid.
- 143b. CINC NORE to AD 281232a March 1945 (NHS 8000 PH, Signals).
144. Messages in Ibid.
145. Halifax Chronicle 6 April 1945 (NSS 19-4-2).
146. NSS 18355-412/1, v. 1 .
147. NHS 8000 PH, 0-7.
148. Clark.
149. Roy, p. 205.
150. Morison.
151. CTG 86.3 to PH 160905b August 1944 (NHS 8000 PH, 0-7, v. 4).
152. Photo E-6583-1 in NHS photo file PD, v. 1. (See text, Part I, pp. 30-31 above).
153. Schull W/T notes (NHS 8000 PD, v. 2).
154. Historical Section, 81st Fighter Squadron, USAAF to Dominion of Canada Naval Department 8 August 1946 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 2).
155. HRO to CNMO 20 November 1944 (NSS 1443-249/96).
156. Commanding Officer PH to CNMO 20 December 1944 (Ibid.).
157. Admiralty Operations records (held in NHS).
158. NSS 1926-102/2; NSHQ to COPC 181642z March 1945 (NHS 8780, v. 1).
159. AD to NSHQ 010236b May 1945 (NHS 8000 PD v. 1); Naval Sec to BATM 6 July 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1 v. 1).

The footnote on page 167 needs to be corrected, for another message has come to light which elucidates the question: Did RN personnel take over PRINCE DAVID during the summer of 1945? The message, from COPC to NOIC Esquimalt and "NADEN RN Section" dated 062153z September 1945, reads:

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MR. W. F. BEALING GUNNER RN ALL OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AND RATINGS WHO HAVE BEEN DRAFTED TO 'PRINCE DAVID' AS ADVANCE PARTY WILL CONTINUE WITH THEIR DUTIES AFTER ARRIVAL OF THE SHIP AT ESQUIMALT. . . ALL RN RATINGS ON LOAN TO 'PRINCE DAVID' FOR MOVEMENT OF SHIP TO ESQUIMALT ARE TO BE RETURNED TO RN SECTION NADEN UPON ARRIVAL. AFTER ARRIVAL OF SHIP AT ESQUIMALT MR. W. F. BEALING GUNNER RN IS TO BE RETURNED FOR DUTY IN VANCOUVER.

It is thus clear, at any rate, that 1) there were RN ratings in the ship, and 2) at least one officer, Mr. W. F. Bealing, Gunner RN.  
1) These may have been ratings drafted to the ship as ship's company for HMS PRINCE DAVID, or they may have been hands available at Esquimalt when a working party was required.

159. (Cont'd.)

- 2) Mr. Bealing is shown as serving in PRINCE DAVID in the RN List for July 1945, although the ship herself is not included in the list of ships. PRINCE DAVID does appear in the British List for October 1945; Mr. Bealing and eight other officers are shown as being assigned to her. Mr. Bealing is the only one of the nine who had also been shown for PRINCE DAVID in July. It is cautiously concluded that the Gunner came out to Vancouver to join his new ship ahead of the other officers earmarked for her; and perhaps everything was changed before the rest of the Wardroom arrived.
160. NSHQ messages 15 August 1945; to COPC 1521z (NHS 1650-1 War with Japan NA(PP)--Escorts); and to CNMO 1555z (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).
161. CNMO to NSHQ 061020 September 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).
162. NSHQ to AD 231548z August 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).

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1. Deputy Sec. (Staff) Memo 16 July 1946 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 2); messages in ibid., v. 1 and in NSS 1926-102/2; Naval Staff Minutes 10 September 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1); COPC to NSHQ 311906z August 1945 (NSS 4100-412/1, v. 1).
2. The "Prince" ships cost \$2,250,000. each to build. The Naval Service bought PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE ROBERT in 1940 for \$739,663.14 and \$738,310.09, respectively. ("The Three Prince Ships 1930-9", narrative in NHS 8000 "Prince" Ships General); CTO(N) Memo 30 November 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1).
3. Vaughan to Hon. D. C. Abbott, 27 November 1945 (NSS8000-412/1, v. 1).
4. Letters in NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1.
5. Messages in NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1; NSHQ to CNMO 121426z September 1945 (NSS 19-4-2); letter 18 September 1945 A. L. W. McCallum to Captain E. S. Brand, RCN, Director of Naval Intelligence and Trade (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1); FOIC London to Admiralty 3 December 1945 (NHS 8000 PH, Signals); Admiralty to NSHQ 30 November 1945 (ibid.); Admiralty operations records (held NHS); "Sea War" VI, 2912-3; Roskill III(II), p. 307; Brock, P. W., "The Royal Navy in Germany, 1945-7" in NR, v. 49 (1961), pp. 278-89.
6. Admiralty operations records (held NHS).
7. Letter British Ministry of Transport to the Naval Historian 21 January 1965 (in NHS 8000 PH). See also WAC's 23 January 1947 and Naval Sec's 14 January 1948 in NSS 8000-30, v. 2; and summary of dispositions dated 14 October 1947 in NSS 8000-412/1, v. 2 .
8. Documents in NSS 8000-412/1, v. 2;  
ECR notes in NHS 8000 PD, v. 2;  
WAC to DND 23 January 1947 (NSS 8000-30, v. 2);  
Naval Sec's 15 May 1947 and 14 January 1948 to SCNO London (NSS 8000-30, v. 2).
9. Letter Charlton Steam Shipping Company to the Naval Historian 23 November 1964 (in NHS 8000 "Prince" Ships General).
10. NSS 18180-412/1, v. 1.
11. Letter Sicula Oceanica to the Naval Historian 7 April 1965 (in NHS 8000 PR, v. 3). "About half million pounds"; rate was \$2,7340.
12. Letter British Ministry of Transport to the Naval Historian 21 January 1965 (in NHS 8000 PH).
13. WAC to DND 23 January 1947 (in NSS 8000-30, v. 2); Belgian Shiplover No. 85 (January-February 1962), p. 88; Nautical Magazine May 1962, p. 282; Shipbuilding and Shipping Record 16 August 1962.  
  
In their letter re the PRINCE ROBERT, Sicula Oceanica also state that she was sold ". . . to sister Company--Messrs. Sicula Oceanica S. A.--on August 1961, for 345,000,000 liras [\$562,695. at rate of .001631]." and "On 1962 she was broken up at Vado Ligure (Savona Italy) by Messrs. Giuseppe Riccardi, according with Italian "scrap and built" law. Scraps were sold for about 120,000,000 liras [\$206,640. at rate of .001722]."
14. RCNMR #35, p. 55.
15. NSHQ Press Conference No. 5, 2 October 1940 (NHS 1270).

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16. Tucker II, Appendix I.
17. Schull, Lt. J., Broadcast 1 December 1944 (NHS 8000 PD, v. 2).
18. Lewis, pp. 98-9; Manning & Walker, p. 22.
19. Manning & Walker, p. 352; Beatson II, p. 34; Clowes.
20. Canadian General Orders Part I, 2:06/11.
21. Crowsnest October 1964, p. 19; memoranda re the Toulon memorial on NSC 1440-1 (filed NHS 1650 Operation "Dragoon", v. 1).
22. "Command Decisions", chapters 10 and 16.

Notes for pages 172 - 177

ENEMY MERCHANTMEN TAKEN IN PRIZE BY  
SHIPS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Port of Registry</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Boarded</u>	<u>by HMCS</u>
23/4/16	OREGON	New York	727	off La Pax, Mexico	RAINBOW
2/5/16	LEONOR	see Remarks(1) below		off Cape Corrientes, Mexico	RAINBOW
10/6/40	CAPO NOLI	Genoa	3921	in the Saint Lawrence River	BRAS D'OR
26/9/40	WESER	Bremen	9179	off Manzanillo, Mexico	PRINCE ROBERT
5/2/41	CHRISTIAN HOLM	Copenhagen	9119	off North-west Trinidad	See Remarks (2) below
	SCANDIA	Nyborg, Denmark	8571		
3/6/41	CANGALAIS	St. Malo	369	on the Grand Banks	ST. CROIX
4/6/41	MADIANA	St. Malo	354	on the Grand Banks	ST. CROIX
31/8/41	ANGELUS--see Remarks(3) below	Cancale, France	338	in mid-Atlantic	PRESCOTT

