6
Mourning Observances

Down through the centuries of human history, there have been many customs related to death and mourning, partly owing to religious belief and partly because of the prevalence of superstition. There is little doubt that much of the concern for the departed was, and still is, related to the sheer mystery of life and death. A few of the customs connected with grief and mourning are still to be seen in both civilian and military life today, and one of these is the use of black fabric as a symbol of mourning.

The sombreness of black has long been linked with subdued sound as, for example, in the use of black shrouds to muffle the drums of the funeral procession, or the muffling of oars when the bier is being moved by barge.

An example of the muffling of drums more than two centuries ago is to be seen in an order relating to the death of Princess Elizabeth in England in 1759: "The Baize to cover the drums and the Crapes for the Officers' Sashes will be delivered out of the Great Wardrobe in Scotland Yard."[1]

Today, the drum is muffled by encasing it in a piece of black fabric having a draw-string, thus damping the sound. Muffled oars, in the funeral context, are seldom seen now, but when this kind of ceremonial procession is carried out, as in the case of some famous seaman, black canvas or matting is wrapped round the loom of the oars. This muffles the creaking sound of oars against thole-pins or rowlocks in precisely the same way as a sailor's jersey did when cutting out a ship from under an enemy shore battery, or, nowadays, when rowing guard in harbour on a dark night.

Though the wearing of the black crepe armband has largely disappeared from civilian life, this old custom of indicating grief and bereavement, or simply as a mark of respect, is still very much alive in the military. By regulation, a mourning band is worn on the left arm when court mourning or Service

mourning is directed. It may also be worn in the event of personal bereavement.[2] This custom goes back a long way.

In 1767, King George III decreed, upon the death of the Duke of York and Albany, "Officers of the Army should not wear any other Mourning on the present melancholy occasion than a black Crape round their Left Arms, with their Uniforms."[3]

A typical reaction of a ship's company losing their highly respected captain occurred in HMS *Berwick*, seventy-four guns, near the close of the eighteenth century: " . . . they divided their black silk handkerchiefs, and wore one part round their hats and the other round their arms . . . ; and they walked through the cabin in ranks and bowed to the coffin while passing, and most of them in tears . . . "[4]

Late in 1805, after Trafalgar, a seaman of HMS *Victory* wrote: "There is three hundred of us Pickt out to go to Lord Nelson [*sic*] Funeral. We are to wear blue Jackets white Trowsers and black scarf round our arms and hats. . . . "[5]

Customs relating to death and mourning remind us of the variety of symbolism practised and understood by our ancestors. One such theme appealed to the superstitious, the idea that at certain times, particularly during periods of grief, men's hearts become defenceless against evil. In many ancient churches, special doors were left open so that when the Host was brought in the front door, the devil was encouraged to scuttle out the back. Some scholars see this idea in the firing of the three volleys over the grave — to frighten the ever-encroaching devils away.[6] Fortescue has traced this custom of prayers said over the departed and the three volleys fired in the name of the Holy Trinity back to the companies of German mercenaries of the sixteenth century.[7] Today, of course, the three volleys are simply a farewell salute to one's comrade-in-arms.

Some idea of the antiquity of firing over the grave may be gathered from an account of the burial of Sir Peter Carewe in 1575 in the days of the first Elizabeth:

> . . . the drummes strake upe, and theirwith all the soldyers dyschardged ther peeces 4 or fyve tymes together, wherewith the Churche was soe full of smoke that one coulde scarse discirne another. Lastlye, a nomber of chambers, wch were in the church yearde, and all the greate ordynaunces in the towne, and yn the shippes in the ryver, and at the keye, were also dischardged.[8]

Regrettably, this ancient military rite recently fell victim to the levelling effect of the unification of the Forces (1968), inasmuch as the Royal Canadian

Air Force had dropped this bit of ceremonial back in 1960.[9] However, at time of writing, the decision has been taken to reinstate the use of funeral firing parties.

Another recurring theme of mourning is slovenliness, a feeling of not caring, brought about by a sense of distress and "a sinking of the heart," perhaps best conveyed in the French *je suis désolé.* Today, when some nationally recognized figure dies, the national flag atop the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill is half-masted as a mark of respect and national mourning. This custom comes from the sea practice of half-masting the ensign. But, as every sailor knows, to have a halyard not hoisted close-up is a mark of sloppy seamanship,[10] a sin almost as reprehensible as leaving loose rope-ends trailing over the side. The custom of half-masting the colours is said to date from the sixteenth century.[11]

There is an interesting reference to half-masting the flag in the mid-eighteenth century. In November 1759, HMS *Royal William* brought the body of Wolfe from Quebec to Portsmouth and, upon anchoring, two guns were fired to signal the removal of his remains. "At nine the body was landed and put into a hearse, attended by a mourning coach, and proceeded through the garrison. The colours on the forts struck half flag-staff, the bells muffled, rung in solemn concert with the march, minute guns were fired. . . ."[12]

This particular example of mourning custom related to slovenly seamanship is not unlike the one practised in the days of sail. In harbour, with all sail off the ship, it was normal practice, indeed mandatory, that all the yards must be properly squared off, the yards being the spars suspended from the masts and on which the sails are set. They must be at right angles to the masts and at right angles to the fore-and-aft line of the ship. No self-respecting seaman would have it otherwise. Yet the mark of a ship in mourning was to "scandalize" her yards, that is, yards topped to starboard and to port, said to be "set aslant" or yards "a-cock-bill," in the most unseamanlike fashion.[13]

This same theme of neglect, albeit a studied neglect, may be seen in the idea of things being in reverse to what they should be. To visit Langemarck in Belgium is to see, in a setting of the traditional cypress and crimson roses, a massive, brooding figure in stone, a steel-helmeted Canadian soldier of the Great War, his head bowed in sorrow, his hands resting "on arms reversed" — the St. Julien Memorial. Or take the funeral of General Sir Arthur Currie, commander of the Canadian corps in the Great War, who died in Montreal in 1933. In the cortège were two cavalry detachments, three university contingents and four infantry regiments, "all with arms reversed." "Immediately behind the gun-carriage is the general's charger, with boots reversed in the stirrups, and the empty sword-scabbard hanging from an empty saddle."[14]

Consider the last respects paid in 1929 to Sir William Otter, veteran of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada at Ridgeway (1866), commander of the Battleford Column in the North-west Rebellion (1885), and acclaimed Canada's first native-born general. The casket was borne on a gun carriage, "the led riderless horse with the jackboots reversed in the stirrups . . . ; the firing party with arms reversed; the detachments from every unit in the city; and, over all, the slow measured tread to the "Dead March from Saul" played with muffled drums."[15]

Such scenes had changed little from a ceremony conducted on the western prairie nearly a century ago. The officer commanding the Midland Battalion in the North-west campaign, a Lieutenant-Colonel Archer Williams, succumbed on board the steamer *Northwest*, and the funeral service was held at Battleford, truly an impressive sight:

> The plain board coffin, wrapped in the folds of the old flag under whose shadow he had fought so honorably and well was lifted on a gun carriage, behind which a soldier led his riderless horse. His own fine regiment, now going home without a leader, followed as chief mourners, with arms reversed, and the cortège numbered fully fifteen hundred armed men. Brass bands were there with muffled drums, and the wild lonely upland echoed the wail of the "Dead March in Saul," as slowly and sadly we conducted the gallant dead to the once beleaguered fort. . . . [16]

Fortescue states that the drill of "resting on arms reversed" dates from the funeral of the Duke of Marlborough who died in 1722.[17] However, the idea of neglect of arms as a mourning observance comes down from a much earlier time, as the following account confirms. Sir Philip Sidney died at Arnhem in 1586, just two years before the famous fight with the Spanish Armada. His body was embalmed and preparations were made for moving the remains to England:

> . . . it was conveyed to the water's edge, followed by twelve hundred of the English soldiers, walking three abreast and trailing their swords and muskets in the dust. . . . As they marched, solemn music was performed. Rounds of small shot were thrice fired by all the men present, and from the great ordnance on the walls, two volleys were discharged as the corpse was taken from the shore.

Later, in London, in the state funeral,

> A hundred and twenty unarmed citizens were in attendance, and about 300 citizens trained for war, all holding their weapons reversed . . . , the body was interred under the Lady Chapel [in old St. Paul's] . . . , and a double volley of shot from the churchyard informed the world outside that Sir Philip Sidney had been buried.[18]

To this day, at regimental dinners of le 12e Régiment Blindé du Canada, at Trois Rivières, a special table is always set in front of the head table, and the place settings of crystal, china and cutlery are laid in reverse. In this way, the regiment honours its dead.[19]

When a sailor, soldier or airman dies, the coffin, during the funeral service, is covered or draped with the national flag or the Canadian Forces ensign, in token that he died in his country's service. This very old custom is particularly appropriate for a burial at sea. In the absence of a casket, the deceased is sewn into a canvas hammock with weights at his feet to facilitate rapid sinking. The draped ensign helps to obscure the form of the corpse, for the flag is held fast to the ship's rail when the body is reverently slipped from beneath the ensign over the side, "plunging with a splash to its last resting place 'full many a fathom deep.'"[20]

Finally, in military customs related to funerals, there is the recurring theme of the Light after the Darkness, choose life, not death. Remember the past, but march with spirit and faith into the future, for tomorrow is a new day. This ancient theme is seen in the traditional opening words of the funeral service: "I am the resurrection and the life . . . . "

This idea is seen also in the movements of the funeral escort and the accompanying band music. In the approach to the graveyard all is governed by the solemnity and measured pace of the traditional funeral march, "The Slow March from Saul."[21] But once the burial service is over, the escort is clear of the graveyard, and the shrouds have been removed from the drums, the funeral party, at a sharp word of command, breaks into the quick-march and the band strikes up a regimental march, or in the case of the navy, the stirring notes of "Heart of Oak," beginning "Come, cheer up, my lads . . . . "[22]

This dramatic switch from the slow to the quick is of ancient origin. In 1675, a boatswain of HMS *Assistance* was buried ashore "like a souldyer." The well known diarist, the Reverend Henry Teonge, recorded on this occasion: "and as soone as wee were out of the church yard the trumpetts sounded merry levitts [musical strain or call to rouse soldiers in the morning] all the way."[23]

First post and last post were, until recent years, the last two trumpet or bugle calls to be heard in a military camp or barracks at the close of the day. They had to do with the posting of guards or sentries, the setting of the watch for the night. Today, last post is heard almost exclusively in the funeral service and in Remembrance Day observances from coast to coast. It is not difficult to see the symbolism involved. One does not soon forget the thoughtful impression made on the mind by the pause near the end of last post, followed by the great welling up of that final high E and its eventual drifting away on the night air. In the funeral service, last post is followed by reveille, which is

One of HMC ships preparing to leave harbour for a burial at sea, October, 1966. (Note the rifles of the sentries are in the reverse position and the ship's ensign is at half-staff.)

consistent with the ageless theme of the new day; life must go on; there is duty to be done.

Today, in the Canadian Forces, there is a regulation which has a bearing on uniform dress early in the month of November. It reads in part: "The Remembrance Day Poppy . . . shall be worn . . . on the left side of the headdress . . . "[24] Although associated with the tragedy of war by generations of Europeans, the wearing of the poppy in Canada dates from the years closely following the Armistice of 1918.

There is much conjecture about how this scarlet emblem came originally to be associated with the remembrance of war dead. Certainly in the Low Countries of Europe, which have known the clash of arms for countless centuries, the poppy grows in great profusion in the grain fields, and is considered a weed.

However, there is no doubt about how the red poppy became for Canadians, indeed for the whole allied cause, the symbol for sacrifice, for remembrance, and for the prayerful hope that man would somehow, someday, eliminate the horror that is war. It was fifteen lines of verse written in a dug-out in the trenches not far from battle-torn Ypres in Belgium, in 1915. "In Flanders Fields" was the quiet, thoughtful outpouring of the heart of a courageous, compassionate medical officer of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, of Guelph, Ontario. These are the words, so familiar to so many for nearly sixty years:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae[25]

7
Some Service Customs

Banyan

An example of the custom that continues to evolve or change over the years is the banyan, a special kind of party peculiar to the navy. In spite of the changing nature of the banyan party, there are three constants: it is always a fun occasion, it is held outdoors, and the emphasis is on good food, good drink and good fellowship — something along the lines of the old-fashioned picnic.

Banyan in the navy originally meant a meatless, and therefore an unpopular, day. As a sea term, it dates from the seventeenth century. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays were banyan days designed to conserve the supply of kegs of "salt-horse," that is, salted-down beef, during sea passages which often took many months. The staple on banyan days was a kind of porridge made from dried peas.

The term is derived from the Banians, a caste of Hindus in India, who abstained from the use of meat on religious grounds, a reverence for life.

While this practice continued well into the nineteenth century, flag officers were not above changing the rules when the operational situation warranted. Vice-Admiral Sir Alan Gardner, writing to the Admiralty from his flagship HMS *Queen* in 1794, informed their Lordships:

> . . . when the British fleet was in sight of the Enemy . . . I ordered the Company of His Majesty's Ship the *Queen* to be supplied with an allowance of Pork for their dinner, it being a Banyan day; and finding them exceedingly fatigued after the actions of the 29 May and 1st June, I directed them to be served with half an allowance of wine more than their daily portion. . . .

He closed with the request that the ship's purser be compensated for this extra expense![1]

Banyan days gradually changed from meagre or lean days to much more pleasant ones. For one thing, especially in private ships or detached squadrons on lengthy voyages, fishing from the ship's side was encouraged, and this diversion from ship's routine was much enjoyed. Also, seamen became adept at stowing away palatable foodstuffs of the more tasty kind acquired during "runs" ashore or by barter from bumboat proprietors in harbour. These "goodies" would be brought out in the various messes to tide over otherwise drab meals.

Also, captains came to understand that picnics ashore, particularly on an isolated beach far from civilization where desertion would likely not be attempted, were good for ship's morale. Perhaps one such occasion was in 1850 when HMS *Thetis*, a beautiful sailing frigate of thirty-eight guns was on passage from Valparaiso to her station at Esquimalt. Moresby tells of a picnic ashore on the coast of Chile when, "after a glorious supper of fish, grog, songs and bonfire, we started at a late hour to return [to the ship], and found we had mislaid the boatswain!"[2]

The idea of parties ashore in rather isolated locations continued, particularly in training squadrons, well into the 1950s. After a week of strenuous training exercises, watch and watch about, day and night, frigates such as HMC ships *Beacon Hill* and *Antigonish* would send all but the watch ashore in Bedwell Harbour or near Port Hardy in British Columbia waters, for a banyan of beer and hamburgers. In such places there were no distractions and sailors under training were not likely to get into any mischief!

In 1971 when Her Majesty the Queen was in British Columbia waters in HM Yacht *Britannia*, the royal family, on passage from Powell River to Comox, put ashore in Stag Bay for a quiet picnic. This allowed one of the escorts, the destroyer HMCS *Qu'Appelle*, a bit of relaxation. "After a full day of activities, which included a fishing derby, crab hunting and oyster picking, all hands enjoyed a quarterdeck "banyan" of steaks and broiled oysters."[3]

While sailors will always look forward to getting ashore, the banyan, owing to social and technological advances, is also changing. Today, most ships of the fleet are miniature aircraft carriers, providing uncluttered flight decks for helicopters. And the men of the fleet in the 1970's are a much better educated and more sophisticated lot than their predecessors. As a result, and in spite of the attractions of big-city ports, banyans today are often held right on board ship, even in harbour, and splendid occasions they are.

Indeed, so popular is the modern banyan that even submariners with their restricted upper deck are not to be denied. Providing the sea is quiet to avoid someone being washed overboard from the narrow casing, a half oil drum can

barbecue the most tasty steaks to be washed down with a cool beer beneath a sunny sky.

Finally, there is a more recent new twist to the banyan as evidenced by the experience of the ship's company of the twenty-two thousand ton ship, HMCS *Preserver*. Traditionally, the banyan has always been a self-starter, the initiative coming from within the ship. In 1974, when the *Preserver* landed many tons of supplies as a gift from Canada to the impoverished people of an isolated parish in Haiti, the Haitians responded by joining the *Preserver's* company in one tremendous banyan on a nearby island, a party which featured calypso music and folk dancing as well as the ship's band, a very colourful scene under gasoline generated lighting rigged by the ship's electricians.[4]

The Boatswain's Call

One of the oldest customs of the fleet today is the use of the boatswain's call, "making a pipe" to pass an order. The instrument itself, which is essentially a whistle suspended on a chain round the neck of the boatswain's mate or the quartermaster and made up of parts called the gun, buoy, keel and shackle, has changed little in five hundred years service in the Royal Navy.

"To pipe" means to sound the boatswain's call and follow up with the spoken order, usually over the ship's broadcast, such as "hands to stations for leaving harbour" or "special sea dutymen to muster." On the other hand, some pipes are orders in themselves requiring no spoken word, such as "hands to supper" or "pipe down." The boatswain's call epitomizes the smooth, orderly fashion in which the routines of the twenty-four-hour day on board a warship at sea are conducted.

Some idea of the timeless practicality of the pipe may be gained from the definition given in Falconer's Dictionary of 1815:

> Call, a sort of whistle, or pipe, of silver or brass, used by the boatswain and his mates to summon the sailors to their duty, and direct them in the different employments of the ship. It is sounded to various strains, adapted to the different exercises, as hoisting, heaving, lowering, veering away, belaying, letting-go a tackle, &c., and the piping of it is as attentively observed by sailors, as the beat of the drum to march, retreat, rally, charge, &c., is obeyed by soldiers.[5]

One can imagine the impression on the mind of a sixteen-year old midshipman joining his first ship and hearing for the first time the sound of the pipe as it floated out over the water. The ship was HMS *Blonde*, frigate; the place, the anchorage at Spithead, England, in 1793. "After a severe pull we got alongside as the boatswain and his mates were piping to dinner."[6]

The captain of HMCS *Preserver* being piped aboard for the first time at the commissioning of the ship at Saint John, New Brunswick, July, 1970.

"Piping the side" is a form of salute honouring certain personages as they board or disembark from one of HMC ships. If that person boards from a boat he is piped twice, once as the boat approaches the ship and again as the person mounts the accommodation ladder. If the arrival is over the brow or gangway, he is piped once. Here again, this ancient call is associated with the giving of orders.

In the days of sail, captains often had occasion to visit other ships in company, perhaps for a council of war, or to repair on board the flagship, "booted and spurred," that is, with sword and medals, to "collect a bottle" for some misdemeanour such as needlessly crossing his admiral's bow, or simply to dine with a brother captain. Perhaps it was because of heavy weather, or typical eighteenth century portliness from over-indulgence in port wine and multi-course dinners, that certain personages such as flag officers and captains were lowered into their barges, or hoisted on board, in a contrivance not unlike a boatswain's chair suspended from a whip at the yardarm. This spared them the exertion of climbing the accommodation ladder. Piping the side today sounds very much like the notes of yesteryear which meant "hoist away," "handsomely" and "avast hoisting."

In recent years some changes have been introduced regarding piping the side. Over the centuries the ceremony has been considered a purely nautical one in that the honour was accorded exclusively to the sovereign; a member of the royal family in naval uniform; flag officers; captains of HM ships and foreign naval officers.[7] "No Military Officer, Consular Officer or other civilian is entitled to this form of salute."[8] Today's regulations reflect the single Service nature of the Canadian Forces, for this honour is now accorded to "General officers of the Canadian Armed Forces when in uniform."[9]

Another change that has come about is reflected in the statement: "The side is never piped in a shore establishment."[10] The fact is that today this custom, carried out with spirited dignity and precision, is a much cherished tradition in the naval divisions, HMC ships *Donnacona* (Montreal), *Star* (Hamilton) and *York* (Toronto).

Traditionally, the side is piped when a corpse is brought on board, taken ashore or committed to the deep.

The term, "pipe down," has been used for several centuries in the navy and is one of those expressions that has been accepted in civilian life. It has meant variously: a holiday from all work that is not essential; an admonition to keep quiet after "lights out"; or, simply, an order to dismiss the hands from the deck when a particular duty has been carried out on board ship. The antiquity of this pipe, so popular today, is to be seen in the era of Trafalgar in the case of the new commanding officer of HMS *Diamond*. "The hands were turned up

and his commission read." Turning to the first lieutenant of the ship after the ceremony, the captain ordered: "That's all, pipe down if you please, sir."[11]

A long tradition related to the boatswain's call which is little known outside the navy is that whistling is forbidden in HMC ships so that it will not be confused with the pipe.

With the possible exception of the seaman's knife, the boatswain's call, in whatever form, is probably the oldest, and certainly the most distinctive, item of personal nautical equipment. How old is now known. A form of pipe or whistle was used in the galleys of ancient Greece and Rome to control the stroke of the oars manned by slaves. In the course of time the call or pipe evolved in that cradle of western civilization, the Mediterranean, into the practical whistle of command, but also into a form of symbolism, the whistle as a badge of office, and also as a highly regarded badge of honour.[12]

In the time of Henry VIII, an ornate whistle of gold on a golden chain was the badge of office of the Lord High Admiral of England. Something of the aura surrounding this golden call may be seen in the action of Sir Edward Howard in the sea fight with the Chevalier Prégant de Bidoux off Briest in 1513. When Howard, the Lord High Admiral, was surrounded and cut off on board the French flagship, his last thought before being felled was to hurl his precious badge of office into the sea.