REMARKS

1. Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1915-6, shows a LEONOR, steel screw ketch, registered in Lisbon. This does not appear to be RAINBOW's prize, which Captain Hose called a "power schooner" somewhat "smaller and lighter" than OREGON, and owned by Rademacher, Moller and Company of Guaymas, Mexico.
2. These two prizes were taken together, with the clandestine connivance of their owners. Standard Oil of New Jersey arranged for their Marine Superintendent, Captain Ryan, to be aboard one of the tankers. Initially, he was to protest the Allied seizure; then he was to influence the master and crew to offer no resistance. The two vessels were stopped by HMC Armed Yachts HUSKY and VISON, and HUSKY sent an armed party on board each tanker. These parties were superseded after ten or fifteen minutes by Dutch prize crews from VAN KINSBERGEN, Senior Officer of the patrol. There was more friction between the Allies than with the vessels being captured, which were perfectly agreeable. The misunderstanding caused some ill feelings, and a messaged flurry of recriminations and explanations. The two prizes were sailed to Port-of-Spain flying the Netherlands colours (under Canadian protest), were operated under their own names by the British Ministry of War Transport for the duration of the war, and were returned to their former owners at its end.
3. After being taken, this vessel never reached port again. With a prize crew of nine Canadians aboard, and making for Sydney, ANGELUS was torpedoed about 5 September. The Canadian sailors drifted in lifeboats for over a week, several perished, and the survivors reached Newfoundland about 14 September.
4. Statements have been made that HMCS NIOBE, patrolling off the east coast of the United States in 1914-5, captured "numerous enemy prize vessels". It is impossible to substantiate this claim, and difficult to credit it. There were, of course, prizes to be taken, and some ships of the Fourth

Cruiser Squadron did so. But if NIOBE had taken prizes, her Executive Officer would have known, and would not have forgotten to include the information in his written account of the entire winter (Commander Aglionby, Tucker, v.I, pp.243-4). The incident of 2 January, 1915, when SS BROOKBY was ordered to take her cargo of wheat into Gibraltar instead of proceeding to an Italian port (NHS., History of NIOBE, p.54) was not the taking of a prize, for BROOKBY was British.

5. Only vessels captured underway have been included; there were also several ships of enemy nationality seized by the Canadian Government while in port in Canada during the Second World War.

(Reference: Schull, The Far Distant Ships; Tucker, The Naval Service of Canada, I; NHS Histories of BRAS D'OR, HUSKY, NIOBE, RAINBOW, ST. CROIX; files NHS 8000 ARROWHEAD, NIOBE, PRESCOTT, PRINCE ROBERT, RAINBOW, VISON and NHS 8000 Merchant Shipping A to F)

THE FAST UNITED KINGDOM-NORTH AFRICA (KMF and MKF)  
CONVOYS, OCTOBER 1943 TO SEPTEMBER 1944

The designations KM (outwards) and MK (homewards) dated from October and November, 1942. Previous to that time they were called OG and HG. Besides the fast convoys, with which PRINCE ROBERT was almost exclusively associated, there were also slow convoys on the same routes--KMS outwards, and MKS homewards. The fast cycle was 35 days; the slow 10 days. The examples below show the composition of typical fast convoys, and the ultimate origins and destinations of the ships in them:

CONVOY	MONTH OF PASSAGE	TOTAL NO. OF SHIPS UNDER ESCORT	TERMINAL PORTS--HOME (U.K.)			TERMINAL PORTS--FOREIGN						
			MERSEY (Liverpool)	CLYDE (Glasgow)	BELFAST	GIBRALTAR AND WEST AFRICA	SOUTH AMERICA	ALGERIAN PORTS	NAPLES	EGYPT	EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA	INDIA
KMF 31	MAY 1944	18	11	7	-	6	-	4	2	1	1	4
KMF 34	AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1944	15	9	5	1	2	1	-	2	2	1	7

The usual escort on these runs comprised one anti-aircraft cruiser (PRINCE ROBERT), and an anti-submarine escort group of five or six ships (RN and RCN destroyers, frigates and corvettes). Sometimes extra warships were in convoy, not forming part of the escort, as when HMS AMEER, without her operational aircraft, sailed with KMF 31 bound for the Eastern Fleet (Trincomalee). As a convoy neared Gibraltar and passed eastward, it was continually regrouped. Some vessels sailed south along the African coast. Through the Mediterranean, vessels were detached to, or joined from, Gibraltar, Algerian or Italian ports, Malta, and Egypt. These eastern destinations were a mark of growing Allied control in the Sea; Alexandria became a regular port of call in May 1943; thereafter the traffic doubled. Escort vessels for the Mediterranean legs were drawn from Gibraltar, Algiers, Malta, and Alexandria. From June 1944, PRINCE ROBERT turned around at Naples. Cargoes of extra importance--money, troops and military stores--were carried in the fast convoys, leaving more mundane supplies to the slow ones. The convoys PRINCE ROBERT helped to protect are listed in Appendix H. (Reference: PR, Reports of Proceedings; messages in NHS 8000 PR v. 1; BR 1337, p. 23; "Naval Aviation" II, p. 137; "Sea War" IV, paragraphs 1418, 1552).

PRINCIPAL ENEMY ANTI-CONVOY FORCES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA,  
OCTOBER 1943 TO SEPTEMBER 1944

The U-boat strength disposed by Germany in the Mediterranean in the fall of 1943 was a dozen craft, plus or minus one or two as replacements were sent for the boats the Allies managed to sink from time to time. Throughout the winter of 1943-4 until the end of May, the enemy maintained this strength, but the last successful torpedoing of a merchant ship had already taken place on the 14th of that month. Thereafter the German submarines experienced attrition, and the last two of them were destroyed in Grecian waters on 24 September.

Unlike the Atlantic, in this theatre the U-boat was not the chief threat to our shipping. Well over one-half the losses were due to enemy air action, for which he was extremely well placed and equipped. At the end of 1943, there were one hundred heavy bombers of the Luftwaffe based in the south of France, and the number of planes in this force increased to a peak of one hundred twenty-five in May 1944. One of the recurrent targets chosen for this formidable air strength was Allied Mediterranean shipping.

"The scale and frequency of these attacks . . . declined when the enemy transferred some of his bombers to northern France at the time of the invasion of Normandy."

An attack on convoy UGS 48 by 40 torpedo-bombers (unsuccessful) on 1 August was the last strike against our shipping by this arm. Before the end of the month, Operation 'Dragoon' finally took from the Nazis the fields from where they flew these sorties. In September, 1944, coincident with PRINCE ROBERT's quitting the theatre for refit in Canada, the diminution of these threats made possible widespread cancellation of Allied convoy sailings in the Mediterranean.

(Reference: Roskill, The War at Sea, III, (I), pp.105, 310; III, (II), pp.106-8)

ALLIED AND ENEMY FORCES ENGAGED IN BATTLE  
AROUND CONVOY SL 139/MKS 30, AND LOSSES  
SUFFERED, 14 TO 23 NOVEMBER 1943

ALLIES

DATE	NAVAL FORCES		AIR FORCES	
	SHIPS AND UNITS	TOTAL NO. OF SHIPS WITH CONVOY	NO. OF PLANES	AVERAGE LENGTH OF PATROL
14th	EG 40: HMS EXE (S.O.) MILFORD MOYOLA CLARKIA PETUNIA HMIS KISTNA	6	3	4 hours
18th	EG 7 joined: HMS PHEASANT (S.O. all support forces) CRANE FOLEY	9	17	4 hours
18th	EG 7 joined and detached same day HMS CHANTICLEER GARTIES	9		
19th	EG 7 joined: HMS ESSINGTON	10	16	5 hours
19th	EG 5 joined: HMS NENE (S.O.) TWEED HMCS CALGARY SNOWBERRY LUNENBURG EDMUNDSTON	16		
19th	joined: HMS WATCHMAN WINCHELSEA	18		
20th			17	3 hours
21st	joined: HMCS PRINCE ROBERT	19	10	3 hours
21st	nearby: EG 4 HMS BENTINCK (S.O.) BAZELY CALDER BYARD DRURY	19		

DATE	NAVAL FORCES		AIR FORCES	
	SHIPS AND UNITS	TOTAL NO. OF SHIPS WITH CONVOY	NO. OF PLANES	AVERAGE LENGTH OF PATROL
22nd			7	4 hours
23rd			2	5 hours

TOTALS: Number of ships that helped fight the convoy through--26.

Air cover: -72 ocean patrols averaging 3.9 hours each  
 -about 279 hours of flying time  
 -4 patrols by USN planes, remainder by RAF  
 -and in addition: " . . . over the Bay of Biscay and the approaches to the Bay, Coastal Command aircraft maintained almost constant patrols from United Kingdom bases, and engaged many enemy aircraft as they set out in the direction of the convoy."

ENEMY

Naval Forces

Survivors from U-536, sunk early morning 20 November, stated when interrogated that four groups of German submarines, of about ten boats each, were involved in the attack on SL 139/MKS 30. The groups they named were "Shill 1", "Shill 2", "Shill 3", and "Eisenhardt". However, not all of these forty or so U-boats came into contact with the convoy. The Analysis made by Admiralty at the time suggested "at least 25" had; when Roskill wrote in 1960, having had plenty opportunity to study German records, he states that "thirty-one U-boats had actually taken part", that is, most of the submarines of the groups that set up the patrol lines in the convoy's path on latitudes 39° 30', 42° 30' and 45° 30' North, and a scattered few from a fourth group which was also homed onto the convoy. (See map facing page 49 in Roskill, The War at Sea, III (I).

U-BOATS IN CONTACT 31

AIR FORCES

Aircraft on reconnaissance duty:	16th a.m.	1 plane reported by convoy
	17th p.m.	1
	18th a.m.	2 or 3
	19th a.m.	2
	20th	2 German aircraft shot down off Cape Ortegal
	21st a.m.	1 reported by convoy
	22nd a.m.	1

TOTAL NUMBER OF RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS KNOWN TO ALLIES

10 or 11

Aircraft on strike duty:

21st p.m.

about 22 planes

TOTAL ENEMY AIRCRAFT MISSIONS FLOWN AGAINST CONVOY (estimate)

32 or 33

CASUALTIES AMONG SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT ON BOTH SIDES

DATE	ALLIES	ENEMY
18th	HMS CHANTICLEER damaged	U-333 damaged
19th		U-211 sunk Junkers 88 aircraft damaged by Flying Fortress
20th	4 aircraft failed to return to base	U-536 sunk 2 Focke-Wulf aircraft shot down
21st	MV MARSA sunk MV DELIUS damaged HMS WINCHELSEA damaged	U-538 sunk 3 to 6 aircraft lost from raid <sup>1</sup> 3 to 6 others damaged in raid <sup>1</sup>
22nd		Blohm and Voss aircraft damaged

TOTALS:

	LOST	DAMAGED	TOTAL CASUALTIES
<u>Allies</u>			
Of 67 vessels in convoy	1	1	2
Of 26 ships escorting	-	2	2
Of 72 aircraft missions	4	-	4
<u>Enemy</u>			
Of 31 U-boats engaged	3	1	4
Of (approx.) 32 aircraft missions flown	5 to 8	5 to 8	10 to 16

(Reference: HMCS PRINCE ROBERT, appropriate Report of Proceedings; HMS EXE, Report of Proceedings (extract) in NHS 8000 PRINCE ROBERT, v.3; Anti-U-boat Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty, Analysis of Anti-U-boat Operations in the Vicinity of Convoys SL 139/MKS 30 and SL 140/MKS 31; The War at Sea (preliminary narrative), IV, para.1660; "Combined Admiralty and Air Ministry Communique" in NHS 8000 PRINCE ROBERT, v.3; Roskill, The War at Sea, III (I), pp.49-53; U-536, Interrogation of Survivors in NHS 1650).

<sup>1</sup> German aircraft casualty figures for 21 November are based upon a variety of sources, none of them German. Total Allied claims to have inflicted injury upon the enemy planes total nine, as follows:

Shot down	2-by escorting LIBERATOR A/C
Damaged by near-misses of gunfire	1-by HMCS PRINCE ROBERT
Hit and damaged by gunfire	1-by HMS EXE
	1-by MV MARSA
	1-by LIBERATOR A/C
	2-by SUNDERLAND A/C

Estimates at the time were 3 to 6 German A/C losses from this mission. Roskill says: "3 He 177's were lost to the enemy."

ATTACKS UPON AND SHIP CASUALTIES IN UNITED KINGDOM--NORTH AFRICA CONVOYS,  
20 OCTOBER 1943 TO 13 SEPTEMBER 1944

DATE	CONVOY	AREA OF ATTACK		ENEMY FORCES		CASUALTIES SUFFERED	
		ATLANTIC	MEDITERRANEAN	U-BOAT	AIR	MERCHANTMEN	ESCORT VESSELS
21/10/43	MKS 28		X		X	2 sunk	
27-31/10/43	SL 135/MKS 28	X		X		1 sunk	
3/11/43	KMS 30		X	X		1 sunk	
6/11/43	KMF 25A		X		X	2 sunk	1 sunk
7-9/11/43	MKS 29A	X		X			nil
11/11/43	KMS 31		X		X	4 sunk 2 damaged	
15-21/11/43	SL 139/MKS 30	X		X	X	1 sunk 1 damaged	2 damaged
25-29/11/43	SL 140/MKS 31	X		X			nil
26-29/11/43	KMF 26		X		X	1 sunk 1 damaged	
11-12/12/43	KMS 34		X	X			2 sunk 1 damaged

DATE	CONVOY	AREA OF ATTACK		ENEMY FORCES		CASUALTIES SUFFERED	
		ATLANTIC	MEDITERRANEAN	U-BOAT	AIR	MERCHANTMEN	ESCORT VESSELS
11-12/12/43	KMS 34		X	X			2 sunk 1 damaged
8/1/44	OS 64/KMS 38	X		X			nil
10/1/44	KMS 37		X		X	1 sunk 1 damaged	
17-19/1/44	OS 65/KMS 39	X		X			nil
7-9/2/44	SL 147/MKS 38	X		X			nil
10-12/2/44	OS 67/KMS 41	X		X	X		nil
9/3/44	SL 150/MKS 41	X		X			1 sunk
19/3/44	KMS 44		X		X		nil
29/3/44	KMS 45		X		X		nil
26/5/44	SL 158/MKS 49	X			X		nil
31/5/44	KMS 51		X		X	1 sunk	

(Reference: Monthly Anti-Submarine Report, October 1943 to September 1944; The War at Sea (preliminary narrative), IV and V; Roskill, The War at Sea, III (I) and (II)).

THE CANADIAN SOLDIERS AT HONG KONG, 1941-5

1,973 officers and men of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada arrived at Hong Kong in AWATEA and PRINCE ROBERT on 16 November, 1941. Three weeks later the place was besieged by the Japanese, and it fell Christmas Day 1941. In two and one half weeks of fighting, Canadian casualties were:

killed	290 (or about 14.7% of those engaged)
wounded	<u>493</u>
total	783

These figures do not suffer in comparison with those for the remainder of the Hong Kong garrison. Excluding the Canadians, British, Colonial and Indian troops employed in Hong Kong's defense totalled 12,000, of whom about 13.5% were killed or missing (and presumed dead) in the battle (955 dead, 659 missing--total 1,614).

On arriving in Hong Kong, the Canadians were billeted in Camp ShamShuiPo in north Kowloon. On 7 December they were fetched across to battle stations on Hong Kong Island; thus when the camp was bombed next day in the enemy's opening assault, there were only two casualties. After the British surrender, the Canadians were returned to ShamShuiPo; their barracks became their prison until PRINCE ROBERT rescued them.

At Hong Kong during 1941-5, deaths among the Canadian prisoners of war mounted to 132, partly due to wounds suffered in the siege, and more, apparently, to poor nutrition and lack of medical attention. In 1943, 1,185 of the soldiers were removed from Kowloon to forced labor in Japanese industry. In this group, losses were high--136, or about 11% of them, failed to survive the war.

After Japan's capitulation, Manila in the Philippines was appointed the marshalling place in the East for released Allied prisoners of war. Thus the Canadians who had sat out the war entirely at Hong Kong, and those who had been sent to Japan itself, were alike concentrated there in September 1945, and there PRINCE ROBERT embarked 34 for return to Canada.

Grim statistics:

deaths in battle	290
deaths in captivity	<u>268</u>
total	558 (or over 28% of those embarked for Hong Kong in October 1941)

(Reference: HMCS PRINCE ROBERT, appropriate Reports of Proceedings; Stacey, Col. C. P., Six Years of War, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955, Chapter XIV; Admiralty Historical Section, The War at Sea (preliminary narrative), VI, paras. 3114, 3122)

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT ON THE UNITED KINGDOM--NORTH AFRICA CONVOY  
ESCORT RUN, OCTOBER 1943 TO SEPTEMBER 1944

CONVOY	PRINCE ROBERT JOINED	PRINCE ROBERT DETACHED	TOTAL NO. OF DAYS IN ANTI-AIRCRAFT SCREEN
MKF 25	28 October, 1943	2 November, 1943	5
SL 139/MKS 30	21 November	24 November	3
OS 139/KMS 35	11 December	16 December	5
KMF 27	19 December	24 December	5
MKF 27	28 December	2 January, 1944	5
KMF 28	17 January 1944	23 January	6
MKF 28	1 February	5 February	4
KMF 29	22 February	29 February	7
MKF 29	8 March	14 March	6
KMF 30	31 March	5 April	5
MKF 30	15 April	20 April	5
KMF 31	7 May	12 May	5
MKF 31	21 May	28 May	7
KMF 32	13 June	22 June	9
MKF 32	24 June	2 July	8
KMF 33	20 July	29 July	9
KMF 33	31 July	9 August	9
KMF 34	26 August	4 September	9
MKF 34	6 September	13 September	7

SUMMARY: PRINCE ROBERT was available for KMF-MKF escort duty for 329 days: 20 October 1943 to 13 September 1944. Days at sea in anti-aircraft screen 119, or 36% of time allocated. In addition to this, 31 days (9.5%) were spent at sea in the Atlantic not in company. Convoys escorted were 19 in number, 10 homeward, and 9 outward. Merchantmen casualties during this period in these convoys totalled two, one sunk and one damaged. Approximate total number of ships escorted was 314.