> None else, he cried, shall wear, and mocking say
> This was his badge, token England's might,
> High Admiral of England.[13]

The boatswain's call's long heritage in control and command at sea was well known to Shakespeare. In the first scene of his drama, *The Tempest*, he has the master calling to the boatswain:

> .... speak to the mariners: fall to't yarely [nimbly],
> or we run ourselves a-ground: bestir, bestir. [exit]

and the boatswain shouts to the crew:

> Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare,
> yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to th' master's whistle.

The same kind of control and command, this time in battle action, is to be seen in an eyewitness account of Drake in the *Golden Hind* in the Pacific off South America in 1579.

> About nine o'clock at night, the English ship crossed the course of San Juan's vessel and, immediately, came alongside... they blew a whistle on the English ship and the trumpet responded. Then a volley of what seemed to be about sixty arquebuses was shot, followed by many arrows, which struck the side of the ship, and chain-balls shot from a heavy piece of ordnance carried away the mizen and sent it into the sea with its sail and lateen yard.[14]

The Changing of the Guard

A very popular feature during the summer months in the nation's capital is the colourful ceremony known as "the changing of the guard." Though the guard duty itself is carried out at Government House (sometimes called Rideau Hall), which is the residence of the Governor-General and the home of Her Majesty the Queen when residing in Ottawa, the elaborate pageantry and military precision of the changing of the guard occurs daily on the lawns of Parliament Hill.

Some one hundred and twenty-five officers, non-commissioned officers and guardsmen participate in this centuries-old ceremony. Essentially it is the relief of the old guard by the new. Attired in their traditional bearskin headdress and scarlet tunics, the guardsmen present a stirring scene as, attended by a band, they parade their queen's colour (when Her Majesty or the Governor-General is in residence) and their regimental colour.

Commencing in 1959, the public duties detachment of the Regiment of Canadian Guards performed this duty every summer for eleven years. Today, two militia regiments share the responsibility — the Governor-General's Foot Guards of Ottawa, and the Canadian Grenadier Guards of Montreal.

A point of interest is that the new detachment arriving for guard duty is called "the duties." Once it has passed an exacting inspection by the adjutant who sees it is properly turned out and fit to perform guard duty, only then is the detachment called the "new guard" and the officer commanding takes over his command.[15]

Following the inspection, the colours, with their armed escort, are marched through the ranks. Then the old guard pays its compliments to the new by presenting arms, and the compliment is returned. This is followed by the ancient Ceremony of the Key in which the commander of the old guard turns over the key of the guardroom to the commander of the new guard. The two guards then change positions, march past the adjutant and leave Parliament Hill, the new guard to take up its duty, the old to leave its cares behind.

To most observers, the changing of the guard means "spit and polish," colour, precise movements and the spirited music of the band. It is refreshing to see another view, the good-humoured grousing but solid sense of duty

traditionally inherent in the make-up of the guardsman. A veteran Coldstreamer put it this way:

> We did lots of ceremonials in the Guards — troopin' the colour, guardin' the Tower of London, and what not. Stood on parade four and five hours at a time — with a 14-day detention if you fainted. The trick is to keep your weight off your heels. That's why Guards' boots bulge in front — lots of room to wiggle your toes without anybody knowin'![16]

The Commission

"Commission, in a military sense, is the authority by which every officer acts in his post."[17] This eighteenth century definition assesses the meaning of a parchment or linen-backed paper scroll which a man or woman receives on becoming a commissioned officer. The queen's commission is a delegation of authority to exercise command, on behalf of Her Majesty, over one's subordinates. In Canada, the commission scroll is signed by the Governor-General as the queen's representative, and by the minister of national defence.

Over the centuries, the sovereign's commission has, from time to time, been changed in wording, but for the most part the format and message conveyed have remained constant. The officer commissioned is named, his duties and obligations are outlined in general terms, and there is an expression of trust and confidence in him. In the Canadian Forces, an officer may be given only two commissions, one when he is first commissioned, usually in a junior rank, and a second if he should reach the rank of brigadier general or commodore. An officer holds his commission at the pleasure of the sovereign.

The commission scroll bears the coat of arms of Canada. The signature of the Governor-General is in the centre, over which is the impression of the Governor-General's privy seal. The signature of the minister of national defence is at the base of the scroll which reads:

> Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of The United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.
>
> TO
>
> (Name in Full)
>
> HEREBY appointed an Officer
> In Her Majesty's Canadian Armed Forces
>
> With Seniority of the day of 19
>
> We reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and

Integrity, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer in our Canadian Armed Forces. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such in the rank of Or in such other Rank as We may from time to time hereafter be pleased to promote or appoint you to, and you are in such manner and on such occasions as may be prescribed by Us to exercise and well discipline both the inferior Officers and men serving under you and use your best endeavour to keep them in good Order and Discipline. And We do hereby Command them to Obey you as their superior Officer, and you to observe and follow such Orders and Directions as from time to time you shall receive from Us, or any your Superior Officer according to Law, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in you.

IN WITNESS Whereof Our Governor-General of Canada hath hereunto set his hand and Seal at Our Government House in the

City of Ottawa this day of

in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and

and in the

Year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

The wording of this modern Canadian commission may be compared with that of a lieutenant's commission in 1809 in the Honourable Artillery Company of London:

> ... you are, therefore, to take into your charge and care the said Company, and duly to exercise the inferior officers and soldiers of the same in arms; And also to use your best care and endeavour to keep them in good Order and Discipline, commanding them respectively to obey you as their Lieutenant. And you are also to obey your Superior Officers (according to the Discipline of War) in pursuance of the Trust reposed in you.[18]

A later commission of the same unit, dated 1879, looks more like the modern format. Beginning with "Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c," it uses the ancient formal language of the sovereign addressing a subject: "To Our Trusty and Well-beloved, Greeting."[19]

Indeed, there is little change from this Victorian commission to a Canadian army commission of 1940, except that emphasis is placed on the trust and confidence the sovereign has in the newly appointed officer. Signed at the upper left by the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, the commission reads in part, after the formal greeting:

> We, reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and good Conduct, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer... to exercise and well discipline in Arms, both the inferior Officers, and Men serving under you and use your best endeavours to keep them in good Order and Discipline... according to the Rules and Discipline of War, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in you.[20]

A post-war commission in the Canadian army signed by Viscount Alexander of Tunis in 1949 was identical to the wartime version except for changes such as the sovereign no longer being Emperor of India and the deletion of the words "Dominion of" in reference to the nation.[21]

A commission in the Royal Canadian Air Force signed by the Earl of Athlone in 1945[22] and one signed in 1950 by Viscount Alexander of Tunis[23] were in almost all respects identical to those of the Canadian army, including the minor changes in wording. Indeed, the scroll used in 1959, in the new reign, revealed few changes from that used by the air force during the Second World War.

The introduction of a common commission after the unification of the Services in 1968 has removed a historic, but rather curious, aspect of the naval officer's commission. While the former army and air force scrolls emphasized, by repetition, the trust and confidence in the newly commissioned officer, the navy, while mentioning these qualities, ended up with the dire threat: "you will answer the contrary at your Peril."

The anomaly may be explained by going back to an earlier time when there were marked differences between the actual control of the British army and the Royal Navy. The sovereign delegated his authority directly to the subalterns in the army, but exerted no direct control over the navy. The royal authority was delegated to, and jealously exercised by, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, even to the wording of commissions, hence the threat was an admiralty threat.[24]

Two other differences in naval commissions, though minor ones, were that they bore the personal arms of the sovereign, and the newly appointed officer was invariably addressed as "Mister." But the major difference was in the language used.

A commission in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (the RCNVR — who during the Second World War formed by far the great majority of the officers and ratings manning the fleet), signed by the Earl of Athlone in 1945, read in part:

> By the Governor-General and Commander in Chief of the Dominion of Canada .... By virtue of all powers me hereunto enabling, I do hereby constitute and appoint you a Sub Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Charging and Commanding you in that rank... to observe and execute the General Printed Instructions for the Government of His Majesty's Naval Service... And likewise Charging and Commanding all Officers and Men subordinate to you... to behave themselves with all due Respect and Obedience to you their Superior Officer.[25]

Oddly enough, the traditional admiralty threat is not in the RCNVR wartime commission, but it was in that of the permanent force navy of the post-war period. This document is an interesting one, because, besides bearing the personal arms of the sovereign, it shows the queen as granting the commission. It also contains the admiralty threat of old. Moreover, "good conduct" of the army and air force becomes "integrity" in the navy and the admonishment about subordinates behaving themselves is forgotten.

A commission in the Royal Canadian Navy signed by Governor-General Georges P. Vanier in 1960 reads:

> Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.
>
> To Mr ..... hereby appointed Lieutenant Commander in Her Majesty's Canadian Fleet.
>
> We reposing special Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and Integrity, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you a Lieutenant Commander, Royal Canadian Navy, Willing and Requiring you from time to time to repair on board and to take upon you the Charge and Command of Lieutenant Commander in any ship or Establishment to which you may hereafter at any time be duly appointed, or the charge and Command of any other Rank to which you may be promoted or appointed, strictly Charging and Commanding all the Officers and company of the said Ship or Establishment subordinate to you to conduct themselves jointly and severally in their respective employments with all due Respect and Obedience unto you, and you likewise to observe and execute the Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Royal Canadian Navy and such Orders and Instructions as you shall from time to time receive from Naval Headquarters or from your Superior Officers. Hereof nor you nor any of you may fail as you will

answer the contrary at your Peril. And for so doing so this shall be Your Commission.[26]

It has been a custom in all three services for many many years to celebrate a promotion, in which, of course, the promoted one pays for the refreshments consumed in his honour by his friends and fellow members of the mess. It is generally known as "wetting the stripe."[27]

A similar celebration called "wetting the commission" has been observed a long time, too. Describing an incident which occurred three years before Trafalgar, in 1802, the first lieutenant of HMS *Volage* recounts being on shore and encountering eight "jolly midshipmen" from his ship seated around a table holding a gallon-bowl of strong punch. "Number one" was invited to partake of the punch in honour of one of the "mids" who had just learned of his promotion to lieutenant. The officer wryly noted that the bowl's contents were soon gone despite the taste of parchment and the fact that most of the ink was gone from the scroll.[28]

Crossing the Line

One of the oldest customs of seafaring men, as well as the most boisterous, is the centuries-old, farcical ceremony of crossing the line, meaning the equator. Dating at least from the early seventeenth century, this elaborate occasion for horseplay and skylarking illustrates the sailor's enthusiasm and ingenuity in making the best of an otherwise boring situation. The seemingly endless days of the listless rolling of the windship and the flapping of her canvas, while drifting through the light airs of the doldrums, provided the opportunity for initiating people variously called greenhands, tadpoles or novices, into the "Mystic Rites of the Freedom of the Seas, according to the Ancient Customs of King Neptune and his Watery Realm."

As one would expect, the ceremony has had many variations through the years in dress, props, and procedure, depending on the imagination and talents of King Neptune and his motley retinue.

On the great day, as HMC ship approaches the imaginary line (the ship having been placed out of routine except for the watch, and officers and men alike having taken up every vantage point to watch the hilarious spectacle), a hail is heard from somewhere forward demanding to know "what ship?" An equally great voice replies from the bridge and soon learns that King Neptune is about to board the intruder.

Said to enter by the hawsepipe, a strange company is soon seen on the fo'c'sle making its way aft, led by King Neptune, bearded and bewigged with rope-yarn, oakum and sea-weed, bearing in solemn majesty his crown and

trident. In his wake trips the heavily rouged, amply endowed, but suspiciously muscular, Queen Amphitrite, to the tune of a fiddle or recorder and the inevitable ribald remarks of the ship's company. Then come the barber, with his huge wooden straight-edge razor and sundry swabs, the doctor, with his large galley syringe, mallet and mystical physic, and, bringing up the rear, the bears, sometimes called constables, with their persuaders.

Having demanded the presence of all the greenhands in the ship's company irrespective of rank, King Neptune lectures them on the impending ordeal to be suffered before being admitted to His Oceanic Majesty's realm as shellbacks (i.e. proper, full-blown, deep-water sailors), and warning them of dire results should they ever in the future neglect to see that all future tadpoles receive similar treatment.

There follows the time-honoured ceremony of seating the blindfolded tadpole on a tilting plank over a canvas pool specially rigged for the occasion. Each time the candidate opens his mouth to answer a question, he receives the barber's swab of soap lather and eventually is shaved with the outsize razor, with little regard for nose and ears. The physician then profers his special brand of treatment, including an enormous pill concocted by the co-operative sick bay "tiffy" and the galley crew. Finally, the candidate is tumbled into the pool, there to be ducked thrice by Neptune's willing henchmen, the bears. Of course, through all this, the victim struggles valiantly, resulting in an uproar much to the liking of the jubilant company assembled.

After the presentation of flowery-worded, often artistically executed, certificates to the new shellbacks, King Neptune and his entourage disappear over the side.

While the making of a shellback is traditionally tied to crossing the equator, there are numerous instances over the years, as well as today, where crossing the line has been adapted to crossing the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the Polar Circles, and even the passing of famous headlands such as at the Strait of Gilbraltar or Cape Horn.[29] Such customs go back into early Canadian history.

In *Jesuit Relations*, that magnificent documentary of life in New France, for the years 1647-48, is a description of what happened on board ships bound for Quebec on reaching that part of the St. Lawrence River opposite the "Mountains of Notre Dame," when the ship's crew amused themselves "by baptising the new passengers, unless, by means of a present, they turn aside the flood of that baptism, which is made to pour in abundance over their heads."[30]

Two centuries later the same custom was being practised in the emigrant ships on reaching the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. On 3 May 1855

Neptune, King of the Sea, boarded the ship *Ocean Queen* to receive the newcomers on board "this being their first visit to the Banks of Newfoundland going to Quebec in America."[31]

Soldiers, too, on passage to distant stations, have enjoyed crossing the line. Lieutenant-Colonel William Dyott, in his journal, tells of taking his regiment to Barbados and the ceremony involving his troops as they crossed the Tropic of Cancer in January, 1796. He writes:

> Then comes on the barber's work, who after daubing the face and head of the fast-bound stranger with the vilest of all possible compositions, of tar, grease, etc. etc., proceeds to shave him with a piece of old iron, which not only takes away the sweet-scented fine oily lather, but scrapes the face (carrying some particles of skin with it) to that degree to cause howlings most hideous.[32]

Nor are modern soldiers adverse to participating in the good-natured festivities of crossing some imaginary line at sea. In April, 1951, the Royal Canadian Regiment, bound for Korea, crossed the 180th meridian of longitude in the Pacific and duly marked the occasion with "certificates of the Order of the Golden Dragon" signed by no less a dignitary than Davy Jones himself.[33]

At one time, crossing the line was an ordeal of considerable hazard. In January, 1782, a regiment of Light Dragoons was in a convoy of the Royal Navy out of Portsmouth, headed for the East Indies. On crossing the equator, eighty-one people paid tribute, leaving one seaman and two boy seamen as the only greenhands. They were "accordingly ducked three times from ye Lee Main Yard Arm."[34]

A good description of this rough and ready method of entertainment on board ship is in a journal kept nearly a century earlier in 1702, in the *Arabia* of sixteen guns.

> This day likewise we crossed the equinoctial line, into the Southern part of the World . . . The manner of ducking is this; there is a block made fast to the main yardarm, through which is reeved a long rope, one end whereof comes down on the Quarter Deck, the other to the water, at which end is made fast a stick about a foot and a half long thwartways, on which the person sits across holding fast with his hands the rope as it goes up having a running knot about him; when being ready he is hoisted up close to the yardarm, by the people on the Quarter Deck, and at once let run. His own weight from that height plunges him under the water, as low as the ship's keel; then they run him up again as fast as they can and so serve him three times, then he is free and may drink with the others that paid.[35]

Sailors over the centuries have enjoyed the high jinks of crossing the line, but ever since the advent of the long-range aircraft, there's been a new twist to the ancient ceremony where all the hilarity is at the expense of the novice. High above the clouds, over the equator, the Arctic Circle, or even the Pole, the same tradition prevails, albeit with new factors introduced, such as cramped space and speeds measured in the hundreds of knots.

But the people of air transport command (now group), ingenious as they are, have made adequate adjustments. King Neptune is now the captain of the aircraft and he has only a few henchmen, just enough to attend to the blindfolding of the unfortunate tadpole, who now on bended knee listens to a litany of transgressions, all the while his left hand suspended in a hastily concocted preparation (warm vegetable soup and shaving cream are quite standard ingredients); there follows a thick beverage of mushroom soup and ginger ale, and on removal of the blindfold, the cold water treatment![36]

However, to compensate in part for these indignities, the now fully fledged member of the "Winged Order of Neptunus Rex" is given a handsome, signed certificate, much like the sailor's, so that he will never again be suffered to endure such an ordeal.

It is of interest to note that the elaborate certificate, though it is not embellished with beautiful mermaids as is the sailor's, does make rude remarks about those interlopers "Davey Jones and all his admirals of the fleet and their minions," and also reminds the veteran of the polar skies who boasts about the rigours and dangers of the Canadian Arctic, that this certified journey, "unlike that of the admirable Admiral Byrd, was conducted at so and so feet in air conditioned comfort" and that the only ice encountered by our adventurer "was in a glass container" — a far cry from being ducked at "ye Lee Main Yard Arm"!

Embarkation

There is an old saying in Service life that with responsibility goes privilege. This idea is seen today in the custom whereby seniors board a transport aircraft last and disembark first, to spend the least possible time confined in the aircraft, subject as it is, when on the ground, to the heat of summer and the cold of winter. This custom is centuries old and comes from the sea. Indeed, the word embark is derived from the old poetic term "bark" or "barque," meaning any ship or boat.

If a destroyer, for example, is lying at trots, as opposed to a jetty, or is anchored in a roadstead, passage to and from the shore or other ships is made in the ship's boats. All ranks may go in the same boat, but juniors in rank embark first and disembark last.

In the days of the "wooden walls," when this custom began, there was very real discomfort and a likelihood of getting soaked by the brine when the ship's launch, with a bit of a sea running, was being fended off by the boat's crew at the foot of the accommodation ladder. For the boat was much livelier than the ship; it rose and fell more rapidly. It was to avoid, as much as possible, having seniors exposed to the inconveniences of an open boat in a seaway that this bit of protocol developed centuries ago, yet it is still practised today in spite of the relative luxury of the Boeing 707 transport.

Feu-de-joie

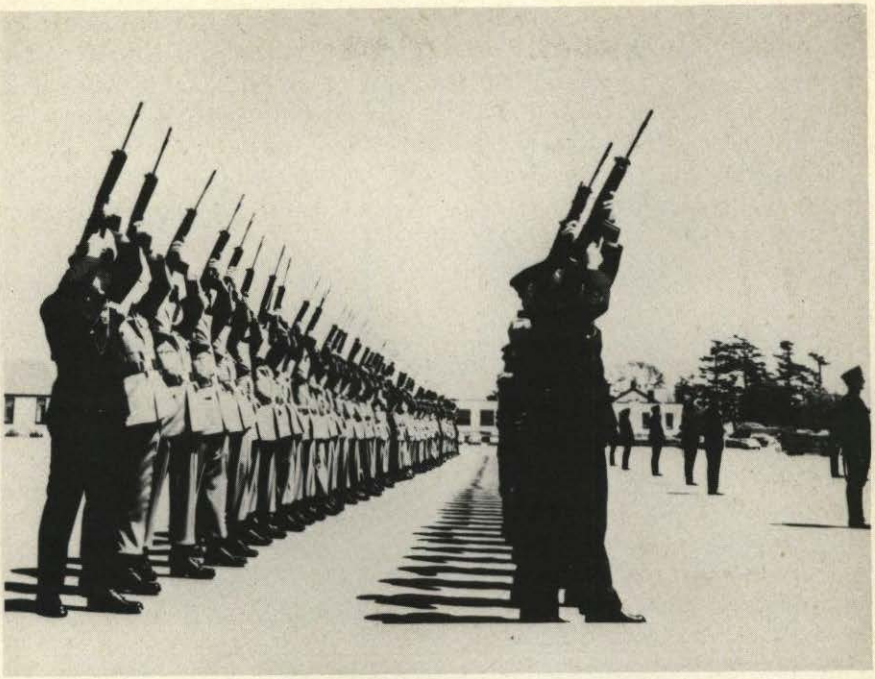
A feu-de-joie is a salute fired on occasions of rejoicing, just as the expression suggests — a bonfire, a fire of joy. The firing of muskets replaced the bonfires of ancient France and developed into the present ceremonial salute. A British admiral described the feu-de-joie a century ago as "a salute fired by musketry on occasions of public rejoicing, so that it should pass from man to man rapidly and steadily, down one rank and up the other, giving one long continuous sound."[37]

The feu-de-joie, or "running fire," down through the centuries has been an expression of joy and celebration for a great variety of occasions. Sometimes it was on the grand scale. A recruit in the 56th (Essex) Regiment of Foot in 1799 described how Abercromby's victory in Holland was celebrated by troops at Barham Downs awaiting passage to the battle zone: "... we were nearly 20,000 strong ... being formed in one extensive line, the firing of the feu de joie produced a fine effect ... certainly the finest sight I had ever witnessed."[38]

As is often the case, a military custom may have its counterpart in civilian life. Admiral John Moresby tells how he experienced, as a youth in Somerset in the early nineteenth century, the excitement at the time of the apple harvest and the crushing of the fruit in the cider-presses:

> ... as night closed in, the custom, descending from heathen times, of wassailing the apple trees was faithfully observed. Every old gun, blunderbuss, or pistol that the village could produce was brought out, and masters and men, women and children, all trooped to the principal orchard.... Then, with shouting and cheering, and a general feu de joie over the trees, all joined in the chorus: 'Old apple-tree, I wassail thee,' etc. etc.[39]

It is rare for a feu-de-joie to be fired at sea, but such was the case in HMS *Basilisk* off the coast of New Guinea in 1873. Moresby, as captain of the



Men of the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, firing a feu-de-joie, Work Point Barracks, Victoria, June, 1967.

Basilisk, describes the occasion when the possession of some islands was proclaimed. "The Jack was then run up and saluted amid three hearty cheers . . . . A feu de joie was then fired, and I said: 'Lads, in honour of what old *Basilisk* has done, we will splice the main brace tonight [that is, serve out an extra ration of rum to all hands].' "[40]

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, the queen's forces were celebrating quite different occasions. Barely a month after its organization, the forerunner of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada on 24 May 1860 fired a feu-de-joie for Queen Victoria. The order read in part:

> . . . the Active Militia Forces of No. 5 Military District of Upper Canada . . . will parade in brigades on Thursday, the 24th inst. in the field on the west of the Parliament Buildings, Toronto, at a quarter before noon, for the purpose of firing a 'feu-de-joie' in honour of Her Majesty's Birthday.[41]

Twenty-five years later, on the old queen's birthday, another feu-de-joie was fired, this time in an operational situation at Battleford on the North Saskatchewan River during the North-west Rebellion. Two columns of Canadian militia celebrated the Twenty-fourth of May with a divisional parade and a full feu-de-joie was fired, including artillery. "This show of strength so impressed the Indians that they came flocking in to surrender . . . . "[42]

In modern times the feu-de-joie has been fired in Canada on numerous occasions. On 6 May 1935 the Calgary Highlanders joined with other units in a grand parade to Victoria Park, Calgary, where a feu-de-joie was fired as part of the celebration marking the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George V.[43]

On 12 May 1937 the temporarily-styled Royal Regiment of Toronto Grenadiers joined with its sister regiments, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and the 48th Highlanders of Canada, at Queen's Park, Toronto, to celebrate the coronation of His Majesty King George VI.[44]

Another memorable occasion was on 23 June 1959 on the Plains of Abraham, Quebec, when the three regular battalions of the Royal 22e Régiment were presented with new colours by their colonel-in-chief, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. After Her Majesty addressed her regiment in French, the ceremony, which opened with "God Save the Queen," ended with the regiment firing a feu-de-joie and the singing of "O Canada."[45]

Just as it had done more than a century before, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada celebrated its 110th birthday in 1970 with the firing of a feu-de-joie.[46]

A very unusual occasion was the honouring of the late Colonel R.S. McLaughlin, honorary colonel of the Ontario Regiment for forty-seven years,

on the attainment of his one hundredth birthday. At a special parade of his regiment in September, 1971 a feu-de-joie was fired in the colonel's honour.[47]

The Fly-past

It was after the Second World War that the ceremonial fly-past came into its own as a traditional form of salute on occasions of national importance. Over Ottawa, as well as other centres, such occasions are Battle of Britain Sunday, Canadian Forces Day, and Dominion Day. Aircraft fly in formation over a prescribed flight-path and an honoured personage in a conspicuous location formally takes the salute. In several respects it is not unlike the ceremonial attending the march-past of troops and vehicles and the sail-past of the fleet.

Though this form of salute is largely a post-1945 practice, the first large-scale, ceremonial fly-past of the Royal Air Forces actually took place in 1935 at Duxford, England, when some two-hundred aircraft of the RAF passed overhead in review in celebration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V.[48]

Of course, long before 1935, small-scale fly-pasts honouring commanding officers of stations and other dignitaries were fairly common. They probably had their origin in the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service when squadrons returning from missions during the Great War flew past their stations at low altitude before landing.

Today, in addition to fly-pasts of nation-wide significance, the ceremony is performed locally on the occasion of a change of command or to participate in some civic observance.

Freedom of the City

One of the most prized honours of a marching unit is the conferring upon the unit of the privilege and distinction of the freedom of the city — the honour for all time of marching through the city with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed. Several regiments have been so honoured in Canada in recognition of their honorable record and to demonstrate the affection and esteem with which they are held by the citizens. Nor is the granting of the freedom of the city exclusively a regimental affair. In the port city of Vancouver, the naval reserve division, HMCS *Discovery*, takes pride in being the first and only unit to be so honoured (1973). Similarly, the city of Trenton conferred the privilege on Royal Canadian Air Force Station Trenton in September, 1967.

Usually, the freedom of the city is granted to a unit which has enjoyed a long and happy relationship with a city. An example is the Royal Regiment of Canada which, in 1962, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the regiment, was so honoured by the city of Toronto, the first

in the city's history. At the same time the regiment was reminded of its obligation "to hold itself, as a regiment, as the first official protectors of the city."[49] But sometimes the honour is granted to mark a people's gratitude for a heroic service, as in the case of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. In its jubilee year, 1964, the freedom of the city of Ypres in Belgium was conferred on the Patricias for their exploits a half century before.[50]

The conferment of the freedom of the city means, in the physical sense, the granting of the privilege to march through the city with "drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed." Of course, everyone is familiar with the colour and pageantry of the military parade, which immediately raises the question, what is so important about the granting of this privilege? As is the case with so many of our traditions, this custom goes back more than three centuries in British military history.

There has ever been amongst British peoples a deeply seated antipathy towards a large standing army; large regular forces as garrisons in British cities have seldom been welcomed by the populace. This goes back to Tudor times, before and since, when the city of London jealously guarded its ancient rights and depended on its own trained bands to keep the peace and defend the city. Throughout our history, both in Britain and the Commonwealth, there is a strong tradition against the war-like appearance of large bodies of troops in the streets disturbing the civil repose and posing a threat, real or imagined, of infringement of ancient civic rights.

Even the time-honoured method of recruiting "by beat of drum" was highly suspect in the citizen's mind because of past incidents not unlike those associated with the press gangs of the Royal Navy. Thus it became customary to request the permission of the chief magistrate, the lord mayor, before any such foray was undertaken.

Sometimes the sequence of words — drums, colours, bayonets — differs, reflecting different times and different conditions. For example, when the custom of conferring the freedom of the city first took hold after the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660,[51] the bayonet was not yet in use. Today, the naval division has no colour. And it is only in relatively recent times that bands have come into use as opposed to the fife and drum of an earlier age. This would seem to favour the recognition of historical development in today's usage — first, the ancient drum; next, the colours; and lastly, the bayonet.[52]

The ceremony of granting the freedom of the city hearkens back to an even earlier time when cities had walls and gates were barred to friend and foe alike — to the foe for obvious reasons, to the friend until the city authorities were assured of the troops best behaviour and the purpose of the presence of the

regiment seeking entry. Today's ceremony reflects the ritual which had to take place in the days when troops on the march had no barracks and required being billeted in the town for the night. The following was written more than two centuries ago:

> As soon as the Town-Major . . . has notice from the Sentinels that the Regiment is in view, he should take a Serjeant and a file of men, and go to the outermost Barrier, and order one of the draw-bridges to be drawn up after him, till he has examined the original orders or route of the Regiment, lest the enemy, by having notice of the march of the Regiment, should, under that pretence, endeavour to surprise the town.[53]

These same procedures of long ago are to be seen today whenever a unit of the Canadian Forces is honoured by a city. The 2nd Battalion, the Royal Canadian Regiment, is a good example. As the battalion marched into the city of Fredericton in June, 1973, the chief of police stood his ground in the middle of the road, just like the city marshal of yesteryear, stopped the regiment and enquired of the commanding officer as to the purpose of the presence of the regiment on the march in the city. As the troops waited beyond the barrier of old, the commanding officer was escorted to the mayor who called a formal session of the city council, whereupon a resolution granting the freedom of the city was voted upon and approved. There followed an inspection and review of the battalion by the city's chief magistrate, and an exchange of scroll and gifts — all for the purpose of demonstrating the mutual esteem and respect of the citizens and the regiment.[54]

The wording used in the scroll normally presented to a unit at the time of the granting of the privilege of marching through the city with "drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed" is colourful and varied. The following is the text of the illuminated scroll presented to the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment by the City of Belleville in 1964.[55]

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF BELLEVILLE

TO

THE HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENT

> THIS DAY AND HENCEFORTH MAY IT BE KNOWN THAT, on this occasion of the Presentation of Colours and in honour of the history and tradition of The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment and its predecessor units, that the Corporation of the City of Belleville in the realm of Canada of her Gracious

Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Second, by virtue of the authority of a resolution passed unanimously by the Council of the said Corporation on the sixth day of January, One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty-Four, HEREBY PROCLAIMS AND GRANTS TO THE HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENT
The Freedom of the said City of Belleville and all rights and privileges pertaining thereto, as long as the waters of Quinte Bay embrace the shores of the said city, to enter therein and march throughout its streets, thoroughfares and highways, without hindrance or trespass on any and all occasions with Colours and Battle Honours flying, bayonets fixed and bands playing,

This Freedom is granted and confirmed in grateful acknowledgement and recognition of services rendered and duty bravely performed since the formation of the Regiment's parent units, the First Regiment of Prince Edward Militia in the year, One Thousand, Eight Hundred, and the First Regiment of Hastings Militia in the year One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Four and continuing throughout a distinguished record of service in the wars of 1812, the Rebellion of 1837, the Fenian Raid of 1865, the North-West Expedition of 1885; the war in South Africa in 1898, the First World War of 1914 to 1918; the unit formally became the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment in 1920, and this grant is particularly to perpetuate its feats of bravery, devotion and glory from 1939 to 1945 from North Africa to Sicily, to Italy and to the European Theatre, to witness the capitulation of its enemies and thereafter, in causes dear to the hearts of the said City and all its citizens.

In particular and without limiting the foregoing, This Freedom is granted and to be recognized as a memorial to all ranks from said Regiment and its predecessors contributing to its distinguished history, who have given their lives on the altar of freedom in the performance of their duty and earned for their comrades and all who came after them the honours now recognized and being secured to them in perpetuity by their fellow citizens hereby recorded.

SIGNED AND SEALED on behalf of the CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF BELLEVILLE on this *seventeenth* day of May, in the Year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty-Four.

J.R. Ellis
Mayor

SEAL

A.S. Stalker
Clerk

Levee

The levee has a long tradition in the Canadian Forces as one of the activities associated with New Year's Day. Officers of the various units and headquarters receive and greet in their messes visiting officers and other guests

in the convivial spirit of the first day of the new year. Hospitality is dispensed in a variety of forms, from the special flaming punch of the Royal Canadian Hussars of Montreal, a concoction bequeathed to the regiment by the old 1st Motor Machine Gun Brigade and which takes a month to prepare, to the famed Athole Brose, that brew of oatmeal, honey and whisky, of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, Vancouver.

In line with this tradition, the chief of the defence staff, beginning on 1 January 1975 hosts a levee each New Year's Day in the new National Defence Headquarters at 101 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa.

The levee has an unusual origin. The word itself meant, originally, the action of rising, specifically from one's bed, coming from the French *lever* (to rise). As early as the seventeenth century, a levee was a reception of visitors on rising from bed, a morning reception by a king or person of distinction. In the eighteenth century, in Britain, it was an assembly in the early afternoon by the sovereign at which men only were received.

While the levee is still largely a male preserve, women, unescorted, do attend on New Year's Day. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland in 1975 are the only two provinces where women are not welcome at the lieutenant-governor's levee.[56]

Make and Mend

A make and mend is a half day (afternoon) when normal work and routines are suspended. The expression is often abbreviated to "makers." Originally, in the days before naval ratings had a standard uniform issued, once a week, usually on Thursdays, the pipe, "hands to make and mend clothes" would be sounded so that seamen could make and mend the clothing which in those days had been purchased from the purser's slop chest. It was an afternoon to catch up on the wear and tear to which sailor's clothing was subjected in the days of sail.

With the advent of issued uniform clothing in the mid-nineteenth century in the Royal Navy, the make and mend gradually took on a recreational purpose including organized sports, both ashore and afloat. This was the case in the Royal Canadian Navy and, traditionally, this was on Wednesday afternoons.

However, even before the First World War, the idea of the make and mend as a time when a seaman afloat had some time to himself was gaining ground. "At one p.m. on Thursday, instead of clearing up decks as usual, preparatory to both watches, falling in, the pipe goes, 'hands make and mend clothes,' which means that the afternoon is for the men to do as they like."[57]

One author, an able seaman, gives a graphic description of what the make and mend meant to the sailor afloat in the 1920s:

> . . . the majority of the ship's company may be relieved of routine duties between noon and seven bells. These are golden hours indeed, when, in summer weather the bluejackets may be seen stretched out on the forecastle enjoying sweeter sleep than any civilian knows.[58]

In the period of the Second World War, in HMC ships, a makers was still a half-day on which ratings not on watch were to muster and repair and wash their clothing, and scrub their hammocks.[59]

Today, with unification and the five-day working week, there is a trend in HMC ships to return to harbour early on Fridays, with a make and mend, meaning leave for all but the watch on Friday afternoons. As a result, the make and mend appears in daily routine orders published in advance so that the ship's company may make their plans for week-end leave. Because the intention to grant a make and mend is known in advance, the pipe, "hands to make and mend clothes," is not heard so often today.[60] At sea, the same result is often achieved simply by piping the order, "pipe down."[61]

An ancient nautical custom, it is of interest to note that the make and mend has an army background, too. An historian writing about the Royal Canadian Regiment in training on Salisbury Plain, England, in 1940, wrote: "On return to barracks . . . there was the customary 'make and mend' day free from duties; one fifth of the Regiment went on leave and others began to practise for the Brigade sports three days hence."[62]

Indeed, it is rather intriguing that while the navy has lost the original meaning of the term and today uses the term make and mend less and less, in the Royal Canadian Regiment and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry it is used widely, not only to denote a period of time when normal work and routines are suspended, but to signify, say on a field exercise, time to be devoted to maintenance of personal kit, clothing, weapons, vehicles et cetera, not unlike the old make and mend of the days of sail.

Manning and Cheering Ship

"Manning and cheering ship" is a very old custom. More than a mark of respect, it is an expression of esteem and affection by the whole ship's company for a particular person or another ship's company. This drill or ship's evolution, invariably carried out with spirit and enthusiasm, is to be seen when Her Majesty the Queen or her representative, His Excellency the Governor-General, visit, or make their departure from, units of the fleet; when HMC ships enter harbour after an engagement or victory at sea; and when one of HMC ships sails to her new homeport or to pay off. Sometimes a departing flag officer or other senior officer is so honoured.

The ship's company of HMCS *Gatineau* cheering ship as Her Majesty the Queen in the royal yacht *Britannia* leaves Canadian waters, July, 1959. (Note the historic arrangement of flags in *Britannia*: the Union Jack at the jack-staff; the admiralty flag at the fore; the royal standard at the main; the Canadian ensign at the mizzen; and the white ensign at the ensign-staff.)

In the days of sail, manning and cheering ship made a remarkable sight as each ship of the squadron vied with each other in smartness and speed to man the yards and rigging clear up to mastheads. Today, the ship's company line the rails of the upper deck, and, led from the bridge, give three mighty cheers.

Manning the Side

In the expression, "to man the side," there are two different meanings. One is the example where two warships meet on more or less parallel, reciprocal courses. One would expect to hear the alert sounded by bugle or bo's'n's call in each ship and the hands fallen in on the sides facing each other.[63] This practice has come down from the days of the heavily-gunned windship where, with most of the ship's company on deck or aloft, the guns could not be run out, indicating peaceful intentions.[64]

The other meaning of manning the side is the very old custom of receiving senior officers at the head of the accommodation ladder or the brow with a side party in attendance. Such side party would consist of four or five ratings, once called side boys, all in a line, headed by a chief or petty officer with his bo's'n's call ready to pipe the dignitary aboard.

There is an interesting account of the practice of this custom in Canadian waters more than two centuries ago. It will be remembered that in the summer of 1759 Wolfe spent several weeks assessing the problem of taking Quebec. One day during one of his tours of inspection he encountered a young midshipman recently arrived from New England who had not yet acquired a uniform. Ashley Bowen's journal gives an account of the lively exchange between the general and the midshipman in which the latter proved his identity by detailing how Wolfe was received on board HMS *Pembroke*, fifty guns, Captain John Simcoe RN,* earlier at Halifax. Young Bowen explained how only four hands were ordered to man the side until it was discovered that the visitor was none other than the commanding general, James Wolfe, when the orders took on a note of some urgency. In quick succession, the sergeant of marines, the boatswain and the master-at-arms arrived at the double, and a proper ruff was beat.[65]

*HMS *Pembroke*, fifty, in Halifax and in the St. Lawrence in 1759, is of special interest as a result of subsequent events in Canadian history. The captain of the *Pembroke*, Captain John Simcoe, died on the passage to Quebec; he was the father of Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, Colonel John Graves Simcoe. Moreover, the master (navigator) in the *Pembroke* was none other than the future famous explorer, James Cook.

Marriage

Social and economic change has had a significant effect on the serviceman and attitudes regarding marriage, and thus on customs related to marriage. In the past, two things militated against early marriage — low pay, and the belief that undivided attention was essential to the young man's success in the learning phase of the military profession.

Ten years before meeting his destiny at Quebec, a young major of infantry, James Wolfe, pointed up a third factor when he issued this order: "Any soldier that presumes to marry clandestinely, . . . that shall not consult his officer before his marriage, that the woman's character may be inquired into, every such offender will be punished with rigour."[66]

This concern for the welfare of the young serviceman still persisted when the Royal Canadian Air Force first spread its wings in 1924. "Permission to marry may be granted by the applicant's commanding officer. Such permission will not be given unless . . . the commanding officer is satisfied that the applicant is financially able to marry and that the woman is a desirable character."[67]

Even as late as 1965 it seemed necessary to admonish young officers to tread softly in this matter of marriage. "If you are married you are bound to have more interests outside your army life, and then your work and learning suffer . . . . You must not expect to have special treatment if you do marry before the official age [23 years]; it would be unfair to the other officers."[68]

But in spite of all the dire warnings, young men and the ladies of their choice found ways to begin their married lives and many were the joyous scenes when the young sailor went over the brow with long, white tapes securing the black silk about his neck, the symbol of his wedding day. That custom, of course, went out with the square-rig of bell bottoms and jumper. However, one custom of this kind does survive, though it is only occasionally seen today — the hoisting of a garland.

When a member of a ship's company is married in the port where the ship is lying, a garland of evergreens is hoisted for the day between the masts of a two-masted ship, or on the forestay of the more likely single-masted ship.

A marriage custom which is very much alive today is the time-honoured arch of swords. In a Service wedding involving a commissioned officer, officer colleagues in uniform acting as ushers make the arch of swords for the bridge and groom at the foot of the chancel steps at the end of the ceremony. Or, more often, the weather being fine, the ceremonial arch is made outside the church door, the officer-ushers having made a rapid exit through a side door, leaving the bridesmaids to go down the aisle unescorted.[69]

Two service personnel exchange marriage vows, Nova Scotia, 1957.

A lively marriage custom combining dignity and mirth is the one observed in the Second Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery at CFB Petawawa. Whenever a member of the regiment marries, he and his bride are joyfully assisted to a special seat mounted on the limber of a twenty-five pound gun. In this fashion, under tow by a 3/4-ton truck and escorted by a party from the regiment, the happy couple leave the church to begin their honeymoon.[70]

New Year's Day

As in our society generally, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are times of merry-making and good fellowship throughout the Canadian Forces. In addition to the traditional levees (see page 94), activities, more of an "in-house" kind, are varied and colourful.

Formal balls on New Year's Eve are very popular in units from coast to coast, a typical example being that of the Saskatchewan Dragoons of Moose Jaw, where balls take place simultaneously in the warrant officers/sergeants mess and the officers mess.

New Year's Day in the messes epitomizes the camaraderie and goodwill between all ranks. In most units of the Canadian Forces the officers as a group call on the warrant officers and sergeants in their mess and then, in turn, the NCO's are entertained in the officers' mess.

This custom in its various forms is of long standing. On the western front in 1915, the 3rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (called the Toronto Regiment, a forbear of today's Royal Regiment of Canada) had spent Christmas Day in the sodden trenches facing the German army. But by New Year's Day, 1916, the battalion was out of the line in reserve. There, spread out company by company in huts and barns, the troops fashioned trestle tables, decorated them with holly, and sat down to dinners of remarkable ingenuity served by the sergeants and officers in a memorable atmosphere of battle-tried comradeship and good-will.[71]

On New Year's Day, 1944, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada were stationed at Bournemouth, facing the English Channel. But duties in wartime served only to heighten the sense of good fellowship when the regiment's commanding officer and his officers strode up to the door of the sergeant's mess and were invited in, in the time-honoured tradition, by the regimental sergeant-major, to have a glass together.[72]

The traditional exchange of visits on New Year's Day between the officers and sergeants has, in the case of the 7th Toronto Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, an additional happy development. The commanding officer and the regimental sergeant-major join forces and personally cook and serve breakfast to the lot.