(Reference: HMCS PRINCE ROBERT, Reports of Proceedings)

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY AT WAR WITH JAPAN,  
1941-1945

This story is easily sketched, because until Germany surrendered, the RCN clung closely to the war's basic strategy of defeating that enemy first, and kept most of the ships in the Atlantic. Then Japan, too, succumbed, within four months; before Ottawa's plans to send two aircraft carriers, three cruisers, seven destroyers and about forty smaller ships into the Pacific could be brought to fruition. Thus contact between Canadian warships and Japanese forces was very rare. (About half of these occasions involved one or more of the "Prince" ships--these events will be found in full detail in the text of this history.)

1. HMCS PRINCE ROBERT at Hong Kong. This Armed Merchant Cruiser (Commander F. G. Hart, RCN) escorted SS AWATEA, with 2000 officers and men of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada, from Vancouver to Hong Kong. This voyage was in October-November, 1941, and Canada was not yet at war with Japan. PRINCE ROBERT turned around at Hong Kong on 18/19 November. Within a few weeks the Colony had fallen to the Japanese, and the entire Canadian Army contingent was either killed or made prisoner. PRINCE ROBERT returned to Canada by way of Pearl Harbour. Clearing from there three days before the Japanese raid on that port, she diverted her voyage to Esquimalt to search for the 2140 ton US freighter CYNTHIA OLSEN, reported torpedoed by a U-boat. (It was the Japanese I-26). But PRINCE ROBERT found no trace of the enemy or the merchantman.

On 30 August 1945 PRINCE ROBERT (Captain W. B. Greery, RCN) arrived back at Hong Kong as part of the British reoccupation and relief fleet. The Canadian ship liberated Kowloon and 1500 Allied prisoners of war. Four hundred of the Canadians she had escorted out 4 years earlier were among those freed.

2. The West Coast anti-U-boat patrol. This duty consumed more ship-hours than any other activity of the RCN directed against Japan. For example, in January 1942 three AMC's, three corvettes, five minesweepers, three armed yachts and about two dozen Fishermen's Reserve patrol craft were allocated to this service. But only once during the war did the enemy appear. That was on 20-21 June 1942. The SS FORT CAMOSUN was torpedoed and shelled early 20 June 70 miles off Cape Flattery by I-25 or I-26 (both these Japanese U-boats were on patrol in the area). HMC Ships QUESNEL, EDMUNDSTON and VANCOUVER and six other vessels rushed to the merchantman's aid. The first two of these had asdic contacts and made depth-charge attacks on approaching the torpedoed ship. But EDMUNDSTON's Commanding Officer later concluded, "I do not think a submarine was present at that time." The next night (20/21 June) I-26 shelled the lighthouse and radio station at Estevan Point. Five days of skilful salvage work saw the FORT CAMOSUN safely into Esquimalt, where she was repaired.
3. Operations in Alaskan waters. PRINCE ROBERT, PRINCE DAVID, PRINCE HENRY, DAWSON and VANCOUVER spent 2½ months, starting 20 August 1942, in Alaska. American authorities worked the Canadian ships between Kodiak and Dutch Harbour, mostly on convoy escort. Five or six anti-U-boat attacks were made, but there was never proof of the enemy's presence, although there were Japanese forces based on Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians. DAWSON and VANCOUVER did further work off Alaska the following spring, without encountering any Japanese forces.
4. UGANDA. She was the only Canadian ship to actually and definitely engage Japanese units. From 8 April to 27 July 1945 UGANDA (Captain E. R. Mainguy, OBE, RCN) was part of the British Pacific Fleet's Carrier Force, which conformed to the movements of the US Third (Fifth) Fleet's Fast Carrier Force. She had four periods of action in the Pacific:
  - (a) 12 to 20 April 1945. UGANDA was in the screen for RN carriers as they launched strikes against air facilities on Formosa, and the islands of Ishigaki and Miyako. The aim was to help cover Okinawa during Operation "Iceberg". UGANDA saw one enemy plane.

- (b) 4 to 25 May. Same targets. On several occasions during this phase, UGANDA fired her armament at enemy planes, but claimed no individual successes. On 4 May she was detached with HM Ships KING GEORGE V, HOWE, and others to crater Miyako airfields with gunfire. They were successful. HM Ships INDOMITABLE, FORMIDABLE (twice) and VICTORIOUS (twice) were hit by kamikaze planes during this series of strikes. After about 10 May, UGANDA was placed on a picket station 12 miles southwest of the fleet's centre, where she could give early warning of Japanese approaches and begin to break up hostile formations, if they attacked.
- (c) Operation "Inmate", 12 to 17 June. This was a bombardment of Truk under Rear-Admiral E. J. P. Brind, CB, RN, by HM Ships IMPLACABLE, SWIFTSURE and NEWFOUNDLAND; UGANDA; HMNZS ACHILLES; and a flotilla of destroyers. It was neither very necessary nor very successful. No opposition was met.
- (d) 17 to 25 July. UGANDA was screen or picket as the carriers' planes attacked Tokyo, Nagoya, Kure and Kobe. Slight resistance--UGANDA did not fire her weapons.

#### 5. Miscellaneous.

- (a) HMCS ONTARIO, bound for the Pacific war, was also too late, like PRINCE ROBERT. She arrived at Hong Kong on 13 September 1945 to aid in the liberation.
- (b) HMCS ALGONQUIN was also on her way, via the Mediterranean, and was ordered to turn around at Alexandria.
- (c) RCN and RCNVR personnel on loan to the Royal Navy throughout the war constitute an important part of Canada's naval war against Japan. As many as 2400 Canadian personnel were at one time serving in British ships, submarines, MTB's, combined operations outfits, and the RN Fleet Air Arm. Many of these units were engaging Japanese forces. The best-known example here is Lieutenant R. H. Gray, VC, DSC, RCNVR, who won his high award flying a Corsair from HMS FORMIDABLE against the Japanese homeland in the war's closing days.

(Reference: NHS files and narrative histories of the ships concerned, and their Reports of Proceedings; Press release 21 May 1945 (NHS 1650-239/5); Hashimoto, M., Sunk (London: Cassell, 1954), pp. 30-7; BS 47; Roskill III(II), chapter XXVII: "Sea War", III, 695, IV, 1348, VI, 3108; Stacey, chapter XIV; Tucker II, 520; Schull, pp. 414-25).

OUTFITS OF LANDING CRAFT IN HMC SHIPS PRINCE DAVID AND PRINCE HENRY  
1944-1945

Particulars of craft borne:	LCA--Landing Craft Assault 58' long 18' 6" beam 10 knots maximum (6 when loaded)	LCS(M)--Landing Craft Support (Medium) 41' long 10' beam 9 knots maximum 5 light machine guns	LCM--Landing Craft Mechanized (Mark 3) 50' long 14' beam 11 knots maximum (8 when loaded)
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Throughout, the craft in the Canadian ships remained the property of the United Kingdom, which retained the right to exchange or reclaim them. After the war, Canada purchased the eight craft which PRINCE DAVID had brought home with her.

DATE	TOTAL NO. OF CRAFT	CRAFT	REMARKS ON CHANGES
PRINCE DAVID's OUTFIT (Flotilla No. 529)--changes underlined			
21 April 1944	8	LCA 1057, 1059, 1150, 1151, 1137, 1138, 1373, 1375. (Original outfit).	
1 May	8	LCA 1059, 1137, 1138, 1150, 1151, 1375. LCS(M) <u>83</u> , <u>101</u> .	For gunfire support on D-day.
31 May	8	LCA <u>985</u> , 1059, 1137, 1138, 1150, 1151, 1375. LCS(M) 101.	For obstacle clearance.
6 June (p.m.)	<u>none</u>		7 craft sunk, LCA 1375 detached.
7 June	<u>5</u>	LCA <u>1115</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1391</u> . LCS(M) <u>176</u> .	Replacements.
9 June	<u>6</u>	LCA 1115, 1346, 1359, <u>1375</u> , 1391. LCS(M) 176.	Returned from Normandy.