A similar occasion is to be seen in HMCS *Star* where the captain hosts a luncheon for all the officers of the Hamilton Naval Division.

In HMC ships in harbour there is a long tradition of sixteen bells being rung on the ship's bell at midnight on December 31, rather than the eight bells which normally would mark the end of the watch. On this occasion the bell is struck not by the quartermaster or the boatswain, but usually by the youngest seaman in the ship, this to the accompaniment of sundry whistles and sirens of other ships nearby.

In HMCS *York*, the Toronto naval division, there is a very lively scene in the chiefs' and petty officers' mess which not only marks New Year's Day but which recalls a three-hundred-year old custom which has only recently disappeared from the fleet. A highly polished, brass-bound rum barrel is appropriately broached at the sound of the time-honoured pipe, "up spirits," and the irreverent but low-key aside, "stand fast the Holy Ghost!"

A new tradition has been building for some years in HMC ships when in their home port for New Year's Day. More and more of the families of the members of the ship's company come down to the harbour at Esquimalt or Halifax to go on board and sit down to dinner in the congenial atmosphere of the mess decks of a ship of war. Where sailors must live in such confined quarters, it is indeed a joyous experience for them to hear the children's voices close at hand while they and their wives enjoy the good fellowship of the occasion.

The old French Canadian custom of gift-giving on New Year's Day is a highly cherished tradition in le Régiment de Hull where at a breakfast party in the armoury each officer and his wife receives a beautiful and tastefully chosen gift, often in silver, from the officers' mess of the regiment.

Reference to the year-end festivities in the Canadian Forces would not be complete without a word about that time of celebration so dear to the Scots — Hogmanay, the ancient expression for the last day of the year. The word itself is thought to have come from an old Norman word *hoguinané*, having the same meaning. To be present at the reciprocal visits between the messes of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, where the pipes seem to come into play with a renewed spirit and there is joyful camaraderie on every hand, is to see a reflection of the meaning of Hogmanay in the Scottish regiments throughout the land.

The Oath of Allegiance

When a person joins the Canadian Forces, he or she is required to swear an oath of allegiance, or make a solemn affirmation, in these words:

I, (full name), do swear (or solemnly affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her heirs and successors according to law. So help me God. (The entreaty at the end is omitted in the case of the solemn affirmation.)

Such a statement, made under oath, is a form of contract, a solemn promise, between the recruit and the sovereign, who as the queen of Canada embodies the state, the sovereign power. This oath of allegiance, or solemn affirmation, is based on a practice thousands of years old.

In the legions of ancient Rome, the soldier took a military oath called the *sacramentum*. It was a set formula of words voiced under conditions of great solemnity and expressing a commitment so deep that a soldier would seldom dare break it, not so much from fear of sanctions, as from the impossibility of expunging the stain from his personal honour. He promised implicit obedience to his commanders, that he would not desert the Service, "nor at anytime refuse to expose himself to the utmost Perils, for the Safety and Welfare of the State."[73]

This Roman army ceremony was re-enacted at the beginning of each year. It was an impressive spectacle. One soldier would be selected for his strong voice. He would repeat the formulated words after the tribune, whereupon the whole legion, as one man, would shout their consent to abide by the oath, sometimes drawing their short, heavy swords and thrusting them in the air to emphasize their declaration.[74]

Through the centuries, the conditions under which the oath of allegiance was administered, or whether it was administered at all, to recruits, have formed the background of many stories, fact and fiction. Much has been written about the "king's shilling," the acceptance of which at one time constituted an agreement by a man to enlist. Many were the tales of over-zealous recruiting sergeants inveigling a fellow citizen, too long languishing in the tavern, into accepting the king's shilling, the victim waking up next morning wondering how he was to escape being apprehended as a vagabond, or how to muster twenty shillings "smart money" to buy his way out of his "bad bargain." Or, it could go the other way, and that is why a useless soldier or sailor was known as a "king's hard bargain." Or, perhaps, the reluctant recruit never even saw a king's shilling, for in times of great national stress, the dreaded press gang produced "the bodies" if they could not be procured any other way.

However, it is of interest to note that Britons nearly three centuries ago had some protection against arbitrary induction into the forces. Since 1694, the

attestation of a recruit was required to be before a civil authority to guard against a citizen "being entrapped, without understanding the nature of it, into a contract, which, even though not a contract for life, is one of a very serious nature."[75]

Although the words of the oath of allegiance have changed over the years, there is a timeless quality in the expression of the relationship binding the sovereign and the subject. For example, there is something almost medieval in the phrasing of the soldier's oath in the days of Queen Anne nearly three centuries ago:

> I swear to be true to our Sovereign Queen Anne, and to serve Her honestly and faithfully, in the Defence of Her Person, Crown and Dignity, against all Her enemies and Opposers whatsoever; and to observe and obey Her Majesty's Orders, and the Orders of the Generals and Officers set over me by Her Majesty. So help me God.[76]

During the Napoleonic Wars, the oath and the certificate of the magistrate or justice of the peace before whom the recruit was attested were printed forms. The oath taken by a soldier in 1799 was reinforced by this quaintly worded document:

> I, (name) do make Oath, that I am by Trade a and to the best of my Knowledge and Belief, was born in the Parish of in the County of and that I have no rupture, nor ever was troubled with Fits, and am no ways disabled by Lameness or otherwise, but have the perfect Use of my Limbs, that I am not an Apprentice; and that I do not belong to the Militia, or to any other Regiment, or to His Majesty's Navy, or Marines.[77]

Promenading

The custom of promenading, as practised in the Canadian Forces today, is said to be one of considerable antiquity, yet, in the military sense, reference to it is difficult to find in print until the twentieth century. Promenading is associated with infantry regiments, particularly guards regiments, and is also practised in some armoured regiments. The word is taken from the French, meaning a walk taken at a leisurely pace for exercise or amusement, to and fro for display, or as part of a ceremony. The term dates from the sixteenth century and, in the eighteenth century, represented a fashionable practice of the European civilian scene.

Indeed, a rather colourful scene was painted in the words of a young officer of the 4th Regiment of Foot nearly two centuries ago, in 1787, recently arrived at Halifax for garrison duty. "There is a square in town called the Grand

Parade, where the troops in garrison parade every evening during the summer; and where all the belles and beaux of the place promenade, and the bands remain to play as long as they walk."[78]

Promenading has been defined as "a custom of long standing in the British Brigade of Guards by which officers on guard meeting, move to and fro in a leisurely, informal style in pairs prior to being called on parade for the changing ceremony. The officers march 25 to 30 paces in one direction, turn about and repeat the process."[79]

Promenading, in relation to the assembly of a battalion, is carried out in some regiments in lieu of the practice where the officers are fairly casually marched on to the parade by the battalions' second-in-command, where they stand in line facing the troops awaiting the order for the officers to fall in or to take post.

In the "Standing Orders of the Royal Canadian Regiment" (1935), it is clear that promenading was practised but the word was not used: ". . . as each Company is formed up . . . Officers will walk to and fro not more than three abreast, well clear of the battallion."

The air force seems to have adopted something approaching promenading, though perhaps in not so informal a fashion. "The officers are to march onto the parade ground and proceed to march in quick time, in pairs, up and down along the directing flank of the squadron in rear of the trumpeter . . . and the drummer."[80]

In spite of the uncertainty of the origin of military promenading, the custom is still very much alive in the Canadian Forces today. In the century-old Drill Hall in Ottawa, at the commanding officer's parade of the Governor-General's Foot Guards, the officers walk informally, in pairs, traditionally with hands clasped behind their backs, behind the saluting dais, prior to taking over their respective commands.

Reveille

It is the rare individual who really enjoys getting up in the morning, particularly when he is being coerced into getting out of bed by some insistent, jarring noise, be it the harsh notes of a bugle, or the "cheerful entreaties" of a sergeant or a ship's quartermaster, or the raucous demands of the simple alarm clock wisely set in a dish-pan. Yet the rising is inevitable and that's what reveille is all about, particularly the dictionary meaning for *se réveiller*, to revive. Like so many things military, the word comes from the French imperative *réveillez*, meaning wake up, originally from the Latin *vigilare*, watch.

However, in spite of the nasty ideas associated with reveille, including that

line from an old song — "Some day I'm going to murder the bugler!,"[81] the word reveille, probably more than any other, brings to mind one scene after another at such a rate and in such a variety of time and place, that when all put together conjures up in the mind's eye a most rich and colourful tapestry depicting the military heritage of the Canadian people:

The bright, chill air of an April morning in 1793 and the Queen's Rangers building new quarters at Queenston where the gallant Brock was to fall two decades later in the defence of Canada. "The Bugles sound at 5 every Morning & Coll. Simcoe goes out with the troops & returns to breakfast at nine."[82]

The 2nd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, at sea off Korea on 5 May 1951. ". . . reveille blew at 0430 hours and debarkation at Pusan began."[83]

Major-General Smith-Dorrien's flying column striking out against Boer guerilla forces in the cold and fog of an African night in 1900. "Reveille sounded at 1:00 a.m. on November 6 and at three o'clock the columns moved off . . . " including the Royal Canadian Dragoons, two guns of "D" Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery, and a pom-pom, which was the advance guard.[84]

The early morning assault of the 3rd Canadian Division over the Normandy beaches. "Reveille on D-Day, 6 June, 1944, was at 0315 hrs. The water in the Channel was rough: the spirits of the men boisterously high."[85]

The 10th Royal Grenadiers from Toronto on the march with wagon train north from Qu'Appelle to bring Riel's rebels to battle, camped on the prairie for the night. Next morning, 11 April 1885, reveille sounded at 4 a.m. and the long march continued.[86]

The makeshift camp of the Calgary Highlanders on the Sarcee Indian Reserve at the outbreak of war in 1939. "Each morning Boy Bugler Bennie Lee would arouse the drowsy recruits — bankers, salesmen, clerks, cowboys, farmers, lawyers and men from all grades of civilian life. In their motley garb ranging from mufti to kilts and home-made glengarries, the troops grabbed pails and raced for the water pumps. The day's training had begun."[87]

The shrill notes of the bo's'n's call in a Second World War destroyer and the timeless language of the sea. "Wakey, wakey, wak-e-ey! Rise and shine! Lash up and stow [your hammock]!"[88]

It was April, 1885, when the men of the 92nd Regiment (Winnipeg Light Infantry) were at Calgary to march to the relief of Edmonton, bent on the capture of Big Bear and his forces after the massacre at Frog Lake. ". . . the strident notes of the bugle

band sounded reveille at half past four, and breaking camp early we marched twenty-five miles our first day."[89]

Camp Borden in the days of the old Canadian Air Force of 1922, before the RCAF was established; an office-hut adjacent to the parade square, the living quarters of an RCMP constable (station security) and the assistant postmaster. The latter was a sergeant of the CAF and it was his duty to play reveille early every morning. This he slyly did by poking his bugle out the open window of the hut "for there was nobody else around!"[90]

In September, 1974, in exercise "Potlatch" off the mouth of the Nahwitti River, Vancouver Island, men of One Combat Group bedded down for the night in the cold austerity of the anchor cable space in HMCS *Provider*, took it in stride when a petty officer announced an unusually early reveille for the troops, 0300, "because that's when we drop anchor," and the cable deck is no place to be when that massive chain cable starts rattling out through the hawse.[91]

Although the early morning call or beat of the drum was known in Elizabethan times, probably the earliest instance of reveille in printed English was *Lawes and Ordnances of Warre* by the Earl of Northumberland (1640): "No victualler shall entertain any Souldiers in his house, tent or hutt, after the warning-piece at night, or before the beating of the Ravalee in the morning." A similar warning is to be found in the Articles of War (1673).[92]

In the eighteenth century, reveille was defined as "the beat of a drum, about break of day, to advertise the army that it is day-light, and that the sentinels forbear challenging."[93] Another purpose for reveille, other than for waking people up and marking the cessation of night duties, was as a signal to open the gate to let the horse-guard, consisting of a corporal and half a dozen troopers, do a quick reconnaissance beyond the walls of the town.[94]

Today in the Canadian Forces, people know what reveille means but its use in the sense of a fixed drill or loud, awakening sound has all but disappeared. It is seldom spelled out in routine orders. Indeed, the way people start the working day in the forces reflects a less regimented, "do-it-by-numbers" way of life. The majority of personnel today, whose duty is performed on bases, stations and even in barracks, live on the economy, that is, in their own accommodation in the town or elsewhere. They are expected to get themselves up, transported and in their place of duty on time, and this is their own responsibility.

In barracks today the troops do not normally live in dormitories, but are accommodated two to four in a room, or even in individual rooms. In some barrack situations, the troops are on their own so far as getting up is

concerned, while in others a duty NCO goes around knocking on doors to awaken people. At Collège Militaire Royal de Saint-Jean, a duty cadet in each block has the same responsibility.

What it really amounts to, today, is that reveille is far from a standardized routine in the Canadian Forces. There is much variety and flexibility to allow for differences in accommodation and circumstances, for example, duty at a command headquarters, as opposed to arctic training up by the Coppermine River.

It is evident that in regard to the management of daily routine there is a marked difference between what might be called the training scene and the operational environment, a distinct diminution of the outward signs of disciplinary control. For example, at CFB Chilliwack, where people are under training, daily routines are regulated audibly by recorded trumpet calls and band music, electronically controlled from the guardhouse. Similarly, at the Royal Military College, Kingston, reveille is by recorded bugle call, reinforced by the voices of duty cadets, and even by the bo's'n's call in the quarters known as the stone frigate.

On the other hand, when troops are out in the field on a scheme or exercise, rousing people is done by the man to be relieved, by a shake or voice call, or if the tactical situation permits, people may be awakened by the piercing sound of a "deuce and a half horn," the air horn of a 2½ ton truck. But, generally, the further one moves from the training establishment to the routine of the fixed base or station, with factors of shift work (as it is called) and of military duty occupying only a fraction of the weekly span, there is less and less of the outward signs of the traditional military life and more and more of what is called "civilianization" of the Service.

Yet, to visit a line regiment in garrison, is to hear the reveille of old sounding in the crisp morning air. For example, in Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, to this day, a bugler of the regiment's Corps of Drums steps smartly out on the parade square and sounds reveille in the time-honoured way.

One area where there has been little change is in "rousing the hands" in HMC ships where the factor of having to live in relatively cramped quarters still obtains as it has since the days of Nelson and before. Here the "cheery" twittering of the bo's'n's call penetrates every mess deck by way of the ship's broadcast, "wakey, wakey, rise and shine," followed by a variety of rhymes of doubtful literary merit intended to convince the drowsy matelot that the view from the upper deck is "wondrous fine!"

The Rifle Tradition

When the three former Services were merged into a single unified force by Act

of Parliament in 1968, followed by a programme a year later of kitting up all ranks in a common dark green uniform, the new garb seemed familiar and most appropriate to several units of the Canadian Forces — the rifle regiments. Eight years later, in 1976, when the minister of national defence authorized all rifle regiments to wear their traditional black web belts and sword slings with the Canadian Forces green uniform on ceremonial occasions, it was like coming home, a return to what has become known as the rifle tradition. Units such as the Regina Rifle Regiment, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, the Brockville Rifles, the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, and other units with forbears of the rifle tradition, all take great pride in being a part of this nearly two centuries old distinctive form of infantry.

It all started back in 1797 in the British army when a special battalion of riflemen was added to the 60th Regiment of Foot (later to become the King's Royal Rifle Corps). Three years later much the same thing happened in the 95th Regiment (later the Rifle Brigade). Unlike the other line regiments who wore red, "the rifles" right from the start were clothed in green like the gamekeepers of the forest on whom to some extent the role of the rifles was modelled.[95]

Both in uniform and drill, the rifles tactically represented a fighting man who blended into his environment and, therefore, was less readily seen, and a skirmisher lightly equipped, quick and flexible in movement. He was ideal for the campaigns in the forests of North America. Indeed, the 60th Regiment was raised for that purpose and gave a good account of itself in the Seven Years War and the American Revolution. A century later, the Royal Rifles were at the gates of Fort Garry, near where the Red and the Assiniboine rivers join in today's Winnipeg, to quell Louis Riel's rebellion.[96]

Rifle regiments traditionally, in addition to a green uniform, used black leather (later black web) equipment, black head-dress, and black buttons. There were no fifes and drums, just bugles used mostly for passing orders. They carried no colours and their battle honours were inscribed on their badge, traditionally a maltese cross.

Unlike other infantrymen, who were equipped with the bayonet triangular in cross section, the rifles had a special weapon called a sword, and to this day a rifleman's bayonet is called a sword. It came about this way. Originally, riflemen were equipped with a shorter and lighter rifle than ordinary infantry units to increase their mobility. A longer bayonet was provided to make up for the length of reach lost by the shorter rifle. This bayonet was fitted with a hand grip to use alone for close quarter fighting. For this reason it was called a sword.[97]

On the march, the rifle was carried "at the trail" to be ready for instant action, and the march itself was conducted at a pace faster than the normal cadence of the infantry. Drill movements were quick and quiet with a minimum of orders. Though strictly disciplined, quick, quiet flexibility and resourcefulness were the mark of the rifleman in the field. Emphasis was placed on the individual in developing alertness, stealth and speed of movement. High standards of marksmanship and ability to move away from fixed tactics and drills were hallmarks of the rifle regiment. These traditions are very much alive and proudly preserved by the rifles today.

Rounds

Rounds are routine duties of inspection designed to ensure the security of a military force irrespective of its form, location or function. Sometimes called by other names, such as "duty officer's duties," rounds are essential to the safety and fighting capability of a force and therefore, in whatever form, are as old as the military profession itself. An officer a century ago came close to the mark when he defined rounds as "going round to inspect sentinels. The general visting of the decks, made by officers, to see that all is going on right."[98]

A much earlier conception of the importance of rounds is to be found in *An Abridgment of the English Military Discipline*, published in London in 1689 for the use of His Majesty's Forces: "In Garrisons that are well Guarded, the Rounds go every quarter of an hour, To the end the Rampart may never be unfurnished."[99]

So, whether the routine orders for rounds were written today or centuries ago, there are two basic purposes involved — ensuring against surprise by a hostile force, and preserving the safety and therefore the fighting capability of the force from being jeopardized by such things as fire, the elements, or conditions contributing to poor health. Consequently, rounds may range from those of the picquet thrown out round a night field position with sentries keeping watch, to the officer of the day and the duty petty officer on board ship in harbour making rounds in the mess decks before "pipe down" in the evening, to see that all is squared away and shipshape for the night.

Today, on land, the term rounds is not used as much as it once was. Seldom if ever will it be found, for example, in routine orders. It depends to some extent on the type and location of the military establishment. For example, in a barracks located in a city, the majority of Service personnel spend the night in their own private accommodation outside the barracks, resulting in much of what was called rounds being carried out by non-Service personnel, the commissionaires. But, even so, the orderly sergeant still makes his rounds in

the early evening, and the duty officer still inspects hospital and guardroom facilities on a regular basis.[100]

What it really amounts to is that the time-honoured system of rounds, like so many other aspects of Service life today, has been adapted to suit a variety of situations. There is little of the uniformity which once prevailed. On some bases, the battalion orderly sergeant supervises rounds as of old. On others, particularly within a regiment's lines, members of the unit, called regimental policemen, carry out this duty. On yet other bases, there are no rounds on foot at all; reliance is placed on the cruiser rounds of military police.

All of this, of course, reflects changing attitudes in society at large. Indeed, some say it is one more aspect of the "civilianization" of the military. For example, in the forces today, "hotel system" and "inn-keeper" are commonly used terms. Hotel system refers to the fact that troops in barracks no longer live in dormitories, but two or four to a room, or even one to a room. It means male and female Service personnel sharing the same barrack buildings. Very few people are required to live on base. To do so, except in training establishments, is a matter of individual choice. One hears the rejoinder, "You don't make rounds in married quarters, why would you in single quarters?" The inn-keeper is the NCO responsible for keeping the block clean but not for the disciplining of its residents.

Flexibility in routines is, of course, essential in the context of a variety of situations. For example, during a prolonged exercise in the field, there are many occasions when picquets must be thrown out and sentries posted, requiring some form of rounds, however temporary the need may be.

On the other hand, in HMC ships, when the pipe "clear up messdecks and flats for rounds" is heard, all hands know that in short order the officer of the day and the duty petty officer in harbour, or the executive officer and the coxswain at sea, will soon be briskly walking through all the messdecks and all the spaces from forepeak to tiller flat, keeping a weather eye for any irregularity which might interfere with the safety and fighting capability of the ship. The captain's rounds are normally made once a week.[101]

There is one aspect of rounds in the army tradition which has survived very much in a ceremonial form, and that is the mounting of a quarter guard in honour of a visiting officer of high rank, say to a military encampment. Such a guard consists of some ten to fourteen men, depending on the number of posts to be manned, for a period of some twenty-four hours. Issuing from the quarter guardroom, the men would be fallen in in two ranks, and pay appropriate compliments to the visiting dignitary. Then over a specified period the men would man sentry posts and perform the time-honoured ritual of the challenge and response, and of the new sentry taking over from the old.

Something of the timelessness of this ceremonial ritual may be seen in the standing orders of the old Toronto unit, the Governor-General's Body Guard a century ago:

> A sentry should consider his duties as a sacred trust . . . . After watchsetting, on any one approaching he will challenge, 'Who comes there?' and port his arms. If the answer is satisfactory, he will say 'Advance, friend, all's well;' should the answer be 'Rounds,' he will demand 'What Rounds?' If he is posted at the guardhouse, and the reply is 'Grand Rounds' or 'Visiting Rounds,' he will call 'Stand, Grand (or Visiting) Rounds, Guard turn out.' If posted anywhere else, he will say, 'Pass, Grand (or Visiting) Rounds, all's well.' If there is a countersign, he will command them to 'Advance one and give the countersign.'[102]

In a typical eighteenth century satire, there are these references to rounds in the form of advice to the major:

> When it is your turn to be field officer of the day in camp, be sure to keep the picquets waiting as long as you can, particularly if it should rain: this will accustom the soldiers to stand the weather, and will make them glad to see you.
>
> "In going the rounds in the night, do not fail to keep the serjeant and escort in a good round trot. This will prevent their catching cold, and may be done without the least inconvenience, if you are on horseback."

To the private soldier:

> If you are sentinel at the tent of one of the field officers, you need not challenge in the forepart of the evening, for fear of disturbing his honour, who perhaps may be reading, writing, or entertaining company. But as soon as he is gone to bed, roar out every ten minutes at least, 'Who comes there?' though nobody is passing. This will give him a favourable idea of your alertness; and though his slumbers may be broken, yet will they be the more pleasing, when he finds that he reposes in perfect security. When the hour of relief approaches, keep constantly crying out, 'Relief, relief!' it will prevent the guard from forgetting you, and prove that you are not asleep.[103]

She and Her

Ships are regarded as feminine and in the parlance of sailors are referred to as "she" and "her." This custom is centuries old but how it came to be is not known. There has been, of course, much conjecture, but much of this sounds contrived, for example, that "she's hard to manage," or "she's unpredictable."

Yet, there is no doubt that the custom is very much alive in expressions, such as "the eyes of her," that is, the fore end of the ship near the hawse pipes through which the anchor cables are paid out. Or "to meet her," as used when the rudder has been put over in altering course and it is necessary "to meet her" with opposite rudder to prevent the ship swinging too far.[104]

The suggestion that ships are referred to as "she" because most bear feminine names does not hold water, for thousands have been given masculine names. Similarly, while most carved figureheads adorning the stems of ships were female forms, many were not.

The most likely explanation for ships and boats being referred to as feminine is the traditional belief of sailors that a ship is very close to being a living entity, endowed with spirit and a distinct personality, demanding respect and, given proper consideration, most dependable. And, somehow, through some curious alchemy in the mind of the seaman in the days of sail, often away from the land for months on end, this near-human being took on the beauty and mystique of a woman.

Whatever the origin, there can be no doubt about the antiquity of this custom of speech. In a Spanish deposition regarding a South Pacific raid by Drake in the *Golden Hind*, there is this statement:

> On Friday, February thirteenth, 1578, . . . the ship of some English Corsairs, with a pinnace and skiff arrived at the port of Callao de Lima. Entering between the ships that lay at anchor there, the Corsairs enquired for the ship of Miguel Angel, ... On boarding her they found . . . she did not contain the riches they expected, for the silver had not yet been carried aboard.[105]

Similarly, in a letter written in 1610 by a young sea officer to the vice-admiral at Plymouth and referring to an inquiry about a particular ship, he wrote: "Concerning the ship the case thus standeth: Shee was taken by one Captaine Walmer whom we had like to have taken at our first arrivall in Ireland."[106]

The Ship's Bell

Despite the inevitability of changing customs, functions and technology, the ship's bell remains, like the binnacle, one of the focal points of the ship. It continues to be one of the most valued pieces of the ship's original equipment. Indeed, it is often all that is left long after the ship herself has vanished. The reasons for this feeling toward a piece of highly polished, fine bronze are many and varied.

Traditionally, the bell is engraved with the ship's name and the year of her

build. For example, the bell of HMCS *Provider* displays below the name in bold characters, 1963. The size of a ship's bell varies with the dimensions of the ship.

For centuries, the ship's bell was used primarily to indicate the hour, and therefore, in a sense, controlled the ship's routine. In the days of sail, when most of the people on the lower deck were illiterate and certainly carried no time-piece, the ringing of the ship's bell to mark the changing of the watch was of great importance.

Until Harrison invented the marine chronometer in the late eighteenth century (the first versions of which may still be seen in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England), the measurement of time was achieved by the half-hour sand-glass kept near the binnacle on the quarter-deck. It was the duty of one of the ship's boys to turn the glass, under the watchful eye of the quartermaster of the watch, and ring the ship's bell, the number of bells rung corresponding to the time elapsed, there being eight bells to each four hour watch.

This function of the ship's bell has now largely disappeared in HMC ships owing to the fact that the same information may be heard by means of the pipe over the ship's broadcast. Also, of course, everyone wears a watch, although it is not many years ago in the Royal Canadian Navy that the wearing of watches and rings, et cetera, by people engaged in gunnery, torpedo and cable work was forbidden by regulation to prevent physical injury.

Another use of the ship's bell which has given way to modern means of communication is as an alarm, as in the case of fire. For centuries at sea, the rapid ringing of the bell brought the swift attention of the whole ship's company to the receiving of orders. An illustration of this and what it meant when fire occurred in a lone ship far from outside help may be seen in the case of HMS *Menai*, frigate. She was on passage from her station at St. Helena, where she had been keeping a weather eye on the exiled Napoleon over that empty stretch of ocean to the Cape of Good Hope, a century and a half ago.

The boatswain's yeoman had removed the candle from a lantern, left it burning by a beam, and forgot it when going to his supper. "[We] soon heard a murmur rising from the lower deck and then the awful cry of 'Fire' . . . The fire-bell rang out; all went to their stations to fight the fire, which had broken out in the boatswain's store room, separated only by a double bulkhead from the powder magazine."[107] The ship's bell brought prompt action, and superb discipline saved the ship.

But the primary purpose of the ship's bell, today, is to help avert collisions between ships. *The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea* requires that a vessel at anchor in fog, in harbour, or in a roadstead must ring

her bell rapidly for five seconds at intervals of one minute. This practice is a very old one and well illustrated in the seventeenth century diary of Chaplain Teonge, Royal Navy.

Describing a convoy passage from Deal to Tangier in 1675, under the escort of the frigate *Assistance*, Teonge recorded one of the convoy instructions to the masters of the merchantmen. "If it prove foggy weather by night or day, we must ring our bells, and fire a musket now and then. And in dark nights each ship to carry a light." And, again, in 1678, this time from the Captain of the *Royal Oak*, sixty-four guns, "So great a fog that we are fain to ring our bells, beat drums, and fire muskets often, to keep us from falling foul one upon another."[108]

A visitor to the Parliament Buildings, Queen's Park, Toronto, may notice that a ship's bell occupies an honoured place there. It is the bell of the cruiser, HMCS *Ontario*. A closer look will reveal the names of children inscribed on the bell, children who were baptized on board the *Ontario*. Traditionally, in Her Majesty's ships, children of members of a ship's company may be christened by a chaplain using the ship's unshipped bell inverted as a baptismal font. Afterwards, the consecrated water is returned to the sea by the chaplain and the side is piped during this part of the ceremony. The child's full name is then inscribed on the bell.[109]

Today, in Stadacona Chapel, CFB Halifax, the permanently fitted baptismal font is the bell of HMCS *Uganda* bearing the date 1944. Inscribed on it are the names of children baptised during the cruiser's periods in commission.

Splice the Main Brace

Even though the daily issue of rum in HMC ships was abolished in 1971, current regulations authorize seamen to receive a special issue of spirits in exceptional circumstances. Soldiers and airmen may receive the same treatment when performing their duties "under unusual and difficult conditions . . . ."[110]

There is a long Service tradition behind the special issue of spirits, as may be seen in an order issued by James Wolfe as he faced the task of taking Quebec in the summer of 1759: "When rum is to be issued out to the troops on account of the badness of the weather, or their having suffered extraordinary fatigues, any soldier who is known to have disposed of his allowance to another . . . shall . . . be struck entirely out of the roll when rum is to be delivered out . . . ."[111]

Similarly, a century and a half after Wolfe, the Royal Canadian Dragoons

in their fighting march against the Boers from Bloemfontein toward Johannesburg and Pretoria braced themselves against the bitter cold with "the thrice-weekly issues of rum — two and a half ounces. This warmed the stomachs and brightened the outlook. . . ."[112]

Today, in the navy, there is a relatively rare issue of rum which is made on the order "splice the main brace," when every officer and man in the ship's company receives two and one half ounces of spirits. Such an occurrence is usually related to victory in battle, such as V-E Day, 1945, or observance of some happy occasion of national significance.

Such an occasion was celebrated on board HMCS *Ontario*, cruiser, in the port of Seattle, Washington, in August, 1950. The crash of the saluting guns shattered the windows in the dockyard and the local residents, streaming down to the jetty-side to see what the noise was all about, happily joined the ship's company on the fo'c's'le and quarter-deck for the splicing of the main brace. It was the announcement of the birth of Her Royal Highness the Princess Anne. The order, splice the main brace, may be given only by Her Majesty, the Queen or other member of the royal family, His Excellency the Governor-General, or the chief of the defence staff.[113] Governor-General Roland Michener gave the order in HMCS *Preserver* at Antwerp in 1971 and Governor-General Leger did so in HMCS *Terra Nova* at Victoria in 1974.

The expression itself has an interesting origin and is related to the theme of duty well done in exceptionally arduous conditions.

In a square-rigged ship, as most sailing men-of-war were, the mainsail, the largest sail carried, was set on the mainyard at right angles to the mainmast. This great mainsail had an important part in the application of windpower to drive the ship ahead. To exert the desired wind force, the yard with its sail had to be trimmed to a particular angle relative to the direction of the wind and the course to be steered. This was done by hauling on the main brace, a very important part of the rigging. To splice the main brace, that is, to repair or replace this heavy piece of rigging, required great skill and speed on the part of the ship's company, a strenuous task even in good weather, a dangerous one in foul weather.

It is said that the expression, splice the main brace, in the sense of a special issue of spirits, dates from Captain James Cook's tiny squadron of 1773, when Lieutenant James Burney, commanding HMS *Adventure*, in reporting additional allowances of spirits, recorded amounts of rum consumed under "splice the main brace."[114]

Submariners

Submariners are probably the most unorthodox people in the Service with

respect to dress, particularly once their boat has slipped from the buoy or the jetty. It is something of a paradox that the function, design and environment of their vessel has, over the course of some seven decades of submarine development, produced one of the toughest systems of self-discipline side by side with the least formal officer-man relationship in the Service today. These are factors essential to "fighting the ship" in the depths of the sea, as well as to the preservation of the boat and her company.

Space to live and work, and even to stow gear, is extremely limited, as is fresh water for bathing and laundering. A submariner must live, often for weeks on end, in very confined quarters and the informality of his attire at sea is one of the ways in which the underwater sailor comes to terms with his duties and environment.

One mark of the submariner is his high-necked white sweater, a good buffer against the elements while standing watch on the open bridge atop the conning tower. The submariner's sweater has been in vogue since the early days of submarines in the Royal Navy prior to the First World War, and Canada's first underwater craft, the CC boats of 1914 at Esquimalt.

The normal rig-of-the-day in HMC submarines at sea is called "pirate rig," a wide variety of scruffy clothing, sometimes of quite an imaginative bent, often jeans and T-shirts bearing colourful designs and slogans.

Another effective garment of the submariner, particularly for duties on the exposed casing running the length of the pressure hull, is the "poopy suit," a snug coverall that clings to the ankles and wrists, and is so-named because of the necessity of removal to do the necessary.

Finally, in respect to submariner's dress, one must experience a mess dinner in the wardroom of a submarine to believe it. At first glance, it seems incongruous that in this space, little more than nine feet by ten feet, some seven officers not only live and dine, but enjoy an occasional mess dinner, properly served and using fine crystal, china and plate. But once again, it is attire that sets the submariner apart. At such a mess dinner, any kind of rig is quite acceptable providing the diner wears a tie. And one can only imagine the weird and wonderful forms of neckwear which can be and are fashioned by the ever resourceful submariner.[115]

Sunset Ceremony (The Tattoo and the Retreat)

Given the glorious colour of approaching sunset, and then, the gathering darkness; given the spirited movements of the troops and the mood of martial music; given the beautiful physical settings both natural and man-made with which Canada abounds — there is a sense of mystery and magic in the drama called the sunset ceremony. Simple duties of centuries ago, such as closing the

Naval gun's crew practising for the sunset ceremony, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, June, 1971.

gate, troops returning to their quarters for the night, and the setting of the watch, all to the beat of the drum, have in the course of time evolved into a beautiful ceremonial tradition reflecting our people's long military heritage.

The sunset ceremony in all its colourful, smooth-flowing pageantry encompasses three happenings — the tattoo, the retreat and the lowering of the national flag of Canada. A full presentation may involve as many as one hundred officers and men. Basically, the detachment consists of a guard and band, and guns' crews.

An interesting characteristic of the ceremony as laid down in regulations is that it can be carried out in grand manner, as is done occasionally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, or on a reduced scale, as in a jetty-side presentation by a ship's company in a foreign port.[116]

The portion of the sunset ceremony called the tattoo is of ancient origin. The word itself is of interest. In the historical sense, tattoo is defined as "Beat of Drum, or bugle call, at 10 p.m., recalling soldiers to quarters." In the seventeenth century, the word usually appeared as "tap-too," reflecting its Dutch origin, *tap-toe*, meaning to shut off the tap or spigot.

In the days before permanent barracks, troops in garrison or on the march were billeted on the town, sometimes in private houses but more often in inns and ale-houses.[117] After the day's duty, the place of resort for most soldiers was the inns and taverns of the town. The signal to get the troops back to their billets for the night was by beat of drum through the various districts of the town where the ale-houses were located. The beat of the tattoo conveyed two messages — one to the innkeeper, ordering him (originally in the Dutch tongue, *doe den tap toe*,) to turn off his taps and serve no more ale or spirits; the other to the soldiers "to retire to their chambers, to put out their fire and candle, and go to bed."[118]

An officer, a sergeant and a file of men followed within minutes the drummers, sometimes augmented by fifers, and woe betide the innkeeper who did not obey, for his premises would soon be declared out-of-bounds and therefore out of business. An indication of what befell the tardy tippler is to be found in orders issued by Major James Wolfe in 1748/49* when he forebade

> any man to appear out of his quarters, without a written leave from his officer, from half an hour after tattoo is beat till the reveille; any man who shall presume to disobey this order, and shall be discovered, to be put the next morning into the dungeon, and confined there for four days upon bread and water.[119]

*For a short time in the mid-eighteenth century, the year was written "old style" or "new style" when an adjustment was made in the number of days to bring the current calendar into line with solar time.

There is an interesting record of the meaning of the beating of the tattoo at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the eighteenth century. In May, 1758, a mighty fleet of ships of war and troop transports lay in Halifax harbour under the command of Edward Boscawen, Admiral of the Blue, preparing for the assault on the fortress of Louisbourg. The admiral's order read in part:

> No petty officer, non Commissioned [Officer] of the Troops, Soldiers or Seamen to have leave to go on shore but on some very particular occasion, and that Leave to be given in writing by the Captain of his Majesty's ship, or the Commanding Officer of those embarked on board the Transports.
>
> All the Boats belonging to his Majesty's ships, and all those belonging to the Transports, to return on board their ships at the beating the Taptoo.[120]

From the original lone drummer, the gradual increase of more drums, and then flutes or fifes, until the latter part of the eighteenth century when bands appeared in the regiments, the small but authoritative procession in the evening beating the tattoo has taken on the aura of marching entertainment, the elaboration of which has become the tattoo as most people know it today.

Another aspect of beating the tattoo that is still with us to this day is the "Last Post" sounded on a bugle or trumpet. Something of the Serviceman's feeling for those notes rendered on the night air may be gathered from a trooper's description of life in a militia camp near Sussex, New Brunswick, before the outbreak of war in 1914:

> When it got dark you could look around the camp and you'd see row after row of tents, on the flats and up on infantry hill, and every tent was like a little triangle of light. They used candles to light them. At 10 o'clock you'd hear the bugles sound lights out. . . .
>
> Then you'd hear the Last Post. Everybody would get quiet when the bugler played the Last Post. It's strange the sort of hush there is in that music. You'd always get a feeling way down inside when it came across the camp there in the night.[121]

"Post" here is used in the sense of a soldier's station, as in sentry post. In beating the tattoo, the drummers marched from post to post in the town or camp, the first post would be the signal of their having taken up position to begin their round, while the last post indicated they had completed the round.[122] (One can readily see here the symbolism of the "Last Post" at military funerals).

After the tattoo portion of the sunset ceremony, comes that part derived

from the historic "beating the retreat." Perhaps it should be said here that down through the centuries, both in practice and in the literature, there is apparent confusion between the two routines, the tattoo and the retreat.[123] However, it seems quite clear that, basically, the retreat signified the closing of the gate at sunset and the setting of the watch, and the tattoo was the signal for soldiers to return to their billets for the night, which was after darkness had fallen, usually at 10 p.m.

The latter is the origin of *le couvre-feu* (the curfew) which is signalled by the booming report of a 105 mm gun at 9:30 every evening at the Citadel of Quebec. Like the noon-day gun so familiar to generations of the citizens of Quebec, the *couvre-feu* is fired daily by the Royal 22e Régiment from its station in the old fortification overlooking the St. Lawrence River and the Plains of Abraham — a reminder from long ago that it is time for members of the garrison to return to their quarters for the night.

Another point of interest here is that in the eighteenth century a dozen different drum-beats were used to convey orders, and these different rhythms or beats were well understood by every soldier. There were two retreats; one was the retreat at sundown in garrison or camp; the other was the tactical manoeuver in battle.[124] This latter was known in the Royal Navy and probably had to do with grappling and boarding an enemy ship. There is an amusing incident described whereby Midshipman Jackson, aged about fourteen years, was mastheaded for his sins, in HMS *America*, forty-four guns, on the Pacific Station in 1844. This item appears in Moresby's diary:

> Jackson mastheaded during church-time at Callao, for telling the drummer to beat a retreat from division without orders. As church was rigged on the upper deck, Jackson occupied the position of the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, and some ladies who had come on board manifested the extremest sympathy. . . .[125]

But the beating of the retreat, which is associated with the setting sun, is likely sixteenth century in origin and we have an early example, primitive but practical, in our own pioneer development. In 1642, the infant settlement of Montreal, then called Ville-Marie, was founded within a tiny stockade by Maisonneuve and a band of brave men and women known as *Messieurs et Dames de la Société de Notre-Dame pour la conversion des Sauvages de la Nouvelle-France.* These early settlers were almost constantly threatened by the Iroquois. Yet, in spite of the danger, the men gradually cleared a field for cultivation, toiling from dawn to dusk under the watchful eyes of a sentinel or

two, posted at the edge of the clearing. In the gathering darkness, a bell would ring out from the stockade and the workers from the fields would wend their way to the safety of the barred gate.[126]

A good eighteenth century description of beating the retreat by a British regiment reads:

> Half an hour before the gates are to be shut, which is generally at the setting of the sun, a Serjeant and four men must be sent from each port to the main-guard for the keys; at which time, the Drummers of the port guards are to go upon the ramparts, and beat a Retreat, to give notice to those without, that the gates are going to be shut, that they may come in before they are. As soon as the Drummers have finished the Retreat, which they should not do in less than a quarter of an hour, the Officers must order the barriers and gates to be shut, leaving only the wickets open; after which, no Soldier should be suffered to go out of the town, though port-liberty should be allowed them in the day-time.[127]

It was, of course, at beat the retreat that the piquets were formed and the watches set. In the modern sunset ceremony, allusion is made to this ancient routine in the section drill.

There follows the firing of a feu-de-joie, then the band commencing the thoughtful and familiar strains of an evening hymn. Finally comes the stirring rolls of the drums, the majestic rendition of "O Canada" and "God Save the Queen," and the lowering of the national flag of Canada.

Thus has unfolded down through the centuries, from simple military routine duties, this colourful and moving sunset ceremony.

And out of the same traditions have come the countless military tattoos, which have given such joy to countless thousands, from those of the militia at Camp Niagara in the 1920's (where the troops would rush from the field to catch the last steamer to Toronto); to that of the Royal 22e Régiment at that superb site, the Citadel of Quebec; through the peerless performances at Aldershot and Edinburgh Castle, where many Canadian units have taken part; to that magnificent blend of pageantry, humour and stirring drama that was the Canadian Forces tattoo in celebration of our nation's centenary in 1967.