DATE	TOTAL NO. OF CRAFT	CRAFT	REMARKS ON CHANGES
13 July	<u>8</u>	LCA <u>980</u> , <u>1015</u> , <u>1115</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1373</u> , <u>1375</u> , <u>1391</u> .	Replacements.
15 July	8	LCA <u>980</u> , <u>1115</u> , <u>1273</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1373</u> , <u>1375</u> , <u>1432</u> .	Defective craft replaced.
8 August	8	LCA <u>1115</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1373</u> , <u>1375</u> *, <u>1432</u> . LCM <u>160</u> , <u>185</u> .	For landing equipment in "Dragoon".
20 August	<u>2</u>	LCM as above.	Six craft detached.
27 August	<u>8</u>	LCA <u>1115</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1373</u> , <u>1375</u> , <u>1432</u> . LCM as above.	Returned from Baie de Cavalaire.
15 September	<u>7</u>	LCA as above. LCM 160.	One craft sunk.
9 October	<u>none</u>		Seven craft detached.
14 October 1944	none	LCM 176 received as replacement, then put off at Taranto to be rigged.	
18 October	<u>7</u>	LCA <u>1115</u> , <u>1346</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1373</u> , <u>1375</u> , <u>1432</u> . LCM <u>160</u>	Returned from operations at Poros and Piraeus.
6 November	<u>8</u>	LCA as above. LCM 160, <u>176</u> .	Returned from Dockyard, Taranto.
14 December	<u>none</u>		Eight craft detached.
18 January 1945	<u>6</u>	LCA <u>1115</u> , <u>1359</u> , <u>1375</u> , <u>1432</u> . LCM <u>160</u> , <u>176</u> .	1 craft sunk, 1 damaged.
23-9 January	<u>8</u>	LCA <u>241</u> , <u>453</u> , <u>480</u> , <u>856</u> , <u>980</u> , <u>1033</u> , <u>1273</u> , <u>1375</u> .**	Craft exchanged.

NOTE: \*Of the original outfit, only LCA 1375 survived 9 months of operations intact.

\*\*The craft borne at the end of January 1945 came to Canada in PRINCE DAVID.

DATE	TOTAL NO. OF CRAFT	CRAFT	REMARKS ON CHANGES
PRINCE HENRY's OUTFIT (Flotilla No. 528)--changes underlined			
21 April 1944	8	LCA 736, 850, 856, 925, 1021, 1033, 1371, 1372. (Original outfit).	
6 June (p.m.)	<u>6</u>	LCA 736, 850, 856, 925, 1033, 1371.	<u>1021</u> sunk 6 June <u>1372</u> detached, sunk 7 June
7 June	<u>8</u>	LCA 736, 850, 856, 925, 1033, <u>1233</u> , 1371, <u>1396</u> .	Replacements.
8 August*	8	Six of the above LCA. LCM <u>222</u> , <u>223</u> .	For landing equipment in "Dragoon".
September	8	LCA 736, 850, 925, 1033, 1233, 1371, 1396. LCM 222.	
2 October	<u>none</u>		Temporarily assigned to PRINCE DAVID while PRINCE HENRY ferried other Flotillas.
12 October	<u>8</u>	LCA <u>736</u> , <u>850</u> , <u>925</u> , <u>1033</u> , <u>1233</u> , <u>1371</u> , <u>1396</u> . LCM <u>222</u> .	Rejoined.
26 October*	<u>6</u>	LCA 850, 925, 1233, 1371, 1396. LCM 222.	2 craft being exchanged.
1 November*	<u>8</u>	LCA as above. LCM 222, <u>4030</u> , <u>4053</u> .	Replacements.
24 November	<u>1</u>	?	7 craft temporarily removed while PRINCE HENRY does ferry duty.
27 November	<u>8</u>	LCA 850, 925, 1233, 1371, 1396. LCM 222, 4030, 4053.	Rejoined.
11 December	<u>7</u>	?	1 LCA temporarily assigned to SBNOG (Phalerun Bay)

NOTE: \*At a few points in this list, the records are not complete. The statements made above seem to be correct.

DATE	TOTAL NO. OF CRAFT	CRAFT	REMARKS ON CHANGES
14 December	<u>6</u>	?	1 LCA temporarily assigned to SBNOG (Phalerun Bay)
15 December	<u>5</u>	?	LCA <u>1396</u> sunk.
18 December	<u>6</u>	?	PRINCE DAVID's damaged LCA <u>1373</u> hung up permanently in PRINCE HENRY's davits.
21 December 1200	<u>8</u>	LCA 850, 925, 1233, 1371, 1373. LCM 222, 4030, 4053.	2 detached LCA rejoin.
2359	<u>1</u>	LCA 1373.	7 craft detached to Port aux Mahones.
23 December	<u>8</u>	LCA <u>850</u> , <u>925</u> , <u>1233</u> , <u>1371</u> , <u>1373</u> . LCM <u>222</u> , <u>4030</u> , <u>4053</u> .	Rejoin.
20 February 1945	8	LCA 850, 925, 1233, <u>1359</u> , 1371, 1373, <u>1432</u> . LCM 4053.	Exchanged.

NOTE: \*The craft borne in February 1945 returned to the United Kingdom with PRINCE HENRY, and were turned over to British authorities.

(Reference: PD and PH, Reports of Proceedings and Logs; (US) Division of Naval Intelligence, ONI 226--Allied Landing Craft and Ships (NHS 1250 Combined Operations); NSHQ's 232214z October 1945 (NSS 8000-412/1, v. 1); card in NHS 8000 Landing Craft General, v. 1; J. A. Flynn to Hon. G. R. Pearkes 19 August 1959 (NHS 8000 PH, v. 1); SCNOL to Naval Sec. 5 April 1944 (Ibid.); photos in NHS photo file PRINCE HENRY).

COMBINED OPERATIONS IN THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY  
1941-1944

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1. Large scale RCN participation in combined operations began in October, 1941, when the Royal Navy asked for Canadian help in manning landing craft. Ottawa responded in the affirmative. During the next two years about 830 officers and men of the RCNVR trained and fought in British combined operations. These personnel were provided as follows:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| A. Winter 1941-2<br>from Canada   | 340 officers and men for small craft |
| B. May-November 1942<br>from Canada   | 209 officers and men for small craft |
| C. 1942--from RCNVR<br>officers already on<br>loan to RN                          | 30 officers for small craft          |
| D. Winter 1942-3 from<br>Canada   | 250 diesel stokers for large craft   |
| E. June 1943<br>approved provision<br>of 342 more<br>personnel for small<br>craft | (342)*                               |

TOTAL AUTHORIZED: 1171 officers and men

A., B., & C. The groups designated A., B., and C. above were trained at HMS QUEBEC in Scotland. About 100 saw action at Dieppe in British flotillas. The first plan was that they would form the "1st to 6th Canadian Landing Craft Flotillas"; in October, 1942 they were instead organized as [not quite all-Canadian] Flotillas No. 55 and 61 (landing craft assault) and 80, 81, 88, and 92 (landing craft mechanized). These units participated in Operation "Torch". In the winter of 1942-3 the 88th and 92nd Flotillas were disbanded, and Canadians began generously to infiltrate into three new units--No. 166, 167 and 177.

Flotillas 55, 61, 80 and 81 became exclusively Canadian, and took part in the invasion of Sicily (Operation "Husky"). No. 80 Flotilla further worked for five weeks across the Strait of Messina in the invasion of mainland Italy. During 1942-3 there were many smaller-scale raids in which some of these Canadians saw action. Wastage in this group was about 16%--in January 1943, of 579 provided, 489 were available.

D. The 250 RCN diesel stokers loaned to the RN were distributed throughout British formations. They saw action mostly in the Mediterranean.

2. The combined operations plan for 1944 was finalized in the fall of the previous year. It was called for six brand new, all-Canadian units, namely:

3 flotillas of Landing Craft Infantry (Light)--ships would be tenders to HMCS NIOBE.

2 flotillas of Landing Craft Assault for HMC Ships PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY, then converting to Landing Ships Infantry (Medium).

1 RCN Beach Commando--to be administered by HMCS NIOBE.

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\*As the plan was changed soon after, it is unlikely that very many of these men proceeded overseas on this duty.

The personnel required were:

for the LCI(L)	858 officers and men
for the LCA	144 officers and men
for the Beach Commando	87 officers and men

TOTAL: 1089

The sources from which the 1089 personnel could be got were:

- personnel newly recruited to combined operations
- the Canadians who had served in British combined operations during 1942-3--see 1. above
- officers and men trained on the West Coast

3. In 1942, the Canadian Army and Navy together had set up a Combined Operations School in British Columbia. Training began in July 1942 at William Head and at Courtenay. By October 1943 all training had been concentrated at new facilities erected at Comox and commissioned in that month as HMCS GIVENCHY III. About 50 landing craft had been acquired; a few of these were kept, for operational purposes, at Nanaimo, Hardy Bay, Alberni and Prince Rupert, as well as Comox; and repair facilities had been acquired at Nanaimo. First the members of the Fishermen's Reserve, and then other sailors (besides Army personnel) were trained at GIVENCHY III. The minimum rate of naval training was sufficient to provide 190 replacements per year for the Canadians already serving in combined operations overseas.

4. Therefore trained officers and men from Canada were available, as well as the experienced RCN personnel from British combined operations, to man the new LCI(L) and LCA Flotillas described in 2. above. LCI(L) Flotillas No. 260 and 262 were manned chiefly by graduates of GIVENCHY III; LCI(L) Flotilla 264 and LCA Flotillas No. 528 (PRINCE HENRY) and 529 (PRINCE DAVID) received the experienced complements withdrawn from loan to the RN when the 55th, 61st, 80th and 81st Flotillas were broken up in the fall of 1943.

5. RCN Beach Commando "W" recruited personnel new to combined operations, and was trained in the United Kingdom for six months in 1944 before proceeding to Normandy in July. It was disbanded at the end of August, as were the three LCI (L) Flotillas.

6. June 1944 was thus the high point for RCN combined operations:

3 LCI(L) Flotillas had	30 craft	858 personnel
2 LCA Flotillas had	16 craft	144 personnel
Beach Commando had		87 personnel

Still on loan to the RN were:

in Landing Ships Tank	approximately	24 personnel
on books of HMS COPRA		163 personnel
on sea reconnaissance duties (Pilotage Parties)		22 personnel

TOTAL: 1298 officers and men

(Reference: NHS 1250 Combined Operations, vols. 1-4; NHS 1650-1 NA(PP) War Against Japan, v. 1; NHS 8000 Landing Craft General and Landing Craft Infantry General; NHS 8000-411 files: /55, /66, /80, /81, /260, /262, /264, and /528; NSS 1000-5-26 article "Combined Operations" December 1943).

ASSAULT GROUPS J-1 AND J-2 IN THE  
INVASION OF NORMANDY

Together, J-1 (HMCS PRINCE HENRY Senior Officer Landing Ships Infantry) and J-2 made up Force "J", which was one of five approximately equal assault forces on 6 June 1944. The sectors of the Normandy coast to be attacked were named, from west to east: UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO, SWORD; Force "J's" target was "Juno" sector, a stretch of beach about five miles long with the village of Courseulles in the middle. Three definite beach areas were established within "Juno" sector: from the west called LOVE, MIKE and NAN. Some of these were further divided into Green, White and Red zones (to right, centre and left viewed from seaward).

Senior Officer of Assault Group J-1 was in HMS LAWFORD, a frigate which became the first British warship lost in Operation "Neptune" when it was bombed on 8 June. This group's order of sailing on 5 June was:

HMS STEVENSTONE (destroyer)	Senior Officer Escort
HMS LAWFORD	S.O. J-1 Captain A. F. Pugsley, RN
PRINCE HENRY	S.O. Landing Ships Infantry J-1
	Captain V. S. Godfrey, RCN
HMS INVECTA	
SS ISLE OF THANET	
SS MECKLENBERG	
SS DUKE OF ARGYLL	
Fighting French Ship LA COMBATTANTE (destroyer, escort)	
HMS QUEEN EMMA	
HMS ULSTER MONARCH	
SS CANTERBURY	
SS LAIRD'S ISLE	
SS LLANGIBBY CASTLE	
HMS VENUS (destroyer, escort)	

Three Motor Gun Boats (#'s 312, 316 and 324) and one "Coast Guard cutter" completed Group J-1.

Group J-2 was of similar composition, but had eight Landing Ships Infantry instead of ten. Its order of sailing to the assault was:

HMS BLEASDALE (destroyer)	Senior Officer Escort
HMS WAVENEY ("River" Class frigate)	Senior Officer Assault Group J-2
	Captain R. J. O. Otway-Ruthven, RN
HMC BRIGADIER (Landing Ship Infantry Small)	Senior Officer Landing
	Ships Infantry Group J-2 Commander H. J. R. Paramore, RN
SS CLAN LAMONT	
HMS ST. HELIER	
SS LADY OF MANN	
HMS GLAISDALE (destroyer, escort)	
HMS DUKE OF WELLINGTON	
SS MONWAI	
SS ISLE OF GUERNSEY	
PRINCE DAVID	
HMS KEMPENFELT (destroyer, escort)	

Also in company were three motor launches and two United States Coast Guard rescue craft.

Group J-1 was to assault over Mike Green and Red and Nan Green beaches (scheduled H-hour 0735); J-2 over Nan White and Nan Red (0745). These H-hours were postponed ten minutes because of navigational errors made in the crossing. The assault in PRINCE DAVID's sector was the latest one of D-day, occurring  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours after the first attacks in the American sectors (OMAHA and UTAH) 15-30 miles to the westward. Both Assault Groups carried mainly Canadian troops

to Normandy. J-1 had the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier H. W. Foster, CBE, DSO, Canadian Army (Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Regina Rifle Regiment and the Canadian Scottish Regiment); J-2 brought over the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier R. G. Blackadar, CBE, DSO, MC, Canadian Army (Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, North Shore New Brunswick Regiment, and le Régiment de la Chaudière). From each brigade, the Canadian Landing Ships carried chiefly units of the last named battalions, which were not involved in the initial assaults, but landed in reserve 45 minutes later.

(Reference: RCN List, July 1944; RN List, June 1944; Battle Summary No. 39; HMCS PRINCE DAVID and PRINCE HENRY, Reports of Proceedings; NHS, Narrative B, Master copy, v. I, p. 87; Stacey, The Canadian Army, pp. 176-80; Godfrey, "Neptune" (CS 155-5-3); The War at Sea (preliminary narrative), v. V, para. 2070; Jane's Fighting Ships 1943-4 and 1944-5.)

TROOPS TRANSPORTED BY HMC SHIPS PRINCE DAVID  
AND PRINCE HENRY, 1944-1945

PRINCE DAVID:

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>UNITS</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>DATES</u>
437	U. S. Army	New York	Clyde	18-28 January 1944
418	Canadian Army	Southampton	Normandy	3-6 June 1944
470	British Army	Southampton	Normandy	17-8 June 1944
500	U. S. Army	Southampton	Normandy	4-5 July 1944
474	British Army	Southampton	Normandy	9-10 July 1944

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TOTAL NO. OF TROOPS CARRIED TO NORMANDY - 1862

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248	Free French	Agropoli via Propriano to Cap Negre		11-14 August 1944
500 (estimated)	Free French	Ajaccio	Cavalaire Bay	17-18 August 1944
700	Free French	Ajaccio	Cavalaire Bay	19-21 August 1944

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TOTAL TROOPS CARRIED TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE - 1448

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530	British Army	Taranto	St. Nikolo	13-15 September 1944
384	various	Taranto	Piraeus	13-17 October 1944
422	Greek Army	Piraeus	Syros	11-12 November 1944
181	Greek Army	Piraeus	Preveza	20-25 November 1944
276	Greek Army	Piraeus	Preveza	28-30 November 1944
114	Greek Police	Patras	Piraeus	1-4 December 1944
412	Italian POW's	Piraeus	Taranto	4-6 December 1944
311	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	7-12 December 1944
177	British Army	Malta	Bizerta	17-18 December 1944
390	British Army	Piraeus	Taranto	19-21 January 1945
99	Royal Navy	Augusta	Malta	29-31 January 1945

PRINCE HENRY:

362	Canadian Army	Southampton	Normandy	2-6 June 1944
646	British Army	Southampton	Normandy	9-10 June 1944
654	United States Army	Portland	Normandy	27-28 June 1944
581	United States Army	Portland	Normandy	4-5 July 1944

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>UNITS</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>DATES</u>
785	British Army	Portland	Normandy	8-9 July 1944
676	United States Army	Portland	Normandy	15-16 July 1944
TOTAL NO. OF TROOPS CARRIED TO NORMANDY - 3704				
279	First (American-Canadian) Special Service Force	Castellabate via Propriano to Isle Levant		11-14 August 1944
364	Free French	Ajaccio	Cavalaire Bay	17-18 August 1944
850	Free French	Ajaccio	Cavalaire Bay	20-21 August 1944
TOTAL NO. OF TROOPS CARRIED TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE - 1493				
557	New Zealand Army	Bari	Ancona	9-10 October 1944
408	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	13-17 October 1944
241	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	23-26 October 1944
222	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	1-3 November 1944
381	British Army	Piraeus	Salonika	4-8 November 1944
335	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	5-9 December 1944
1100	Greek civilians	Preveza	Corfu	26 December 1944
1700	Greek civilians and EDES	Preveza	Corfu	27-28 December 1944
873	EDES	Preveza	Corfu	29-30 December 1944
592	Italian Prisoners of War	Preveza via Corfu	Taranto	29-31 December 1944
267	New Zealand Army	Taranto	Alexandria	1-5 January 1945
280	British Army	Taranto	Piraeus	24-26 February 1945
376	British Army	Piraeus	Salonika	27 February to 1 March 1945
206	British Army	Salonika	Volos	1-2 March 1945
203	Greek hostages	Volos	Piraeus	2-4 March 1945
162	British Army	Piraeus	Taranto	5-7 March 1945
38	British Army	Taranto	Malta	9-10 March 1945
278	Royal Navy	Malta	Gibraltar	10-18 March 1945
343	British Army	Gibraltar	Sheerness	18-27 March 1945

TOTALS:

Carried to Normandy - 5566  
Carried to the South of France - 2,941  
Carried for the Liberation of Greece  
and the Greek civil war - 10,089

PRINCE DAVID - 7,043 officers and men lifted  
in 19 journeys--an average of  
370 per voyage.