TGIF

An air force custom much enjoyed over the past quarter century, and one that has now spilled over into civilian life, is TGIF (Thank God It's Friday). TGIF is essentially a "beer call" heard in most air force messes every Friday afternoon at the end of the day's work.

Where and when TGIF first began is uncertain. But what is certain is that it

is RCAF in origin and it was observed in the early days of Canadian commitment to NATO in Europe, specifically at Marville, France, in the mid-1950s.[128]

TGIF, a gathering in the mess, marked the end of the flying week, a time to chat over a friendly glass about the past week's operations, a time to compare notes about this aircraft and that mission or manoeuvre. The popularity of TGIF became even more pronounced as the five-day week rapidly became a reality in the 1950s.

The Wedge Cap

Current dress regulations of the Canadian Forces include this rather uninspiring, matter-of-course item: "Cap, wedge, green (optional) — worn on the right side of the head . . . one inch above the right eyebrow."[129]

Yet, the fact is that the wedge cap is a good example of how a tradition was born some sixty years ago and thrives to this day — the airman's affinity for this type of head-dress.

It all began when the Royal Flying Corps was established just before the Great War of 1914-1918, a force in which Canadians played a prominent part. The field service cap, as it was then called, was adopted by the RFC along with a tunic with a high, stand-up collar and secured by buttons at the far right side of the chest. With the cap cocked well over to the right, this uniform with its jaunty air became synonymous with the daring new fighting man, the airman. The head-dress, designated wedge cap in 1941,[130] continued to be worn throughout the life of the Royal Canadian Air Force, 1924-1968, and is still the preference of many airmen in spite of the availability of the forage cap and the beret. There is little doubt that in the days when goggles and leather helmets were worn in open cockpits, the field service cap lent itself to handy storage in a pocket ready for use on return to base.

But the wedge cap is somewhat older than airmen and aircraft. It is of army origin and dates from the nineteenth century. Indeed, the airman picked up the field service cap during a lull in its use by the army.

This head-dress, first called the Austrian pattern field cap, came into official use in the British army in 1890 for other ranks and 1896 for commissioned officers.[131] This was the head-gear worn by Canadian soldiers embarking for service in South Africa at the turn of the century. The army largely switched to the peaked forage cap in 1904 and stayed with it until the Second World War when a reversion was made to the wedge-type cap until use of the beret became general in 1943.

Today's wedge cap, as every boy who served in the old school cadet corps knows, is a little different from the old field service cap, though they look very

much alike. The older one was a rather ingenious garment, fairly cool to wear when perched on the side of the head, but capable of being unfolded to cover the nape of the neck, the ears and the chin. Today's version is sewn so that it does not unfold. But even so, the green wedge cap of today looks very much like those worn by the air crews standing proudly beside the Avro 504s, Sopwith Camels and SE5As of the old Royal Flying Corps.[132]

Weepers

According to the dictionary, weepers were persons hired to mourn at a funeral, but, today, weepers is a highly popular thirty year old naval institution at Halifax. First begun in the wardroom in Admiralty House, HMCS *Stadacona*, about 1947, weepers is a gathering of maritime command officers after duty on Fridays. The significance of the term itself enjoys two versions: "to weep in one's beer" in the traditional "wailing wall" fashion, airing the problems of the week; and the glint-in-the-eye allusion to supposedly weeping wives waiting at home for their wayward sailor spouses.

8
Mascots

Picture the sun-drenched but troubled island of Cyprus in the summer of 1974, and a sand-bagged observation post of the Canadian Airborne Regiment on the Confrontation Line in Nicosia under the pressure of advancing Turkish forces, when who waddles into view but a beautiful white duck, head high in the air, and resplendent in bright orange bill and gaiters. Promptly dubbed Petty Officer Wilbur Duck, no doubt as much for his sea-going gait as for his webbed feet, the new arrival at once becomes the focal point of good humour and affection, a foil to tension and a relief to boredom — in other words, a mascot![1]

The traditional buoyant spirit of the Serviceman and the nature of his calling explains the fact that mascots have been around as long as fighting formations have existed. What is generally not known, though, is that a mascot may not necessarily be, dare it be said, an animate being. Examples abound.

There is Old Blue, the magnificent golden buck's head which occupies a place of honour on a bulkhead in HMCS *Fraser,* destroyer, the "living" symbol of the spirit of the Frasers, as the ship's company is known.[2]. Old Blue, of course, was inspired by the golden buck's head in the ship's badge (the ship was named for the river honouring Simon Fraser), which is derived from the crest of the Fraser arms, and the ship's colours, gold and blue.[3]

Also inspired by a ship's badge is the much travelled wardroom mascot of HMCS *Terra Nova,* Percy the Penguin. Stuffed and highly decorated, Percy has been the center of many an amusing adventure in sixteen years of sailing the oceans of the world.[4]

Another famous mascot of this non-breathing variety was the much travelled Little Chief of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, a pewter Indian, eleven feet tall, which once stood in solemn silhouette against the

evening sky on the roof of the canning factory in Picton, where the regiment mustered for drill back in 1939. However, the stoical Little Chief was lost when the "Hasty P's" were hastily evacuated from Brittany through Brest when the attempt to stem the German tide failed in June, 1940. Nevertheless, a second Little Chief, this time seven feet tall and carved from solid pine, eventually joined the regiment in the European theatre of war, and today enjoys a prominent place in the regimental headquarters at Belleville.[5]

Also fashioned of metal is the well known yet seldom seen Cecil the Snake of 444 Tactical Helicopter Squadron. The device on the squadron badge is the hooded cobra and many years ago, in Germany, a fine likeness of this fierce reptile was acquired in a shop. From then on, he was called Cecil the Snake. But because visitors from other squadrons have been known to cast covetous glances at Cecil, the cobra has been entrusted to the care of the junior officer on the squadron, there being dire penalties awaiting this gentleman should anything happen to Cecil. As a result this unusual mascot emerges from his secret refuge only for very special occasions in the mess.[6]

But perhaps the most cherished and the most coveted of the long parade of inanimate mascots which led truly charmed lives in the Canadian Forces was the Greater Yellow-Legs of Ottawa's No. 2416 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force in the 1950s, which when glasses were raised in the squadron mess, brought forth the solemn toast, "the Honoured Twillick!"

So great was the fame of this bird that it was essential, for his own security, that he spend most of his quiet hours bound by a huge chain in a strong wrought-iron cage. For this mascot was no ordinary Twillick bird. Not only did he occupy the honoured position of being the major device on the squadron's official badge, but he dominated the scene of every mess function. Unknown to the uninitiated, the Twillick bird was fitted with an uncommonly capacious holding tank, together with a spigot concealed in the feathers just abaft the landing gear. With a flourish, the Twillick-Master would give a twist to the spigot and proceed with the ceremonial "Charging of the Noggins" with a brew which defied normal analysis, but which always evoked the lusty toast, "Up the Twillick!"[7]

The origin of the custom of maintaining regimental mascots is not known, but it was well established two centuries ago. A curious little book written and published by a British officer in New York for the express purpose of aiding, by the book's sale, the dependents of the soldiers "butchered that day" of Concord, and of those "that gloriously fell in their country's cause at Bunker Hill" (1775), gives this picture of a mascot in the North America of that day.[8]

> The royal regiment of welch Fuzileers has a privilegeous honor of passing in review preceded by a Goat with gilded horns, and adorned with ringlets of flowers; . . . the corps values itself much on the ancientness of the custom.

The author went on to describe the regiment's observance of St. David's Day at a mess dinner with the richly caparisoned goat ridden by a drummer boy being led three times round the mess table by the drum-major to the tune of "The Noble Race of Shenkin," when the mascot took off at a furious rate, unseating his rider, bound for his quarters in Boston with all his elegant trappings, "to the no small joy of the garrison and populace."

Mascots also flourished in garrison life in the Canada of colonial times. In 1843, one of the units on garrison duty in Upper Canada was the 83rd Regiment of Foot. A water-colour in the Public Archives of Canada portrays a company of the 83rd shooting the Lachine Rapids bound for Quebec and return to England. The vessel shown is a typical forty-foot bateau of the period running free with her single squaresail set and there, firmly secured in the bows in a seated position, is the regimental mascot, a large bear.[9]

A few years earlier, there was a mascot with the garrison at the Citadel at Quebec who rejoiced in the name, Jacob the Goose, and who regularly did sentry-go with the picquet. A century later, the lieutenant-colonel commanding, Coldstream Guards, wrote:

> Jacob the Goose was enlisted at Quebec in 1838. He came to England with the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment in 1842 and died on detachment at Croydon in 1846. He had been awarded one Good Conduct Ring. His head is preserved in a glass case at Regimental Headquarters, and it is adorned with a gorget as worn by officers of the Regiment in the early nineteenth century . . . . I feel that eight years is probably a very reasonable life for an enlisted goose.[10]

A few glimpses of mascots in the Canadian army of the period of the Great War, 1914-1918, are to be seen in regimental histories. The home station of the Royal Canadian Dragoons at St. Jean, Quebec, was also the home of the regimental mascot, Peter the Goat, whose chief claim to fame was his popularity with the local populace and his ability to collect small change to provide comforts for the RCDs at the front. After the war, Peter shared his stable accommodation and pasture with a pair of pit ponies, named for the current comic strip characters, Maggie and Jiggs, which had been acquired by a detachment of the regiment during a spell of duty at Sydney, Nova Scotia.[11]

There is little doubt that the most colourful mascot of the period was that of

the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. Presented to the regiment at Ayr, Scotland, in 1917, Sable Chief was a magnificent Newfoundland dog, weighing in at some two hundred pounds. The pride of the regiment and the delight of the surrounding countryside, Sable Chief marched with dignity on parade and romped with the troops on sports days. Killed in an accident later in England, his surprisingly life-like figure is still to be seen today in St. John's.[12]

It is during periods of hostilities, with their attendant stresses and strains, that mascots make their most valuable contribution to Service life, and the Second World War, 1939-1945, was no exception. There was that big, sad-eyed St. Bernard, Wallace, of the Canadian Scottish Regiment from Victoria. His namesake, Wallace III, still serves with the regiment today.

Another was a little Aberdeen terrier affectionately known as Heather. It seems there was some small bother about regulations and when the pipe band of the Calgary Highlanders was outward bound for embattled Europe, Wee Heather made some of the more difficult parts of the passage in the big bass drum![13]

The most enduring mascot tradition of the Canadian Forces began on a battlefield in wartime Italy and continues to the present day. This is the story of Princess Louise and, most appropriate for a former cavalry regiment, the Princess was and is a very beautiful horse.

It all began on the slopes above the Besanigo River not far from the Adriatic Sea after the capture of the town of Coriano in September, 1944. Darkness had come to the valley. Fitters and mechanics of what is now the 8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's), were out recovering damaged Sherman tanks. During a lull in the enemy shelling, a plaintive cry was heard. A search revealed a very young and wounded filly beside the remains of its mother. Emergency rations of a stimulating nature and the dressing of her wounds back at the Hussar lines started the young mascot, for such she had become, on the road to recovery. She was promptly named Princess Louise.

The tales of the Princess's wartime adventures are legion, some of which are true. She made the transfer to north-west Europe by being smuggled in an army lorry specially fitted with a false front in the cargo area. The war over, it seemed as though the whole town of Hampton, New Brunswick, turned out to welcome Princess Louise after her voyage in a Dutch liner to New York, thence by rail to her regimental quarters. The spirit of the homecoming is to be seen in the quaint language of the welcoming address: "Know all men by *these here present,* that the Royal Lady . . . is entitled to roam at will . . . and to devour and partake of that which she pleaseth . . . ."[14]

The Princess foaled in 1954 and after years of regimental duties was retired

in 1971, aged twenty-seven years, to pasture. The new filly, of course, became Princess Louise II and in 1958 was presented to the newly formed Regular Force component of the regiment at Camp Gagetown. There followed some three years service with the regiment in Germany. At Petawawa, in 1966, Princess Louise III came along but succumbed to an infection four years later. But the second Princess, elegant in her richly embroidered saddle cloth, continues to carry out her ceremonial duties, the beloved embodiment of a regimental tradition spanning more than three decades.[15]

Sea-going mascots are rather scarce in our forces' story, but the Korean War brought forth an incident involving the bitch Alice. In November, 1951, HMCS *Cayuga,* before proceeding on patrol to the northward of Inchon, took on fuel out at sea from a tanker, an evolution that almost ended in tragedy. Alice, whose seniority dated from July, 1950, when she joined ship at Guam, fell overboard between *Cayuga* and the tanker. But Alice was no novice; she'd been over the side twice before. She struggled valiantly in spite of the towering hulls on either side. Also, it is said that the pipe "Alice overboard!" evoked an even quicker response than the sounding of "action stations!"[16]

Most sailors have at one time or another witnessed the timeless little drama of the sea when a shore bird, driven far from the land by the gale, falls exhausted on the deck of a ship. Such was the origin of the mascot of HMCS *Gatineau,* on passage from New Zealand to her home port, Esquimalt, late in 1972. Much pampered by the ship's company, pigeon Tom was named for the destroyer's captain.[17]

A mascot from the wide open spaces of the prairie has attained something approaching immortality in that his mask is the central device on the badge of his unit, the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.

The old 101st Regiment, of Edmonton, raised several battalions for service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War. One of these was the 49th and, during the journey by troop train to the east coast, a coyote puppy was presented to the battalion at Lestock, Saskatchewan. The coyote was dubbed Lestock.

Though coyotes generally do not possess the best of reputations, Lestock made friends everywhere he went, and soon became the pride of the Edmonton battalion. Many were his adventures before he eventually wound up in Regents' Park Zoo in London when the battalion embarked for France in the fall of 1915.

It was early in 1916 that the 49th Battalion was to receive a new cap badge. A strong case was put forward to have Lestock's head as the major device. The battalion's wish was granted, even though the authorities said the much-

maligned coyote had "no heraldic standing" and the official blazon called Lestock a wolf. Today, that coyote pup of sixty years ago graces the badge of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.[18]

Back in 1957, there was a goat mascot at RCAF station Camp Borden. Impeccably groomed and turned out in a tasselled coverlet of silk bearing three chevrons, Sergeant W. Marktime graced all inspection parades of a training school on the base.[19] And so the story of mascots in the Canadian Forces comes full circle, for the goat is the focal point of the military mascot tradition.

It is generally agreed that the earliest regimental mascot, properly maintained and accoutred, and with a long record of service, was the goat of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in the eighteenth century, the one that saw service in the American Revolution (see page 127). And a goat of the Canadian Forces today is a product of that tradition, Batisse of the Royal 22e Régiment.

In Britain there is a royal herd of white goats, the result of a presentation of a pair of goats by the Shah of Persia to Queen Victoria.[20] In 1955, by permission of Her Majesty the Queen, colonel-in-chief of the regiment, a goat was selected from the herd and presented to the "Van Doos," a thousand strong, on the Plains of Abraham, Quebec, by the then Governor-General, the Right Honorable Vincent Massey. The mascot of the Royal 22e Régiment was at once given that familiarly affectionate French-Canadian name, Batisse.

Richly caparisoned and with gilded horns and a specially engraved silver shield on his forehead, Batisse, attended by the traditional goat-major, was on his best behaviour as His Excellency spoke to the Honorary Colonel, Major General Georges Vanier and his regiment:

> Acts of bravery of a Regiment such as yours can only come from a deep-rooted *esprit de corps* and a sense of tradition . . . . You are affiliated with a very famous British Regiment. It is important, I feel, that you should share with The Royal Welch Fusiliers a tradition which has been theirs for centuries — that of having a Royal Goat as a member of your Regiment . . . .[21]

Batisse II was presented to the Van Doos in 1964 by His Excellency the Governor-General, General Georges Vanier. However, this goat died without issue. Now Batisse III, presented to the regiment in 1972 by the Governor-General, the Right Honourable Roland Michener, is the pride of the regiment. At the same time a suitable mate was provided, and the succession of mascots for the Royal 22e Régiment seems assured, an important link in a Canadian Forces' tradition already well established.

The Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor-General of Canada, addressing the Royal 22e Régiment on the occasion of the presentation of the goat mascot, Batisse, a gift of Her Majesty the Queen. The mascot was accepted by the Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, Major General Georges Vanier who eventually succeeded Mr. Massey as Governor-General. The presentation occurred at Quebec, November, 1955.

9
Launching and Commissioning of HMC Ships

When man first fashioned a vessel and put to sea in it is not known. But it is known that for centuries and centuries the launch of a ship has been a very popular event, and one usually attended by considerable ceremony, just as it is today.

When crowds of people gather in the shipyard, there is an air of cheerful excitement and expectation, not just in witnessing the product of master craftsmen rushing down the ways to meet the element for which it was designed, but also in feeling some of the sense of adventure and enterprise, and wondering what the future holds for this creature about to swim for the first time. This seems to be why people gather for the launch, and why, to this day, the beginning of life for one of Her Majesty's Canadian ships, is such a gala occasion.

The other aspect, the ceremony, has a deeper significance and therefore, traditionally, is of a religious nature. There is the deep-felt need for divine protection for the ship in future encounters with wind and weather, and with the enemy, and divine guidance for the ship's company that they may measure up to the challenges in store and to the traditions of the sailors who have gone before. Over the years it is these needs which are expressed in the formal words and prayers used in the religious services.

Ceremonies relating to the building of a ship, by custom, take place at the laying of the keel, the launch and naming, and the commissioning.[1] However, while each of these functions is essential, conditions sometimes dictate flexibility so far as ceremony is concerned.

In wartime, for example, the keels of most corvettes and frigates were laid without ceremony because of the demands for speed and the nature of production line techniques. Similarly, at Sorel in 1954, HMCS *Assiniboine*

was launched in winter in an "unspectacular and laborious" manner using a marine railway. She was named and commissioned in a dual ceremony on a sunny day in August, nearly two years later.[2]

The keel-laying ceremony is usually quite an informal affair and most of the arrangements are made by the builders. After the arrival of the guests, a brief address is delivered by a representative of the yard, the keel section is lowered into place on the blocks by crane, and the sponsor declares the keel of the unnamed ship (usually referred to by the builder's hull number), "well and truly laid," much as the cornerstone of a building is laid. The long process of construction has begun.

The second ceremony is the christening or naming, and the launching. Because of the long period of fitting out yet to come, the ship is still the responsibility of the builders, including the actual launching. At the appointed time, the crowd gathers, usually reinforced by the shipyard workers out in force to see the result of their labours, and the guests assemble on the platform erected close to the decorated stem of the vessel. Ships and boats in harbour stand by with their whistles and horns ready to join in the celebration. Often, a band is in attendance.

The ceremony itself traditionally consists of these basic elements: a short address by the ship's builder; the blessing of the ship by specially appointed clergy; and the naming or christening by the sponsor, now almost always a lady, using the traditional words: "I name you Her Majesty's Canadian ship (name of ship). God bless this ship and all who sail in her." With flags flying, the band playing and the roar of many voices, the new ship starts down the ways for her appointment with the sea.

In ancient times the ritual performed at the launching of a vessel was built around the idea of making a sacrifice to appease the gods who, it was believed, controlled the destiny of the ship and all her future voyages. From these pagan beginnings has come the modern blessing of the ship by the officiating clergy and prayers for divine guidance and protection for the ship and her company. Many writers see in the traditional smashing of the bottle of wine on the ship's bow a parallel with the concept of baptism.[3] While religious observances have had a prominent place in the launching ceremony for a very long time, a standard order of service, originally written by the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been in vogue in the Royal Navy only since 1875.[4]

Although the term "christening" is gradually being replaced by the word "naming," in the former can be seen the idea of baptism. An example of its use in eighteenth century North America is the case of the giant raft built by Amherst's forces to carry heavy artillery during the campaign of 1759 on the Lake Champlain route. "In the afternoon [29 September 1759] the Radeau

The launching of HMCS *Algonquin*, destroyer, at Lauzon, Quebec, April, 1971.

was Launched & christened *Ligonier.* She is 84 feet long & 20 feet broad on the Platform, where the Guns run out she is 23 feet, & to carry six 24-pounders . . . "[5]

Quite a graphic description of a naming ceremony has come down to us from the campaign on Lake Ontario of more than two centuries ago. After the fall of Quebec, British forces spent the winter planning a three-way pincer concentration for the reduction of the last major French position, Montreal, the ensuing spring. Armies were to advance from Quebec, the Richelieu and Lake Ontario. To control the lake between Oswego and the St. Lawrence, two ships of war were built at Niagara during the winter of 1759-60, HM ships *Mohawk,* eighteen guns, and *Onondaga,* twenty-two guns, (forebear of our present submarine). Launched as *Apollo,* the new ship and her consort, HMS *Mohawk,* arrived at Oswego, and Amherst reported in his journal on 1 August 1760:

> To please the Indians I desired them to christen the Snow and took all the Chiefs on board in the afternoon, as they had told Sir Wm. Johnson they would like to have her called Onondaga. I had a large flag made with an Onondaga Indian painted on it. This was hoisted just as I christened the Snow by breaking a bottle at the head. Then Gage's Regt fired a volley. The Fort fired a gun & the R[oyal] Highlanders fired a volley & the Onondaga answered it with 9 guns. All this pleased the Indians extremely & I had made them some speeches by Sir Wm. Johnson. Gave them some Punch & they were greatly delighted with the whole, promised to be fast friends & said they were ready to go with me . . . . [6]

It is of interest that in the case of the naming of HM Snow *Onondaga,* the commander-in-chief himself, Amherst, did the honours. This is a reminder that in earlier times a male member of the royal household, or some other person of high station, was expected to do the duty of sponsor when a ship was to be launched. The present custom of inviting a lady to do so dates only from the nineteenth century.[7]

The traditional breaking of a bottle of wine by smashing it against the bow of the ship, now usually achieved by a mechanical contrivance to avoid faulty aim and possible "misfire," stems from the old practice of drinking a toast of prosperity for the ship from a silver cup, which was then cast into the sea, and no doubt salvaged by some enterprising soul. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, this custom gave way to the present practice.[8]

Finally comes the day of commissioning, when the vessel, built, launched and completely fitted out as a fighting ship — stored, munitioned, fuelled and manned — becomes one of Her Majesty's Canadian ships in commission, ready to join the fleet. Behind these procedures are centuries of tradition in

which the captain was the ship and the ship was the captain, so much so that the captain was often called, by signal, by the ship's name.