PRINCE HENRY - 13,759 officers and men lifted in  
28 journeys--an average of 491 per  
voyage.

Both Landing Ships - 20,802 passengers on 47  
journeys--an average of  
443 per voyage.

(Reference: PD and PH, Reports of Proceedings).

"SITKA" ASSAULT FORCE IN OPERATION "DRAGOON"

The landings in the South of France took place at 0800 15 August, 1944, along a thirty-mile stretch of shore between Cap Negre and Theoule (25 to 55 miles east of Toulon). Three assault areas were designated: ALPHA, DELTA, and CAMEL west to east. In each area, a force of about two dozen Landing Ships and several flotillas of major landing craft, plentifully covered by support forces, launched American troops across the beaches.

The two Canadian ships were not involved in this the principal phase of the invasion. They belonged to a fourth Assault Force called "Sitka" (Task Force 86, Rear-Admiral Davidson, USN), the job of which was to prepare the way prior to the main assault. Sailing from Propriano on 14 August, "Sitka" was thus organized in three task units:

<u>TASK UNIT</u>	<u>COMPRISED OF</u>
86.3.1 "Able"  Task--to land 700 ranks of the Special Service Force to seize guns on Ile de Port Cros.	USS TATTNALL (CTU 86.3.1 Commander Hughes, USN) HMS PRINCE BAUDOIN 1 PT-boat
86.3.2 "Baker"  Task--to land 1400 Special Service personnel to seize guns on Ile de Levant.	PRINCE HENRY (CTU 86.3.2 Captain G. E. Maynard, USN; also embarked was the Flag Officer of all the troop-carriers in all three units of "Sitka", CTF 86.3 Rear-Admiral T. E. Chandler, USN) USS BARRY USS GREENE USS OSMOND INGRAM USS ROPER 4 PT-boats
86.3.3 "Romeo"  Tasks--to land 825 of the 1st Groupe de Commandos to 1. seize the guns on Cap Negre; 2. cut the highway behind Rayol beach	PRINCE DAVID (CTU 86.3.3 Captain S. H. Norris, DSO, DSC, RN) HMS PRINCESS BEATRIX HMS PRINS ALBERT 5 PT-boats

As escort, US Ships GLEAVES and SOMERS, and His Hellenic Majesty's Ship THEMISTOCLES (destroyers) sailed with them from Propriano. Close off-shore France, rendezvous was made with 4 US Air/Sea Rescue boats, about 6 more PT-boats, HMS LOOKOUT (destroyer), and the two cruisers allocated for heavy support if necessary--HMS DIDO (ten 5.25-inch guns) and USS AUGUSTA (nine 8-inch guns).

(Reference: PD and PH, Reports of Proceedings; ES 43; narrative "The Canadian LSI's in the Mediterranean" (NHS 8000, PD, v. 1); Bulkley, pp. 322-7)

THE ROLE OF THE FREE FRENCH 1ST GROUPE DE COMMANDOS  
IN THE "DRAGOON" ASSAULT

"Dragoon" was a neater invasion plan than "Neptune" in this respect, that operations were staged preliminary to the main landings for the purpose of isolating the beachhead from enemy reinforcements during the all-important first hours of D-day. The roads from the west, north and east, leading into the area which the Allies had chosen for their attack, were to be seized and blocked.

At 0430 and 1015 15 August paratroops of the First (US/UK) Airborne Task Force were dropped about five miles inland to secure communications leading south from the interior. The other precautionary moves were entrusted to the 1st Groupe de Commandos, who, on both flanks of the beachhead, cut the coastal road leading into it from east and west.

One detachment landed at Cap Negre to guard against German movement eastward from Toulon. As it was the ships of "Sitka"--Romeo section--PRINCE DAVID, PRINCESS BEATRIX and PRINS ALBERT--that carried them, this operation is described in the text.

The eastern segment of French Commandos deserves special mention here, however, because its part in the attack is in danger of being lost sight of, and sometimes has been. Only seventy troops were involved; they did not land from any of the regular assault units, and histories of the battles subsequent to the South of France lodgment slight their contribution from want of information. As distinguished a student as Rear-Admiral Morison, USNR, for example, was in some doubt about them. In 1956 he wrote to the Canadian Army Historical Section:

"At another point on the coast I saw a tablet that the French had erected to Capitaine de corvette Marche, Enseigne de Vaisseau Sernel and nine other members of the naval assault group of Corsica who landed on the night of 14-15 August 1944. Do you happen to know whether this was the crowd in the PRINCESS BEATRICE or another gang? The location of this tablet is at a point on the coast called Theoule Superieure, some distance from Cap Negre."<sup>1</sup>

The troops in HMS PRINCESS BEATRIX landed at Cap Negre to watch the road from the west. Capitaine Marche and the others commemorated were apparently members of the other French commando group, that landed at Deux Freres Point just south of Theoule. This is over 25 miles (as the crow flies) along the coast Northeast of Cap Negre. Some of the eastern unit's story can be pieced together from the Admiralty Historical Section's Battle Summary No. 43--Invasion of the South of France. These French commandos were carried to the assault in 4 PT-boats attached to the Eastern Section of a "Special Naval Operations Group" whose task was to make a feint to the east of the intended beachhead. This section comprised in all twenty vessels--HM Ships APHIS and SCARAB (gunboats), ANIWERP and STUART PRINCE (Landing Ships), 4 Motor Launches and 12 PT-boats. It sailed from Ajaccio and Bastia (Corsica). The commandos in the 4 PT-boats detached about 2200 14 August, and landed in their homeland ten minutes after midnight on D-day, the first Allies ashore in "Dragoon" by over an hour. Of their subsequent operations on shore,

". . . no information is available . . . but presumably they were successful since no counter-attacks developed on D-day from the direction of Cannes."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter Lt.-Col. Nicholson to E. C. Russell, 2 February, 1956. (NHS 8000 PD, v. 1).

<sup>2</sup> BS 43, p. 25. See also pp. 10, 28-30; and Bulkley, pp. 324-7.

LANDING CRAFT FERRIED BY HMCS PRINCE HENRY,  
OCTOBER & NOVEMBER, 1944

<u>NO. OF CRAFT</u>	<u>FLOTILLA</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>DATE</u>
8	No. 563	Messina	Ancona	3-5 October 1944
8	No. 561	Ancona	Messina	5-7
4	No. 563	Messina	Ancona	7-10
4	No. 562	Messina	Bari	7-8
4	No. 564	Bari	Taranto	8-12
4	No. 561	Ancona	Sarande	10-11
7	No. 564	Brindisi	Messina	25-26 November 1944

(Reference: PH, Reports of Proceedings)

THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (DECEMBER 1944/JANUARY 1945)  
AND ITS BACKGROUND

The three crucial issues in 1944 Greek politics, in their probable order of importance, were:

1. the constitutional question--should the country be a monarchy or a republic?
2. the patriotic question--who had been most active in resisting the German occupation, and thus deserved to have the leadership of post-war Greece? Most forward claimants were the Communist-controlled organizations EAM (National Liberation Front) and ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army). But they were so prominent partly because they had forcibly contained or crushed other resistance groups that began to spring up during the occupation. The biggest example of a maquis force which had also harassed the Germans, and survived ELAS' sideways war, was General Napoleon Zervas' National Republican Greek League (EDES).
3. the ideological question--should the basic structure of government be--democratic capitalism,  
--fascist dictatorship, or  
--totalitarian communism?

Following the liberation, the principal armed powers in Greece were:

1. Communists. ELAS was their army. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) had also organized a gestapo (OPLA), a militia (EP), and the National Popular Liberation Navy (ELAN), a  
". . . minor appendage of ELAS . . . which ran a small but efficient service of armed caiques, chiefly in the Gulf of Corinth".<sup>1</sup>
2. Other resistance groups, such as EDES described above, and many others.
3. Britain, which had introduced a two-brigade occupation force in Operation "Manna".
4. And, weakest of all, the government. Just returned from exile, its elements of coercion were few: the Athens police, the Royal Hellenic Navy (about 7000 personnel), and the Sacred Squadron; EDES would also help enforce its orders. When the Rimini Brigade was brought over from Italy, and the Government began to disarm ELAS, the civil war began.

Greek elements which rallied to help oppose ELAS' left-wing coup d'etat were basically:

- monarchists, or
- ideological anti-communists, or
- patriots who feared a Greek Communist government would be Russian-dominated, and over-disposed to abandon traditional claims of Greek nationalism in favour of Balkan compromise, or
- believers in legitimacy and democracy.

The chief armed opposition to ELAS, however, came from British forces, which were bolstered up by the 4th British Division. Why did the United Kingdom interfere in Greek politics? The reasons seem to be:

- humanitarian. Famine conditions in Greece cried out for relief programs, which needed stability, law and order to be effectively carried out.

--moral obligation. Britain was a traditional friend of Greece: Greece had been a staunch ally against Hitler; and both the resistance (including ELAS) and the exiled Greek government had during the war pretty well obeyed British directions.

--democratic and constitutional. As Churchill explained to the British House of Commons:

"The last thing which resembles democracy is mob law, with bands of gangsters, armed with deadly weapons, forcing their way into great cities, seizing the police stations and key points of government, endeavouring to introduce a totalitarian regime with an iron hand, and clamouring, . . . to shoot everyone who is politically inconvenient as part of a purge of those who do not agree with them . . . Democracy is no harlot to be picked up in the street by a man with a tommy gun . . . We shall persist in this policy of clearing Athens and the Athens region of all who are rebels against the authority of the constitutional government of Greece."<sup>2</sup>

--self-interest. Churchill and Stalin had reached an agreement on spheres of interest in October, Greece for Britain in return for a free hand for the Russians in Rumania.<sup>3</sup>

True to her word, Russia did not balk at British intervention in the Greek civil war. The United States did, publicly stating on 5 December,

". . . we expect the Italians to work out their problems of government along democratic lines without influence from outside. This policy would apply to an even more pronounced degree with regard to governments of United Nations in their liberated territories."<sup>4</sup>

Canada too, had some qualms about the propriety of crushing the ELAS rebellion, all the while her ships were helping to do it. The Canadian Prime Minister several times asked Churchill for explanations, but in deference to the British leader's "facts, arguments and appeals, Mr. Mackenzie King refrained from any public act of dissociation"<sup>5</sup> from British policy. When questioned in the House of Commons on 6 December, 1944, as to whether Canada supported Britain's intervention in Greek politics, he answered, "There have certainly been no Canadian troops in Greece," and "The government has no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of liberated countries where that can possibly be avoided."<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of December, 1944, ELAS refused to disarm and began to extend the control they held widely throughout the country into the capital of Athens. The British commander there ordered them out, and when they persisted in attacking and overrunning the police stations, by 5 December he had committed all his men, British and Greek, against them. He explained at a press conference

". . . the grounds which justified his intervention; that an attempt was being made to achieve a political object by armed force, and that ELAS and EP were technically mutinous troops."<sup>7</sup>

(ELAS had, in July--the Caeserta agreement--placed itself under British operational command).<sup>8</sup>

From the first shooting on 3 December, the civil war lasted for six weeks. The rebels almost gained a quick decision. By 8 December they had compressed and surrounded the British and loyal Greek troops in both Athens and Piraeus. Then reinforcements arrived from Italy, and while the Army regained some ground in the capital, naval units fought their way up from the shore, block by block. The Athens-Piraeus road was open by the 18th. ELAS began to dicker for an armistice. General Scobie insisted on controlling and disbanding all private armies, which the rebels refused. Meanwhile the British and the Government kept winning the war.

At Christmas time Churchill resolved a political problem, when he arrived in Athens and called leaders of every faction together with the Archbishop. By 30 December he had returned to London, and the King of the Hellenes had been persuaded to make the Archbishop his Regent for the time being. On 4 January, 1945, General Plastiras, a "vehement republican" was made Prime Minister. These events are important because perhaps among EAM/ELAS, and certainly in many segments of the population, the opinion was strong that Papandreou's government and the British were intent on a monarchist dictatorship for Greece, and had brought the Rimini Brigade over from Italy to enforce it on the country without fair elections. The Regency exercised this plaint; public opinion in Greece had probably leaned towards Britain all along; it now inclined even more favourably--a tendency strengthened by revelations of ELAS atrocities. On 11 January the rebels signed a truce:

- no private armies, of the Right or the Left, would be legitimized
- ELAS would withdraw from the cities
- and give up certain stocks of weapons
- and exchange prisoners
- but could keep civilian hostages it had seized.

The armistice took effect on 15 January, ending the civil war. ". . . The spasms of Greece may seem pretty, but nevertheless they stood at the nerve-centre of power, law and freedom in the Western world."<sup>9</sup> This affair was the first instance of a Western country strongly resisting the spread of communism during the post-Second World War era. The United States was opposed at the time; but has, since the Truman Doctrine (1947), erected this policy of containment into a rule for all the world.

(Reference: Canada. House of Commons and Senate Debates 1944-5; SO(I) Greece Memos "Composition of KKE . . . etc." and "Summary of Events" (NHS 8000 PH 0-7); Churchill V, Book II, Chapter 13, and VI, Book I, Chapters 18 and 19; Leeper; Woodhouse).

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1. Woodhouse, p. 64.

2. Churchill VI, pp. 294-5.

3. Ibid., pp. 227-35.

4. Ibid., pp. 296-7.

5. Ibid., pp. 304-5.

6. Canada. House of Commons Debates (1944), VI, p. 6844.

7. Woodhouse, p. 218.

8. Churchill VI, pp. 285-6, 305.

9. Ibid., p. 325.

COMMISSIONS AND COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE "PRINCE"  
SHIPS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

## HMCS PRINCE DAVID:

Commissioned	28 December 1940	28 December 1940 to 25 March 1941	Commander W. B. Armit, RCNR
		25 March 1941 to 2 December 1941	Commander K. F. Adams, RCN
		2 December 1941 to 19 March 1942	Captain V. S. Godfrey, RCN
		19 March 1942 to 17 April 1942	Lieutenant-Commander T. D. Kelly, RCNR
		17 April 1942 to 18 April 1943	Captain V. S. Godfrey, RCN
		18 April 1943 to 1 May 1943	Commander T. D. Kelly, RCNR
Paid off	1 May 1943		
Commissioned	20 December 1943	20 December 1943 to 14 May 1945	Commander T. D. Kelly, RCNR
		14 May 1945 to 11 June 1945	Lieutenant-Commander C. A. McDonald, RCNVR
Paid off	11 June 1945		

(Reference: PD, Reports of Proceedings;  
Schull, p. 475; 0-48590 McDonald).

HMCS PRINCE HENRY:

Commissioned	4 December 1940	4 December 1940 to 2 December 1941	Captain R. I. Agnew, RCN
		2 December 1941 to 1 January 1943	Captain J. C. I. Edwards, RCN
		1 January 1943 to 21 March 1943	Captain F. L. Houghton, RCN
		21 March 1943 to 23 March 1943	Lieutenant-Commander E. W. Finch- Noyes, RCN
		23 March 1943 to 30 April 1943	Lieutenant-Commander T. K. Young, RCNR
Paid off	30 April 1943		
Commissioned	4 January 1944	4 January 1944 to 15 April 1945	Captain V. S. Godfrey, RCN
Paid off (loaned to the Royal Navy)	15 April 1945		

(She was in commission again, as HMS PRINCE HENRY, from about July 1945 to about July 1946. The Commanding Officers during this period were:

July 1945 to 8 February 1946	Captain J. O. Davies, RNR
8 February 1946 to July 1946	Commander R. B. Stannard, VC, RNR

(Reference: PH, Reports of Proceedings;  
RCN and RN Lists; NSS 8000-412/1, v. 2;  
0-80560 Young; ships index on NSS 19-4-2;  
RCNMR 16, p. 70; Memo Naval Sec. to COAC  
8 July 1940 (NSS 1400-412/1, v. 1).

HMCS PRINCE ROBERT:

Commissioned	31 July 1940	31 July 1940 to 8 October 1940	Commander C. T. Beard, RCN
		8 October 1940 to 21 June 1942	Commander F. G. Hart, RCN
		22 June 1942 to 30 December 1942	Captain F. L. Houghton, RCN
		31 December 1942 to 6 January 1943	Commander O. C. S. Robertson, RCN
Paid off	6 January 1943		
Commissioned	7 June 1943	7 June 1943 to 7 December 1944	Captain A. M. Hope, RCN
		8 December 1944 to 18 December 1944	Captain W. B. Creery, RCN
Paid off	18 December 1944		
Commissioned	4 June 1945	4 June 1945 to 28 October 1945	Captain W. B. Creery, RCN
		28 October 1945 to 10 December 1945	Commander L. L. Atwood, RCNVR
Paid off	10 December 1945		

(Reference: PR, Reports of Proceedings;  
Schull, p. 475; NSC 0-3340 Atwood;  
NHS 4000-100/14 Personnel "A" to "F"  
(Beard) and "G" to "M" (Hart).)