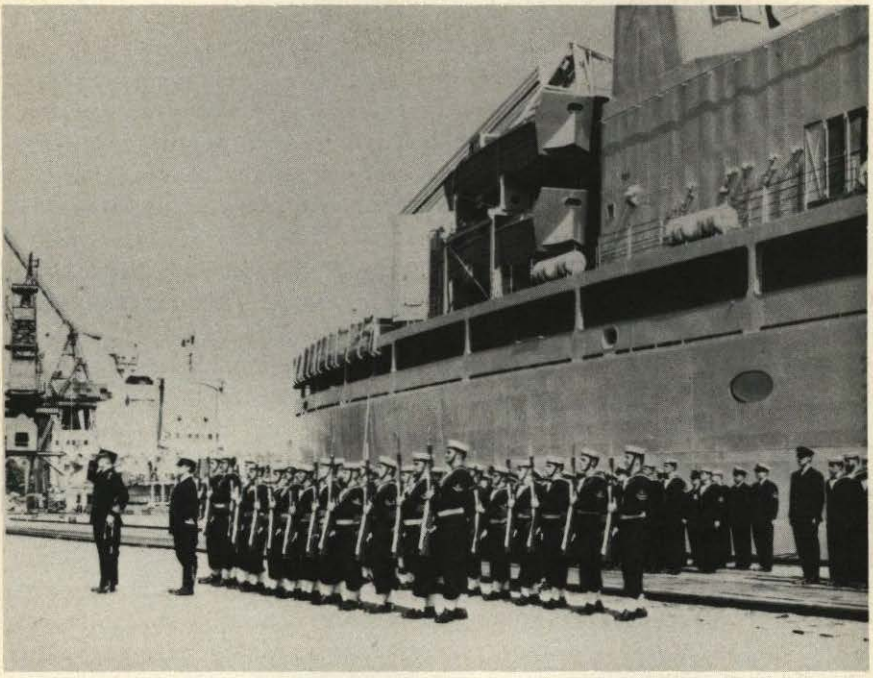
A couple of centuries ago, then, when a ship was to be commissioned, it really meant the commanding officer being handed his commission to place the ship herself in service. Such an officer, ashore, was, in a sense, no longer a sea officer even though he had had many years of service as a sea officer; he was simply commissioned to carry out a particular mission, and when the mission was completed he reverted, to all intents, to civilian status again.

The captain would be summoned to the admiralty in Whitehall and be presented with a formal document, which, in essence, ordered him to proceed to a particular port, such as Portsmouth, to bring a ship out of ordinary (that is, out of reserve), and to put that ship into a sea-going condition. This was a job of formidable proportions. It was the captain's duty personally to see that the vessel, practically a bare hulk in maintenance reserve, was brought forward. He personally saw to it that the ship was fitted with masts, spars and sails; completely out-fitted with guns, ammunition, stores and victuals, and provided with a ship's company, whether they be volunteers or coerced by his own press-gang.[9]

But before any of this could be legally carried out, the captain, on arrival at Portsmouth, would have a boat take him out to the anchored hulk, climb the accommodation ladder and — even though his only audience, other than the ship's warrant officers, might be a couple of ship-keepers and a few dockyard mateys, and they were probably quite indifferent to the proceedings — stand on the quarter-deck and in a great voice read out the terms of the commission that had been handed to him at Whitehall. With the ensign lashed to a jury-staff, and the pennant at the masthead, the ship was now in commission.[10]

Today, the commissioning ceremony for HMC ships is a very moving experience, both for the general public and for the ship's company. The observances usually take place within the building yard, with the ship, freshly painted, secured alongside at the company's jetty. Invited guests occupy a specially constructed seating area with a good view of the proceedings, and the ship's company are fallen in as for Sunday divisions at the jetty-side, adjacent to the ship.

Addresses are delivered by representatives of the builder, the department of supply and services responsible for the letting of construction and equipment contracts, and the department of national defence. There follows a ceremonial signing of acceptance of the ship by high-ranking officers of the two departments and the Canadian Forces, and by the officer appointed to command the new ship. A symbolic presentation of "keys to the ship" are made to the captain by an officer of general officer's rank.



The guard and ship's company mustered on the jetty for the commissioning of HMCS *Preserver*, operational support ship, at Saint John, New Brunswick, July, 1970.

Then comes the commissioning service normally conducted by the two chaplains general from national defence headquarters. It is at this point that the commanding officer orders Her Majesty's Canadian ship to be commissioned. Immediately, the ensign and jack are hoisted and the ship's pennant is broken out at the masthead. It is a dramatic moment; those who "go down to the sea in ships" know that, barring calamity resulting "from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy," the ship's pennant will stream from aloft for a good twenty years.

The keynote address for the occasion is then delivered by the guest of honour, perhaps a cabinet minister or a general officer. (The term flag officer is no longer used in the Canadian Forces.)

There follows a brief address by the ship's commanding officer, largely directed to the ship's company assembled on the jetty. He concludes with the order: "Man Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (name of ship)." As soon as the ship's officers and men have taken over the ship, the commanding officer exercises his traditional prerogative and is piped on board. He in turn greets all the guests who repair to the hangar space for the reception to follow.

The religious service which takes place mid-way through the commissioning ceremony has, through the centuries, held great meaning for sailors about to embark on long voyages in dangerous waters to possibly hostile shores. Typical of a modern twentieth century commissioning service was that conducted jointly by the chaplains general (Protestant and Roman Catholic) for HMCS *Athabaskan* in 1972 at Lauzon, Quebec:

The Commissioning Service

The Exhortation

Brethren, seeing that in the course of our duty, we are set in the midst of many and great dangers, and that we cannot be faithful to the high trust placed in us without the help of Almighty God, let us unite our prayers and praises in seeking God's blessing upon this ship and all who serve in her, that she may sail safely under God's good providence and protection.

Hymn: (Tune: Melita)

O Father, king of Earth and Sea,
We dedicate this ship to Thee;
In faith we send her on her way,
In faith to Thee we humbly pray,

O hear from Heaven our
sailors' cry,
And watch and guard her
from on high.
And when at length her course is
run,
Her work for home and country
done;
Of all the souls that in her
sailed,
Let not one life in Thee have
failed;
But hear from Heaven our
sailors' cry,
And grant eternal life on
high.

Psalm 107 (Verses 23 to 31, 43) to be read responsively.

23. They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24. These see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.

25. For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26. They mount up to the Heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.

27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses.

29. He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

43. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

Then shall the Captain of HMCS *Athabaskan* say to his ship's company in the words of "The Gaelic Blessing":

I call upon you to pray for God's blessing on this ship.
May God the Father bless her.

Ship's Company: Bless our ship.

Captain: May Jesus Christ bless her.

Ship's Company: Bless our ship.

Captain: May the Holy Spirit bless her.

Ship's Company: Bless our ship.

Captain: What do ye fear seeing that God the Father is with you?

Ship's Company: We fear nothing.

Captain: What do ye fear seeing that God the Son is with you?

Ship's Company: We fear nothing.

Captain: What do ye fear seeing that God the Holy Spirit is with you?

Ship's Company: We fear nothing.

Captain: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Ship's Company: Who hath made Heaven and Earth.

Captain: The Lord be with you.

Ship's Company: And with Thy Spirit.

Amen.

Let us Pray

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who has compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; be pleased to receive into Thy Almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us Thy servants, and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and her Dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve Thee our God; and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours; and with a thankful remembrance of Thy mercies to praise and glorify Thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Almighty and Eternal God, the strength and support of those who put their confidence in you, be pleased, we beseech you, to bless this ship which is being commissioned today; guard and protect her from all danger and from all adversity; protect her against the visible and invisible snares of the enemy that she may defend the paths of justice and overcome, with your help, the powers of the enemy. Pour into this ship, the officer who commands her, and all her officers and men the richness of your blessing, guidance, and protection. May

they ever be inspired by your Holy Law. May they grasp with their minds, cherish in their hearts, and carry out in their actions the teachings that lead to the safe haven of eternal life; through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

The Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render unto no man evil for evil; strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak; love the Brotherhood; fear God; honour the Queen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost be upon you, and remain with you always.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.[11]

10
Some Distinguishing Marks

A badge is a sign, a symbol, a distinctive mark, intended to identify its bearer. The origins of this concept of identification are lost in the mists of prehistoric times. However, the system of badges and other identifying symbols employed in the Canadian Forces has come down to us through our European heritage. In the days of chivalry, knights fully armed and helmed needed signs on their shields to indicate their identity, just as the famed standards had done, more than a thousand years before, for the legions of the Roman Empire. Thus it is that the badges and other marks used in the Canadian Forces today are inextricably bound up with the history and traditions of the units of the Service they identify. Some of these symbols are only months old, others go back to the very beginnings of the nation and beyond.

The four-arrowhead breast pocket insignia of Mobile Command dates from the year of unification of the Forces, 1968. The thunderbird of 426 Squadron was born of wartime service in 1943. HMCS *Skeena*'s leaping salmon, cast in bronze, appeared on the destroyer's after canopy just after her commissioning in 1931. The bounding springbok of the Royal Canadian Dragoons had its origin in an incident of the Boer War in 1900. The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment), established in 1862, shares with regiments such as the Brockville Rifles, the North Saskatchewan Regiment, and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the well known eighteenth century device, the tasselled bugle-horn of the skirmisher. These unit badges number in the hundreds,[1] visual symbols of the magnificent achievements of Canada's military forces in peace and war over the years of our storied past. They are also a constant inspiration to the men and women of the forces who proudly serve the Canadian people today.

In addition to unit badges, there are several symbols used in the forces, each

of which serves to identify and each of which has an origin of considerable interest. One of these is the roundel, which shows the identity of Canadian Forces aircraft.

When the first aeroplanes of the Royal Flying Corps arrived in France in 1914, their pilots soon found out how necessary it was to be able to identify themselves as British. They were fired upon by friend and foe alike! Several markings were tried, including the Union flag which, at a distance, unfortunately, looked very much like the cross device used by the enemy.

Eventually, the RFC turned to their French allies who had already devised a roundel of concentric red, white and blue circles inspired by the tri-colour flag of France. The British simply reversed the colour order, placing the blue on the outside and the red in the centre. The roundel used in the Canadian Forces has evolved from that of the French through the adaptation made by the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service.[2]

In 1921, the short-lived Canadian Air Force was permitted to use, as its own, the light blue ensign of the Royal Air Force which displayed the roundel in the fly. Three years later, on 1 April 1924 the Royal Canadian Air Force came into being and its identifying mark continued to be the British roundel used throughout the empire to identify military aircraft.

It was in 1940, during the Second World War, that the RCAF was authorized to replace the inner red circle with the red maple leaf. However, this step was delayed until after the close of hostilities. Canadian military aircraft began to wear the maple leaf roundel in 1946.[3] Finally, it was in a decision of 1965 that the eleven-point, stylized maple leaf of the new national flag became the centre-piece of Canada's roundel.[4]

The adoption of the maple leaf as an emblem of the people of Canada became more and more popular commencing early in the nineteenth century. Gradually over the years it has become very well known the world over by a variety of avenues, not least of which being its display in HMC ships. A current regulation reads: "Ships are to wear a red maple leaf in the form of a metal badge . . . on each side of the funnel, (or) on the side of the hangar for DDH 280 Class (that is, the new Tribal Class destroyers such as HMCS *Iroquois*)."[5] The wearing of the maple leaf badge on the funnels of Canadian warships is a tradition stretching back some six decades.

In November, 1917, four wooden patrol vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy, called drifters, put to sea from Halifax escorted by HMCS *Shearwater*, sloop, bound eventually for service in the Royal Navy off the west coast of Africa. Manned mainly by Canadian sailors, it was not long before these tiny ships sported bright green maple leaves on their funnels.[6]

During the Second World War, the wearing of the green maple leaf as a

funnel badge was officially authorized by the Naval Board. In those days, all of His Majesty's ships, from whatever country of the Commonwealth, proudly flew the white ensign. The maple leaf badge readily identified a ship of the Royal Canadian Navy. This symbol carried over into peacetime, but the colour of the maple leaf was changed from green to red, much as it appears today.

The maple leaf on the funnels of HMC ships points up a tradition bridging a century, the funnel band to designate ships of a particular force or formation. Today, destroyers and lesser ships are organized in squadrons, yesterday in flotillas or groups. In the Second World War in the Atlantic, some frigate groups displayed a numeral on the maple leaf funnel badge to indicate a numbered escort group. But perhaps the best remembered funnel band of the Royal Canadian Navy in the long Atlantic battle was that of C-5 Group of the Mid-Ocean Escort Force, at first called the Newfoundland Escort Force.

When merchant ship losses to the German submarine "wolf packs" became extremely serious in 1941-42, part of the antidote lay in the provision of port-to-port close escorts of convoys, including the great middle gap of the Atlantic between the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and the western approaches to Britain. The destroyers, corvettes and later, the frigates providing that protection were organized into C groups. One of these was the C-5 group. The funnel of this group sported red and white slanted stripes, and C-5 was promptly dubbed "The Barber Pole Brigade."

There was already an established tradition that when the new Canadian corvettes first put to sea, they were ushered on their way, appropriately enough, to the tune of "The Road to the Isles." It was then only a matter of time when the barber pole funnel marking and the melody that expressed so well the swelling sweep of the Atlantic seas, should come together as the "Barber Pole Song," penned by Surgeon Lieutenant W.A. Paddon, RCNVR, of HMCS *Kitchener*, corvette.

To this day, some thirty-five years later, the red and white barber pole band graces the mast structure or the radar pedestals of the ships of the Fifth Canadian Destroyer Squadron, inheritor of a proud tradition. And the "Barber Pole Song" is still sung with great spirit wherever sailors gather to the familiar tune, "The Road to the Isles." Here is the first verse and the chorus:

It's away outward the swinging
fo'c's'les reel
From the smoking seas' white glare
upon the strand

It's the grey seas that are slipping
under keel
When we're rolling outward bound
from Newfoundland.

Chorus
From Halifax or Newfiejohn or Derry's
clustered towers
By trackless paths where conning
towers roll
If you know another group in which
you'd sooner spend your hours
You've never sailed beneath the Barber
Pole!
It's the grey seas that are slipping
under keel
When we're rolling outward bound
from Newfoundland.

One badge in the Service today has enjoyed the spotlight of good-natured controversy. It concerns the breed of the bird with wings spread as depicted in the badge of the air operations branch of the Canadian Forces, adapted from the insignia of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The debate has continued for generations and surfaces in the press to this day — and this despite the clarity of the evidence. Indeed, so familiar is the topic among airmen that the focal point of the discussion is invariably termed "the bird."

It all started back in 1914 when the British admiralty issued a regulation saying that officers of the newly established Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) would wear an eagle above the gold rank lace on the left sleeve of their uniform jackets. An eagle was also to replace the anchor on the officers' cap badges and jacket buttons. But during the war at sea, the flying sailors of the RNAS, large numbers of whom were Canadians, somehow developed the conviction that no sailor worth the salt in his blood could possibly display anything but "a proper seagoing albatross."[7]

Then, in 1918, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the RNAS were combined to form the Royal Air Force (RAF). The rank insignia and the bird of the RNAS were adopted by the new RAF. In due course, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) was firmly established in 1924 and the dress regulations for the new air force made it clear that the bird *was* an eagle. But, sure enough, RNAS veterans in the RCAF soon spread the word about the

dastardly conspiracy and "the fact" that the badge of the RCAF was really an albatross.[8] Even the official word of the College of Arms, "an eagle *volant affronté*, the head lowered and to the sinister," approved by King George VI in 1943, had little effect on those who proclaimed "it isn't an eagle at all, but — as any clot can plainly see — an albatross!"[9]

There is an intereting side-light to the bird. It is a well known custom in military circles that the major device on collar dogs and lapel badges, if not symmetrical, must always face inwards. For example, to be caught wearing the stag of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters facing outwards is to invite dire sanctions at the bar or extra duty.[10] Yet the eagle of the air operations branch lapel badge is correctly worn facing outwards, and the reason again goes back to 1914. In the Royal Naval Air Service badges the eagle faced to the sinister, that is, to the wearer's left, the design, it is said, having been inspired by a lady's brooch of the time. When these naval officers were required to wear the eagle on the left sleeve, the bird, of course, faced aft. It still does.[11]

While the badges of all air squadrons, the majority of regiments, and all bases and stations, are surmounted by the royal crown, the badges of HMC ships are all contained within a rope surround surmounted by the naval crown, a device of great antiquity. Somewhat similar to the rostral crown of Roman origin, this symbol consists of a circlet bearing the sterns of four ships-of-the-line, each with three poop lanterns, and four squaresails, each spread on a mast and yard and fully filled and sheeted home. The hulls and sails are positioned alternately around the circlet. The naval crown is also to be found in the fly of the Canadian Forces Naval Jack authorized in 1968.

An eighteenth century author stated that the naval crown was given as a mark of commendation "to Officers & who first grapled or Board[d] an Enemy's Ship."[12] Like the laurel wreaths of ancient times, the naval crown can be traced back to the Romans where it was known as the *corona navalis* or *rostrata* (which may have been two distinct degrees of recognition; both are mentioned in Virgil's *Aeneid*) and was given to the sailor who first boarded an enemy's vessel. In more recent times, the naval crown has been granted as an honourable augmentation to the armorial bearings of outstanding naval officers, for example, Earl St. Vincent and Lord Nelson.[13]

Another heraldic device used in the Canadian Forces is the astral crown, a symbol of quite recent origin. The badge of air command was approved in 1975, the year the command was established, and consists of an eagle rising out of a Canadian astral crown. This latter device may be described as a circlet displaying eight stars around the base and bearing four maple leaves each set within a pair of elevated wings.[14] Inspired by the astral crown of the Royal Air Force, the Canadian design was approved by Her Majesty the Queen in 1975.

Something of an enigma is the ancient badge of mariners the world over — the foul anchor. A dictionary definition a century ago made no mistake about the connotations of the expression: "An anchor is said to be foul, or fouled, either when it hooks some impediment under water, or when the ship, by the wind shifting, entangles her slack cable a turn round the stock, or round the upper fluke thereof. The last from its being avoidable by a sharp lookout, is termed the seaman's disgrace."[15] If the foul anchor insignia does, in fact, illustrate one of the worst examples of poor seamanship, no one has ever found the explanation for the badge's highly cherished prestige.

The great age of this badge is not disputed. There is clear evidence in Roman stone, on an English seal of 1601, on a British admiral's flag in 1695, as well as on the arms of various Lords High Admiral and printed title pages.[16] The foul anchor was the major device of the official badge of the Royal Canadian Navy. It was proudly worn on the sleeves of petty officers and leading seamen, as well as on the shoulders of naval officers in full dress uniform. The foul anchor, true to its long tradition, enjoys an honoured place in the Service today: Canadian Forces badge (1967) and ensign (1967); badge of Maritime Command (1968) and the Naval Jack (1968); and badge of the Naval Operation's Branch (1973).

Still, there is no hard evidence of why "the sailor's disgrace" has occupied such a prominent place in the affairs of seamen and the sea. Perhaps it is simply a matter of design. Some early artist may have shown a remnant of cable bent to the anchor's ring. Then another may have made the device what he thought was more decorative by taking turns with the rope or cable round the stock and shank — artistic license not unlike that of the heraldic device, the "rudder ancien," forming the badge of HMCS *Bytown*, in which the tiller is backwards on the rudder head, to make a better design.

The badge of the Canadian Forces, which came into use at the creation of the unified force in 1968, is a *mélange* of the major devices taken from the badges of the former Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, and Royal Canadian Air Force. It is described heraldically:

> Within a wreath of ten stylized maple leaves Gules, a cartouche Azure edged Or, charged with a foul anchor Or, surmounted by Crusaders' Swords in saltire Argent and Azure, pommelled and hilted Or; and in front an eagle volant affronté head to the sinister Or, the whole ensigned with a Royal Crown Proper.[17]

The army's contribution to this design is, of course, the crossed crusaders' swords. The origin of this device is an interesting one.

In 1935, an officer in the War Office in London, Captain Oakes-Jones, was

commissioned to design a badge to represent the British army for inclusion in a stained glass window of Ypres Cathedral honouring the memory of Belgium's beloved wartime commander, Albert, king of the Belgians. The main device of that badge was the crossed swords and after slight modification, the design became the official badge of the British army in 1938.

Shortly after the Second World War, when it became desirable to have a single badge to represent the Canadian army, the major device, the swords in saltire, were taken from the British badge to symbolize the historic ties between the two forces. Also, the swords were altered in design to represent crusaders' swords in recognition that the Crusades of the Middle Ages had in the Christian view elevated warfare to the dignity of a sacred trust where the sword is drawn only in defence of that which is morally right and of the weak against the strong. The Canadian army badge was approved by King George VI in 1947.[18]

These crossed swords, together with the navy's foul anchor and the air force's flying eagle, within a wreath of maple leaves, the whole under St. Edward's Crown, forms the badge of the Canadian Forces today.

11
Music and Verse

Music has been a part of military life from very early times. Long before airs and melodies were developed, musical sounds were used, and still are to this day, to convey messages and pass orders in the field and at sea. A writer of nearly two centuries ago expressed it this way: "Military musick, before the introduction of fire arms, served to animate the soldiers in battles and assaults of places, as well as for the purpose of signals for the different manoeuvres and duties in camp and garrison; wherefore it cannot be doubted but it was used in our antient armies."[1]

The trumpet and fife, and horns of a wide variety of shapes and sizes, have come down from very remote times. But perhaps the instrument of greatest interest, and one that has been known to many primitive societies, is the drum. The number and variety of the messages conveyed by the drum beat have, through the centuries of human history, been limited only by the extent of man's ingenuity.

A military dictionary of the eighteenth century lists ten distinct drum beats, each of which was fully understood by the soldier on the battlefield.[2] Much depended on the drummer's skill and unflagging courage under fire in making those beats heard above the din of battle. Mention has been made elsewhere in this work about the beating of reveille, the retreat and the tattoo.

One drum beat that was well known to the soldier and civilian alike was the alarm, the beat to arms. On the last day of the year 1775, in the pre-dawn darkness on the ramparts of Quebec, an officer of the Royal Highland Emigrants saw suspicious lights. As it turned out, these lights, sighted intermittently through the falling snow, signalled the coming attack on Quebec by rebel forces from the American colonies. With the drums beating and the bells

of the town ringing out the alarm, the whole garrison were soon at their posts ready to repel the invaders.[3]

Some twenty years after these events at Quebec, strange lights again brought a garrison out at the double. It was at Port Royal, Jamaica. The watch on deck in HMS *Blonde,* frigate, heard the drums ashore beating to arms. Three boats with armed landing parties were at once sent to assist the apparently beleaguered garrison. "The adventure produced much laughter at the expense of the piquet who had given the alarm . . .," for the mysterious lights above the town turned out to be clouds of fireflies![4]

Another long-time use of the drum, and the meaning is seen in the civilian expression of "drumming up business," was recruiting by beat of drum. In that troubled summer of 1775 in British North America, the *Quebec Gazette* of August 3 reported that a recruiting party had begun "beating up for volunteers" for the Royal Highland Emigrants, a regiment specially raised for the defence of Canada.[5] However, at times, volunteers did not come readily to hand. The famous Secretary at the Admiralty, Samuel Pepys, was, as he said, always anxious to avoid "offence to the country," particularly in times of peace, when he instructed recruiters "to invite seamen by beating of drums in the place usual" rather than compel them to serve in the Royal Navy. But in 1652 during the First Dutch War, at Sandwich, when beat of drum brought only one man, the press gang promptly went into action and "signed up" fourteen more.[6]

Today, in the Canadian Forces, the term, "the drums," means a corps within a unit consisting of drums, fifes, and bugles or trumpets, or, in some units, "the pipes and drums" is the expression used, particularly in Scottish regiments. Often, the beats employed by the drums today, particularly in ceremonial situations, reflect the beats used in earlier times. The roll, depending on how it is rendered, may be reminiscent of the ruffles accorded flag officers on boarding a ship of war, or of the dreaded "hands to witness punishment." Then there was the call to church and the beat of the drum during foggy weather at sea.

The "drums beating" is an important part of a unit's exercising its right of freedom of the city, just as the granting of permission to march out of a fortified place with drums beating was a mark of respect for a gallant foe by a generous victor. Such was the case when Fort Beauséjour by the Bay of Fundy was surrendered to a British amphibious force in 1755. An article of the instrument of capitulation stated: "The Commandant, staff officers in the (French) King's service, and the garrison of Beauséjour shall march out with their arms, baggage and drums beating" the honours of war.[7]

A widely used drum beat, called the chamade, or the parley, was the means of communication between enemies prior to a flag of truce being sent to arrange, for example, a cease-fire to permit burial of the dead, or the evacuation of non-combatants. The drummers who beat the firing signals for the batteries of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia in 1745 beat the chamade asking General Pepperrell and Commodore Warren to hold their fire prior to drawing up the articles of surrender.[8]

One use of the drum which is common to both ancient and modern times is the measured beat of marching in cadence, setting the pace and helping the troops to keep in step. In the days before personnel carriers, it was important that commanders be able to estimate accurately the time necessary for an army to cover a specific distance. Under ordinary field conditions, once the length of the step and the number of paces per minute were known, it was simple arithmetic for commanders to have their troops reach a certain fortified town or suitable campground in a given length of time. Also, the rhythm of the marching cadence has often kept tired troops going until their objective was reached. This has been particularly the case since the arrival of the military band and the music of the march.

A Canadian infantry sergeant has recorded an example of what band music can do for tired troops, especially where soldiering is based on a strong regimental spirit.

It was early June, 1900, and the capital of the Boer Republic, Pretoria, had fallen. The troops of the Empire had campaigned all the way from Cape Town. They were now about to enter the city, the commander-in-chief himself taking the salute. The Canadian sergeant wrote:

> It was the climax of the campaign, even if it was not the end of the war. I shall never forget that parade. Ragged and tanned, footsore and weary, dirty and gaunt, we trudged along the western road leading into the square . . . . As we wheeled round the corner the band struck up "The Boys of the Old Brigade." I thought it was the sweetest music I had ever heard. We squared our shoulders, chucked out our chests, and put all the ginger we could into our step. I hope everyone else felt as much stirred up as I did; if so, they experienced a sensation they will not forget in many days. Out of a regiment of 1,150 men, we entered Pretoria with 438. We had marched 620 miles on scant rations since being brigaded on February 12th, had assisted in the capture of ten towns, had fought in ten general engagements and on many other days, and had stood shoulder to shoulder all through with British regiments of long and great tradition . . . It was one of those unique moments which only come to a man occasionally during a lifetime. It will never be forgotten. If anyone asks me what I consider the greatest occasion in my life, I say that it was when I marched past Lord Roberts in Pretoria, June 5th, 1900, with the Royal Canadian Regiment.[9]

Band music not only lifts the spirit of weary troops on the march, it also minimizes the monotony and stiff-leggedness of having to stand still over long periods of time. During the Second World War, HMCS *Cornwallis*, on the shores of Annapolis Basin, was said to be the largest naval training establishment in the Commonwealth. Certainly, the fourteen thousand sailors and wrens at Sunday divisions on the parade square made an impressive sight. But it meant long periods of standing while the captain inspected the numerous divisions. However, once the band started to play, the effect was striking. There was a barely perceptible, yet very real, swaying of those thousands to the rhythm of the music, particularly to the strains of "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin.'"[10] Fatigue and boredom were forgotten.

A musical tradition of long standing is associated with the departure of units on active service. In the past it was men marching down the road, or boarding troop trains and troop ships. Today, such departures are more likely to be by air. But, traditionally, a band was there to cheer them on their way. Such was the case of HMCS *Magnificent* in 1956 when she sailed from Halifax for service as headquarters ship at Port Said, Egypt, in the United Nations Emergency Force. The official history states:

> The carrier with 406 army personnel and supplies for UNEF slipped her lines on 29 December to the accompaniment of a rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" given fortissimo by three bands, HMCS *Stadacona*, the Royal Canadian Artillery and the pipes and drums of the Royal Highland Regiment of Canada (Black Watch).[11]

There is one marching song inseparably linked with regiments leaving their station for distant parts. For over two centuries many a tear has been shed as the troops swung down the road to the tune, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."[12] Indeed, in many a garrison town, the local belles felt sorely neglected if the departing soldiers failed to make this final musical tribute.

In February, 1813, a detachment of the 104th Regiment of Foot, originally raised in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as the New Brunswick Regiment of Fencible Infantry, was ordered overland from Fredericton to Quebec and Kingston. The United States had declared war the previous year. On the day of departure, the temperature was in the vicinity of twenty degrees below zero (fahrenheit). One soldier reported in his diary about the low spirits of himself and his companions until "our bugles struck up the merry air 'The Girls We Leave Behind Us.'"[13]

A musical instrument unique in its construction and sound, and profound in its influence on military affairs through the ages, is the bagpipe. Played in many lands and known as far back as Roman times, the bagpipe is a reed

instrument having a leather bag as an air reservoir, enabling the piper to continue the melody while taking a breath.

Today, the bagpipe is recognized as the national instrument of the Scottish people and revered by transplanted Scots and others the world over whose hearts quicken at the skirl of the pipes.[14]

The notes of the piper have brought mind's-eye pictures of the "hills of home" to many a lonely Canadian settler, to others, comfort in time of sorrow. In battle, on many a field, the piper has encouraged his comrades in the thick of the fight, sounding the charge, or onset, in the same tradition as Piper James Richardson, VC, of Victoria's 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish).

In October, 1916, in the attack on the "Regina Trench" in the Battle of Ancre Heights, the battalion was pinned down at the barbed wire defences by heavy machine gun fire. Piper Richardson, just eighteen years old, with complete disregard for his own safety, strode up and down playing his pipes in the time-honoured way and so inspired the battalion that they stormed the wire and pressed on to their objective.[15]

While military calls by drum and horn have been used since the earliest days of organized war operations, which pre-date written history, the military band as it is known today came from the continent to the British army in the mid-eighteenth century.[16] The use of the flute, drum and trumpet by troops on the march was known in medieval times, but it is evident that there was little co-ordination of effort music-wise. The main object seems to have been the production of the greatest possible amount of noise. This is to be seen in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in "The Tale of the Knight."

Similarly, while the troubadours who wandered over the land and the minstrels who visited the great houses of Europe kept alive melodies that would otherwise have been lost, they performed largely as individuals. The development of the multi-instrumented, musically co-ordinated band was dependant on the evolution of the instruments themselves, and this was a very slow process. So that while Louis XIV's court saw significant growth in this direction in the France of the seventeenth century, it was the time of the conquest of Canada in the eighteenth century before regiments of the British army were beginning to produce regimental bands. Indeed, it was not until 1857 that the War Office removed the confusion in organization and musical procedures in British army bands, by the formation of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, Twickenham, England.[17]

In the Canadian Forces today, there are more than 125 officially approved marches in use by units, commands and branches.[18] There are, of course, many duplications. For example, eight Scottish regiments lay claim to the well known Scottish air, "The Highland Laddie," while five regiments march to

"Bonnie Dundee," four to "Blue Bonnets over the Border," and three each to "A Hundred Pipers" and "The Piobaireachd of Donald Dhu." These and "March of the Cameron Men" give some idea of the strength of the Scottish tradition in the militia.

Some marches show the geographical region of the unit concerned, for example, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment's "The Banks of Newfoundland"; the Royal New Brunswick Regiment's, "The Old North Shore"; and "Red River Valley" of the Fort Garry Horse. The title of the march of the Rocky Mountain Rangers comes from the site of the regimental headquarters at Kamloops, meaning "The Meeting of the Waters," the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers in British Columbia.

The quick march of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry shows the regiment's First World War origin, the musical score being a medley of "Has Anyone Seen the Colonel," "Tipperary," and "Madamoiselle from Armentières," while the old song, "Vive la Canadienne," is most appropriate for the Royal 22e Régiment. Four of the older regiments march proudly to the tune, "British Grenadiers."

It is said that music seals friendship. Certainly the march in common is one of the ties which has so successfully bound regiments in alliance, often over a period of many years. Because of the long, proud record of many British regiments, the Canadian units with which they are allied have been honoured by being invited to march to the music of the older regiments. An example is the march, "The Buffs," of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, allied with the Queen's Own Buffs, the Royal Kent Regiment. Some will recall the stirring lines telling of the lone soldier of magnificent courage, awaiting barbaric execution rather than be broken by his captors, as given in Sir Francis Doyle's *The Private of the Buffs.*

Three regiments of the militia — the Elgin Regiment, the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own), and the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment — have the same quick march, "I'm Ninety-Five." The tune has an interesting origin. In 1816, the 95th Regiment of Foot, in recognition of its outstanding service in battle, was removed from the list of numbered line regiments and given the title, the Rifle Brigade. But the unit's marching song continued to be "I'm Ninety-Five." The three-stanza lyric, of a comic strain, followed re-arrangement of the music into a proper march. Once Queen Victoria showed her enthusiastic approval, the tune grew steadily in popular esteem, so much so that other units, not necessarily rifle regiments, adopted it.[19]

One mark of a good marching song is the combination of a relaxed, swinging tempo and that hard-to-define quality of a tune that immediately lifts the

spirit. Such is the march of Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), "Soldiers of the Queen." It was written at the close of Queen Victoria's reign and enjoyed great popularity.[20]

An example of a very old tune used as a quick march in the Canadian Forces today, is that of the 1st Canadian Signal Regiment, "Begone, Dull Care." As a march it originated in the Royal Corps of Signals, but as a tune it dates from 1687 when it was known as "The Buck's Delight."

> Begone, dull Care! I prythee begone from me!
> Begone, dull Care! You and I shall never agree.[21]

"Ça Ira," the regimental march of the Royal Montreal Regiment, is of considerable antiquity and, at first glance, a curious choice of tune for one of the queen's loyal regiments. Blood thirsty and revolutionary, its selection represents one of those odd twists of human nature.

In the Napoleonic Wars it was not unusual for bands of British regiments to play French revolutionary tunes in derision, such as "Ça Ira" ("It will succeed") and "Marche des Marseillois," interspersed with "Rule Britannia" and "The British Grenadiers," a form of psychological warfare.[22] At Famars, in 1793, the 14th Regiment of Foot was repulsed by the fanatical revolutionary soldiers of France. But once regrouped, the commander of the 14th ordered the band to strike up "Ça Ira," and with the blood-curdling notes of the tune that had accompanied the nobility of France to the guillotine, ringing in the ears of the 14th, the regiment swept on to victory.[23]

The 14th Regiment of Foot with great zest took "Ça Ira" for their own march, and later became the West Yorkshire Regiment (the Prince of Wales Own). The Royal Montreal Regiment, which perpetuates the 14th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force of 1914-18, has been allied with the West Yorkshires for more than half a century. And that is why "Ça Ira" is heard in the streets of Montreal.

Since the unification of the forces in 1968, some formations have disappeared and new ones have been established. This in turn has provided an opportunity for new marches to be composed and adopted. For example, the official march for all Service battalions, "Duty Above All," composed by Captain B.G.M. Bogisch, was approved in 1973. The well known "CA-NA-DA," written by Bobby Gimby in the year of the centenary of Confederation, 1967, was re-arranged by Major J.F. Pierret and approved as the regimental march of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1974. The communications and electronics branch has for its quick march "The Mercury March," composed and arranged by Captain A.C. Furey, and officially approved in 1975.

Most of the marches used in the Canadian Forces today belong to the army, and their richness in variety and tradition is the result of the decentralizing effect of the former corps system and the presently retained regimental system. Quite different is the heritage of the naval and air forces. Each had, before unification, a single service organization and concept in which identities and loyalties were not focused primarily on units, but rather on the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force, respectively. This is still reflected in the marches of sailors and airmen today.

"Heart of Oak" is the quick march of the naval operations branch and maritime command. The words, commencing "Come cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer," were written by David Garrick and set to the music composed by William Boyce. It was first heard on the London stage in a production called "Harlequin's Invasion," in celebration of the "Years of Victories" (Minden, Quiberon Bay, and Quebec), 1759.[24]

Similarly, all airmen in the Canadian Forces march to a single tune, "RCAF March Past." This musical score, known in Britain as "The Royal Air Force March Past," was written originally by Sir Walford Davies shortly after the formation of the RAF in 1918, and later was re-arranged and altered by Sir George Dyson.[25] It was in 1943, when the RCAF was so heavily engaged in the air war over Britain and Germany that permission was granted for the RCAF to use the march and, today, "RCAF March Past" continues to be the quick march of the air operations branch and air command.[26]

Article II of the 1757 edition of *Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea* laid down that:

> The Commanders of His Majesty's Ships are to take care, that Divine Service be performed twice a Day on Board, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, and a Sermon preached on Sundays, unless bad Weather, or other extraordinary accidents, prevent it.

Things have changed since that day. Owing to many factors, including the five-day week and the family-oriented nature of Service routines in peace time; the three-shift system on operational bases; the current trend of the majority of single personnel living off-base; and the general decline of religious observances in civilian life; divine service in the Canadian Forces is reduced largely to small voluntary attendance, or selected personnel required to attend for a special occasion. However, it is worth noting that in operational situations such as exercises in the Arctic or on United Nations service abroad there is a good voluntary turn-out. Certainly, in HMC ships at sea, where there is no way of avoiding the round-the-clock watch system, seven

days a week, attendance at divine service, though voluntary unless accompanied by Sunday divisions and captain's inspection, is still normal routine.

At such a service on board ship, the Naval Hymn is invariably part of the worship and is sung with spirit as it has been for over a hundred years. "Eternal Father" was written by William Whiting, a clergyman, in 1860 after passing through a fierce gale on passage through the Mediterranean Sea. It was set to the tune "Melita" by John B. Dykes in 1861.

The Naval Hymn

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard,
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep,
And calm amid the storm didst sleep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O Holy Spirit, who didst brood
Upon the waters dark and rude,
And bid their angry tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go:
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.[27]

Interestingly enough, this composition, in this case called "The Navy Hymn," was adopted by the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, in 1879, and so has been in use there for nearly a century.[28]

Also traditional to divine service on board HMC ships is the Naval Prayer,

the beautiful language of which has remained unchanged these 300 years. It was published in the Book of Common Prayer in 1662, shortly after the Restoration of King Charles II.

The Naval Prayer

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea; who has compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants, and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and her Dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Empire may in peace and quietness serve thee our God; and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours, and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen[29]

Church service in the air force usually includes the hymn, "O Thou within whose sure control." The words were written for "travellers by air" by Kathryn Munro in 1928 and set to the same tune as "The Naval Hymn," "Melita," composed by John B. Dykes in 1861.[30]

O Thou within whose sure control
The surging planets onward roll,
Whose everlasting arms embrace
The sons of every clime and race:
  Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
  For these Thy children of the air!

Thou at the impulse of whose will
A troubled Galilee grew still,
Thy chart and compass shall provide
Deliverance from storm and tide:
  Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
  For these Thy rangers of the air!

Across the ocean, dread and deep,
Above the forest's lonely sweep,
Or when through serried clouds they rise
And hidden are from mortal eyes;
  Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
  For Thy crusaders of the air!

Uphold their shining argosies
Upon the vast ethereal seas;
Encompass Thou their valiant wings
In all their brave adventurings:
  Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
  For these Thy children of the air!

Many regiments have over the years devised their own distinctive order of service on church parade, including a regimental prayer. Typical is that of the 8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's), written expressly for the regiment by the Bishop of Fredericton, the Right Reverend Harold L. Nutter, in 1972.[31]

Almighty God, who has revealed thyself in mercy and justice, we pray that our service to Queen and country may always be characterized by those qualities.

Keep all who serve in this Regiment loyal to Thee and to those with whom they serve. Shelter them in the day of battle, and ever keep them safe from all evil.

We remember before Thee with thanksgiving the courage and fellowship of those who have died in the cause of righteousness and peace, and all those who have shared with us in the life of this Regiment.

We pray that we may be guided always to serve as seeing Thee who art invisible:

Through Jesus Christ Our Lord

Amen

The Regimental Collect of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada was prepared for the regiment by Honourary Major F.H. Wilkinson, Bishop of Toronto.[32]

O God, whose servant David put off his armour the better to prevail against his enemy, grant, we beseech thee, that we, thy servants of the Queen's Own, who were chosen of old to obey with speed and to fight unburdened, may lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and run with patience the race that is set before us by Jesus Christ our Lord, and this we ask for His Name's sake. Amen

Finally, there is a piece of poetry which in three decades has become almost a legend. The sonnet, "High Flight," was written by a nineteen-year old pilot officer of the Royal Canadian Air Force just months before he was killed in 1941.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr., (1922-1941) was born of American parents in

China and received some of his education at Rugby in England. In 1940, he crossed the border to "do his bit" with the RCAF. He received his "wings" in June, 1941, and, shortly after, joined 412th Squadron. He flew several operational missions in his Spitfire fighter. Four days after Pearl Harbour, on 11 December 1941 Pilot Officer Magee, while flying through cloud during a convoy patrol, was killed in collision with another aircraft.[33]

In language reminiscent of Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven," Magee expressed the exhilarating, boundless sense of spiritual freedom and awe on escaping the earth to soar high across the great dome that is the sky.

High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew —
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee