Command in the Canadian Navy: An Historical Survey

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Divers facteurs environnementaux, technologiques et culturels ont façonné la pratique du commandement dans la marine canadienne au cours du dernier siècle, et ce sur trois plans : tactique (navires individuels ou petites flottes), opérationnel (formations de plus grande ampleur, en haute mer ou à terre), et stratégique (quartiers généraux). Le problème, en matière de pouvoir décisionnel, était de maintenir une certaine indépendance face aux alliés dominants, tout en atteignant, dans la pratique, un niveau utile d'interopérabilité avec eux et en conservant une identité canadienne distincte. Des générations successives de commandants ont mis sur pied des flottes versatiles capable d'accomplir une grande variété de tâches correspondant au rôle de la nation à titre de puissance moyenne.

"Command at sea" is one of those phrases that resonate in the popular imagination yet proves to have escaped critical analysis regarding their true meaning.[1] Books going by that title tend to be little more than biographies of the "great admirals," usually an entirely subjective list of the author's favourites.[2] The literature gets especially sparse when narrowed to a Canadian perspective, where a survey to identify works by or about Canadians produces an embarrassingly short list of credible titles.[3]

For the sake of simplicity, command in the Canadian navy, as with practically all other navies, is practised at three essential levels: the strategic level (ashore headquarters,

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[1] This work is a slightly revised segment of a larger study undertaken for Defence Research and Development Canada in Toronto, Ontario: Allan English, Richard Gimblett, Lynn Mason and Mervyn Berridge Sills, *Command Styles in the Canadian Navy* (DRDC Toronto, Contract Report CR 2005-096, 31 January 2005). I am indebted to my co-authors of that study (and also Richard Mayne) for their invaluable commentary.

[2] For example: Oliver Warner, *Command at Sea: Great Fighting Admirals from Hawke to Nimitz* (New York: St Martin's, 1976); Jack Sweetman (ed.), *The Great Admirals: Command at Sea, 1587-1945* (Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, 1997).

[3] Admittedly subjective, the following is an alphabetical listing: Alan Easton, *50 North: An Atlantic Battleground* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1963 / Markham, ON: Paperjacks, 1980); Michael Hadley, Rob Hubert, and Fred W. Crickard (eds.), *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Cdr (ret'd) Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: CISS, 1993); Commodore Duncan E. Miller and Sharon Hobson, *The Persian Excursion: The Canadian Navy in the Gulf War* (Clementsport, NS: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1995); and William H. Pugsley, *Saints, Devils and Ordinary Seamen: Life on the Royal Canadian Navy's Lower Dec^* (Toronto: Collins, 1945). The record will be only partially improved with the forthcoming publication by the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute of Michael Whitby, Richard Gimblett and Peter Haydon (eds.), *The Admirals: Canada's Senior Naval Leadership in the Twentieth Century* (a survey of Chiefs of the Naval Staff and Commanders of Maritime Command).

sometimes referred to as "admiralty" after the British practice[4]), the operational level (ashore coastal headquarters and higher formation level at sea, such as a task force with theatre responsibilities), and the tactical level (the individual ship unit or small groupings, generally now referred to as the "task group"). Although it is a truism that all navies share many things in common, ranging from the environment upon which they operate to the weapons with which they are equipped, those factors also can be the source of differences: the tropical archipelagic waters upon which the Indonesian navy operates, for example, demand a different type of vessel than the open-ocean sub-arctic areas off of our coasts; and the riverine vessels of the Ecuadorian navy carry much smaller-calibre weaponry than our mostly larger vessels, and have no need to counter air or submarine threats. Such factors as the size of vessel and complexity of weapons systems therefore must be important determinants of command. However, the specific nature of those relationships remains an area that has not yet received much scholarly attention, and it is beyond the scope of this study to attempt. What this survey will endeavour to identify is why the Canadian navy has tended to adopt specific ship types and weapon systems, and the implications for its command styles.[5]

Another common truism is the nature of command itself. Although all navies (and armies and air forces also) are "commanded," they are not all commanded alike. Again, the differences are in the details: while it should seem axiomatic that navies stemming from a democratic tradition should practice a different form of at least higher-level command than very centralized totalitarian systems, such as in the Nazi German *Kriegsmarine* or more latterly the Soviet navy, this factor too has received little scholarly attention. Such analysis also is beyond the scope of this work, but a useful starting point would be the notion that different societies will produce different navies, which ostensibly will employ different command styles. One recent popular account edges into this territory by making the specific point that "maritime powers have always prevailed over land-based empires... revealing the way in which supremacy at sea freed thought and society itself."[6] Since the author's aim was to distinguish the Anglo-American navies from those of the empires of continental Europe, he includes no detailed assessment of different command styles, other than to infer an Anglo-American commander's greater scope for independence of action.

Although hardly scientific, it is no great leap to postulate that the general principles can be extended to those navies that follow in the same tradition.[7] That relatively small grouping includes, besides Great Britain and the United States themselves, only Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Despite attempts to define Canadian naval heritage as extending

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[4] It should be stressed that the term "admiralty" has never been used in Canadian practise, but is employed in this study to distinguish that higher strategic level from the ubiquitous use of the term "headquarters".

[5] It would be impracticable for the purposes of this study to re-create the entire history of the Canadian Navy. General readers are directed to Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), and Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (University of Toronto Press, 1999). A brief summary history by this author is in: *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020* (Ottawa: NDHQ/CMS, 2001), Part 4: Sternmark to 2020, 52-70; also available at: http://www.navv.dnd.ca/leadmark/doc/index e.asp.

[6] Peter Padfield, *Maritime Supremacy and the Opening of the Western Mind: Naval Campaigns that Shaped the Modern World* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1999), quote from jacket notes. That is a similar underpinning to Colin Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War* (New York: Free Press, 1992). But neither of these authors explores how the nature of command is different.

[7] Christopher Bell and Bruce Elleman, *Naval Mutinies of the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), add validity to this presumption, in noting the distinctions in the ways that democratic and totalitarian powers react to the idea of mutiny, in a concluding chapter, "Naval Mutinies in the Twentieth Century and Beyond," 264-76.

back to the *ancien régime,* there is no clear continuity of that continental tradition, and for all of its existence the modern service clearly has held itself to be part of the Anglo-American tradition. That is a point of no small import to this study on several levels: from its start, the service accepted as given that it was an integral part of a winning tradition; its officers generally have practised a quite enlightened treatment of their sailors, in keeping with a system in which the harsh "Captain Bligh" leadership style was clearly atypical; and it has maintained an unquestioning belief in "objective civilian control" as a core element of civil-military relations.[9]

While certainly pertinent to any historical study of the Canadian navy, the future relevance of that Anglo-American tradition will become increasingly nuanced, as Canadian society appears to diverge from our American neighbours on important issues. While the new diversity policies of the Canadian Forces indicate that it is not a perfect reflection of the society from which it is recruited, the navy most certainly is no longer the Anglo-Saxon bastion it was for the first half-century of its existence.[10] At some level, Canadian sailors and their commanders must be susceptible to the larger societal impulses documented by Canadian pollsters,[11] which must in turn be factored in to the growing divergence in values between the US and Europe.[12] In most cases, Canada's apparent divergence from America towards Europe should not matter greatly, especially as continental Europe continues to distance itself from its totalitarian past. Certainly the democratic underpinnings of the Canadian navy are a vital factor, and the shift away from America towards Europe, if anything, will reinforce the Canadian tendency to act as an intermediary between the two sides of the Atlantic.

For the foreseeable future, therefore, the Anglo-American tradition can be accepted as a fundamental determinant of the Canadian naval command style. There is, however, one significant respect in which the Canadian navy has always differed (and can be expected to continue to do so) from its British and American antecedents: size. It has never been practicable for Canada, at only a fraction of the population and gross domestic product of either Britain or the United States, to maintain naval forces at more than a fraction of either the Royal Navy (RN) or the United States Navy (USN). Despite being somewhat smaller,

*N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1986) puts this myth to rest with the observation that "the violent seizure of a ship from her officers, on the high seas... [which] may be said to belong to the Cecil B. de Mille school of history... were virtually unknown in the Navy" (237-238). For a discussion of the Canadian experience, see Richard H. Gimblett, "What the Mainguy Report Never Told Us: The Tradition of Mutiny in the Royal Canadian Navy before 1949," *Canadian Military Journal* 1, no. 2 (Summer 2000), 87-94, also at: http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/engraph/Voll/no2/pdf/85-92_e.pdf.

" Samuel P. Huntington, *Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), viii. Although he wrote this seminal volume based primarily upon the experience of the United States Army, it often is overlooked that he began his academic career as a student of the United States Navy, with his "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 80, no. 5 (May 1954).

[10] The only scholarly analytical study of recruiting patterns of the Canadian Forces is Ernie Stanley Lightman, "The Economics of Military Manpower Supply in Canada" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1972). On the immediate postwar Royal Canadian Navy (approximately a half-century after its establishment in 1910), see Richard H. Gimblett, " 'Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Seamen:' The Lower-Deck Complement of a Postwar Canadian Navy Destroyer - The Case of HMCS *Crescent,* March 1949," in *The Northern Mariner /Le Marin du nord,* IX:3 (July 1999), 1-22.

" For example, Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values* (Toronto: Penguin, 2004).

[12] Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Random House, 2003).

however, the Canadian navy has attempted to maintain what might be styled as "command parity" with the larger forces, as necessary to maintain Canadian independence of action (a century ago, the phrase "dominion autonomy" had all the resonance that "national sovereignty" holds for us today). The navy's own self-analysis situates its perceived status in the hierarchy of world navies quite firmly as a "Rank 3 Medium Global Force Projection Navy - [one] that may not possess the full range of capabilities, but [has] a credible capacity in certain of them and consistently demonstrate^] a determination to exercise them at some distance from home waters, in cooperation with other Force Projection Navies (eg, Canada, Netherlands, Australia)."[13] Through a combination of demonstrated operational competence, a desire to work cooperatively with other navies, enlightened leadership and management techniques, and a judicious exploitation of available technology, it generally has been successful.

It was not so for the first three decades of its existence, even if not for want of trying. Still, many of the factors for later success are evident in retrospect and are therefore deserving of comment. When Canada looked to establish a naval force in the early twentieth century, the model was expected to have been not the Royal Navy but rather the Canadian militia. The first director of the naval service was the Canadian-born Rear-Admiral, Sir Charles Kingsmill, who had risen to battleship command in the RN, and as such possessed the necessary operational experience and competence to create Canada's navy. Personally identified by Prime Minster Laurier as suitable for the post, Kingsmill agreed entirely with the government plan to develop a Canadian Naval Militia from the existing Fisheries Protection Service, with the intention that such a small coastal service be wholly "Canadian" from the start, and not liable to the constitutional difficulties that had plagued the appointments of British general officers commanding to the militia - and more importantly, as a local coastal force, not likely to be caught in "the vortex of European militarism" so feared by Laurier.[14] Kingsmill reflected these intentions in planning a fleet to be based upon torpedo-boat destroyers and scouts (small cruisers), and built up gradually as Canadian crews could be trained to man newly built ships. The notion started well, but senior British politicians and Admiralty officers maintained that with growing dominion autonomy also came increased responsibilities: as British naval forces concentrated in home waters to face the German threat, Canada (and for that matter Australia) should take over command of the North American and the Pacific Stations (Australia assumed the Australian Station), and acquire larger ships more appropriate to patrolling those waters. The cruisers *Niobe* and *Rainbow* arrived as stopgaps to carry out this policy on the respective coasts, but they had to be commanded and crewed almost entirely by British officers and ratings because of their larger size. Therefore, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) was established by default as a miniature of the RN.

Robert Borden's Conservative government that succeeded Laurier's Liberals had differing views on a separate naval force (essentially, the Conservatives were committed to providing cash contributions directly to the upkeep of the Royal Navy), and the RCN atrophied under Borden. One area of growth came from naval responsibility for the chain of Marconi wireless telegraphy stations established along both coasts to provide a reporting system for vessels in distress. In addition, the small ships of the Fisheries Protection Service were transferred to the administration of the Naval Service, and they, as well as the two cruisers, were all fitted with the revolutionary wireless equipment. The start of the Great

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[13] *Leadmark,* 44.
[14] See Richard H. Gimblett, "Admiral Sir Charles Edmund Kingsmill: Forgotten Father," in Whitby *et al, The Admirals.*

War in August 1914 found the RCN at strength of three hundred and fifty, with a further two hundred and fifty in the Royal Naval Canadian Volunteer Reserve (RNCVR). The men and officers of the RCN were predominantly on loan from or former members of the RN, and the placement of the word "Canadian" in the title of the RNCVR identifies its function in fact, as well in the eyes of the RN.

Canada's naval Great War was not especially remarkable. For the purposes of this study, only a few incidents stand out. The two mostly British-crewed cruisers provided yeoman (but not exceptional) service patrolling the Pacific and Atlantic seaboards of the United States to intercept German blockade-runners for the first two years of the war. When a German submarine threat developed on the East Coast after 1916, the small ships of the Fisheries Protection Service (with their Canadian officers and crews) were pressed into service, augmented by a flotilla of purpose-built trawlers, but their operational performance was equivocal at best: the one occasion upon which a Canadian warship came across a U-boat, the captain of "the small, ill-crewed" trawler HMCS *Hochelaga* deferred to the better deck-gun armament of the larger German submarine and declined combat to go get help (the submarine got away, and the trawler's commanding officer was dismissed from the service, the court martial finding that *"Hochelaga* should have been steered towards the enemy vessel... and all means of offence available made use of in [an] effort to inflict damage or destroy the enemy").[15]

A more lasting tradition was established in the fact that the future commanders of the Canadian navy in the Second World War all saw action in the First as midshipmen with the battle fleets of the Royal Navy: their formative experience was gaining an appreciation of the capabilities of vessels larger than destroyers, and a confidence in their own ability to operate them. Ashore, Kingsmill's headquarters in Ottawa expanded greatly to comprise a staff of several hundred, but any efficiency and competence it demonstrated relied heavily upon officers transferred on loan from the Royal Navy. Still, because of its small size, the Ottawa headquarters provided mostly administrative oversight and very little operational direction. One little recognized achievement was the evolution of the Marconi network into a most "competent and cooperative" intelligence and control of shipping centre in Halifax, providing direct support to the British admiral directing convoys operating from that port."[16] That successful effort stemmed from two factors: a clear separation of administrative and operational responsibilities, and the constructive personality of the British admiral. These were underscored by the less happy experience with another British officer, Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Coke, transferred to the Canadian service to organize the East Coast Patrols in 1917. A stuffy and inept leader (he bore major responsibility also for the earlier loss of the *Lusitania),* Coke's inability to focus on the task of organizing local sea patrols, in conjunction with his unwillingness to follow orders from his superiors in Ottawa, left Canada's coast vulnerable to U-boat attack.[17]

These two factors (confusion of administrative-operational responsibility, and personality of the commander) will be seen to be recurring themes in Canadian naval command. Of course, they are endemic to any military, but they are magnified in comparison

[15] Roger Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Montréal: Art Global, 1998), 18-20.
[16] Roger Sarty, "The Naval Side of Canadian Sovereignty," in *The Maritime Defence of Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996), 67-8.
[17] Michael Hadley and Roger Sarty, *Tin-Pots and Pirate Ships: Canadian Naval Forces and German Raiders, 1880-1918* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1990), 190-91. Coke's eventual replacement was Captain Walter Hose, another British officer but with "Canadian" experience of helping to establish the Royal Naval Reserve division in Newfoundland in the early 1900s, and having transferred to the RCN in command of *Rainbow* since 1912; he would go on to become Director of the Naval Service (later Chief of the Naval Staff) in 1923.

to the British and American experience because of the "smallness" of the Canadian service. Looking first at the personality of the commander, the larger services have a broad enough base to incorporate a variety of personalities such that, while colourful characters may stand out, they tend to be the exception rather than the norm.[18] In the Canadian service the range of characters is not so broad and tends to be self-selecting for promotions, and with a somewhat more centralized span of command there is little depth to disperse the impact of error, so that conflicts between commanders have more serious ramifications (as will be discussed below). With respect to administrative-operational responsibility, whereas the larger services have the depth to establish an "admiralty" organization capable of accomplishing both functions, in Canada the tendency has been to centralize administrative oversight in a national headquarters in Ottawa, leaving operational matters to the respective coastal commanders. It is telling that in the United States Navy, the position of head of the navy is "Chief of Naval Operations" (CNO), while in Canada, the position is styled "Chief of the Naval [or Maritime] Staff (CNS / CMS).[19]

Other related "smallness" factors affecting Canadian naval command are the greatly constricted capacity of a fleet with insufficient ships to accomplish all assigned tasks, and the manning shortage from which paradoxically it seems constantly to suffer. If those elements had already existed at the time of its establishment, they became entrenched in the interwar period. Although during the First World War the RCN had operated mostly small ships in home waters, by the end there was a sufficient cadre of trained Canadian officers and ratings with overseas experience that the RCN confidently accepted the surplus British light cruiser *Aurora* and a pair of accompanying destroyers as the basis for a revival of Kingsmill's fleet plan (if adopted, it would have produced by 1934 a 46-ship navy, consisting of 7 cruisers, 12 destroyers, 18 anti-submarine patrol craft, 6 submarines and 3 tenders[20]). Instead, Cabinet used the arms limitations of the 1922 Washington Naval Conference as a pretext to slash the naval budget; Kingsmill resigned in protest, and was replaced by Walter Hose, who cut the permanent force to five hundred officers and ratings, kept only the two destroyers and four trawlers in commission as training vessels, closed the naval college, and diverted resources to the establishment of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR).

Hose had little other choice, but the effects would shape the strategic command style

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[18] The main point of Andrew Gordon, *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and British Naval Command* (London: John Murray, 1996) is to highlight the very different command styles of the dominant Jellicoe as opposed to the upstart Beatty factions in the Royal Navy. In the USN, for every "Bull" Halsey ("their most colourful, risk-taking carrier admiral"), there were dozens of less flamboyant flag officers; the quote is from Kenneth J. Hagan, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 319. This very readable survey history has the novel thesis that the USN is naturally a small-ship "continental" [frigate] navy modelled on the fleets of European powers and inclined to commerce raiding.

[19] While the RN gradually adopted use of the title CNS in the 1920s, suggesting an influence upon the Canadian decision, their more common term is "First Sea Lord." Indeed, in *The First Sea Lords: From Fisher to Mountbatten* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), editor Malcolm Murfett observes, "Although naval historians of the twentieth century have tended to use the official terms of First Sea Lord and Chief of naval Staff interchangeably, it is a debatable point whether there is more than a semantic difference between them" (1). The precise origin of Canadian usage of the title CNS is an interesting and early example of the integrationist tendencies of the Canadian Forces, dating back to the tenure of Walter Hose, who forced adoption of the term in 1928 as a means of establishing his parity with successive Chiefs of the General [Army] Staff, who constantly attempted to absorb the Naval Service (as they had the RCAF) as a cost-saving measure; see James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada, Vol I: From the Great War to the Great Depression* (University of Toronto Press, 1964), 229-56ff.

[20] "Occasional Paper No. 2: Proposals for Canadian Naval Expansion," 3 July 1919 (NAC, RG24, vol 5696, NSS 1017-31-2).

of the RCN for generations, and mostly in a negative fashion. With headquarters reduced to a half-dozen officers and a handful of civil servants, the immediate goal of "Canadianizing" the service was achieved by returning all the British officers home. But the capacity to undertake any higher-level strategic planning was severely curtailed, with most of the CNS's efforts devoted to staving off attacks from the other services for even more of its scarce budget, leading to a reputation for shoddy staffwork and an irrational suspicion of the other services. At the same time, with no naval college, aspiring Canadian officers were sent to Britain for their training, producing a somewhat mixed experience: the RN exchanges ensured Canadian officers had a superb tactical and operational formation, but the degree of "Britishness" (and by inference the "un-Canadian-ness") of the RCN remains a subject of intense debate.[21] (It should be noted that RCN ratings also took their long courses and served in exchange billets with the RN.) To a certain extent, the influence of example was compelling: there was, at the time, only one example of a global, successful navy, and that was the RN, and it would be asking too much to expect the senior officers of the RCN, or any other navy, to disregard it as the role model. More problematically, with the RN exchanges, courses and appointments being limited to operational at-sea positions, Canadian naval officers had practically no exposure to the workings of admiralty, compounding any lack of appreciation for the value of higher-level staff work. And in the longer run, the closing of the naval college led the RCN to lose its appreciation also for the value of higher education, adopting instead the mantra that junior officers were better getting to sea as early as possible to learn their trade.

For all that, through the interwar period, the RCN became a quite proficient destroyer navy, pushing the class to the limits of its capabilities, and undertaking a modest expansion, even if somewhat slower than anticipated. Destroyers then were much smaller and less capable ships than those now in service,[23] intended primarily to screen the larger capital warships of the main battle fleet against close-in torpedo boat and submarine attack. With their short "legs" and modest size, they were not especially well suited to the expanse and harsh conditions of Canadian waters. A better class in both those respects was the cruiser, the classical definition of which is any ship capable of undertaking "scouting, commerce raiding and protection, and distant patrols." The term "cruiser," however, carries with it a whiff of imperial nostalgia that does sit well with Canadian sentiment, and in modern times the class has become associated with a much larger and heavier armament; more practically in the 1920s, being larger ships, they did not fit the Canadian budget. Therefore, the RCN had to make do with more financially viable destroyers, but with their anticipated primary employment being to ensure neutrality in the event of an American-Japanese war, Canadian officers adapted them to novel uses more typical of light cruisers.

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[21] The defining article on the issue is William Glover's "RCN: Royal Colonial or Royal Canadian Navy" in Hadley *et al, A Nation's Navy,* 71-90.

[22] On the proficiency of the interwar RCN, see Michael Whitby, "In Defence of Home Waters: Doctrine and training in the Canadian Navy During the 1930s," *The Mariner's Mirror 11,* no. 2 (May 1991), 167-77.

[23] The first pair built to Canadian specifications *(Saguenay* and *Skeena,* commissioned in 1931) displaced some 1300 tons, speed 31 knots, and armed with four single 4.7-inch mountings and eight 21-inch (anti-ship) torpedo tubes. They were essentially a standard British design, modified to Canadian specifications to incorporate steam heat, improved ventilation, extra refrigeration, and showers, and in consequence of these minor concessions to comfort, were dubbed the "Rolls-Royce destroyers" by the RN (see German, *The Sea is at Our Gates,* 59). The standard reference on Canadian warship specifications is Ken Macpherson and Ron Barrie, *The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces, 1910-2003* (St Catherines, ON: Vanwell, 2003).

[24] On the idea of "cruiser" in the RCN, see Kenneth P. Hansen, "Kingsmill's Cruisers: The Cruiser Tradition in the Early Royal Canadian Navy," *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord* 13, no. 1 (January 2003), 37-52.

Tactics concentrated upon stealthy night attacks against heavier opponents, and despite their limited range they voyaged far from home waters, into the Caribbean and down the Pacific coast of Latin America. In one especially noteworthy episode, a pair of Esquimalt-based destroyers en route to winter exercises in the Caribbean in January 1932 were diverted to El Salvador "to protect British interests" in the midst of a peasant uprising, and through the initiative and resourcefulness of the various officers, were instrumental in restoring order.[25]

The RCN entered the Second World War in September 1939, not with the forty-six ship fleet of Kingsmill's plan, but rather a paltry baker's dozen: six mostly modern destroyers, an equal number of minesweepers of mixed vintage, and a sail training ship. It ended the war six years later as the third largest allied power, with some four hundred and fifty vessels of all types except battleships and submarines, and having seen action in practically every major theatre. The story of RCN command in the war is one of the management of expansion and contribution to major operations. The verdict on that command varies according to the level at which it was exercised, from a generally solid (and occasionally brilliant) tactical performance, through emergence as an operational-level power, to strategic ambivalence.

The popular image of the RCN in the Second World War is of a corvette navy waging the Battle of the Atlantic against the long odds of German U-boat wolf packs, and triumphing in spite of fitful administration by Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) in Ottawa.[26] One historian has gone so far as to accuse the RCN of "institutional schizophrenia" in devoting wartime resources to the pursuit of the ambition to acquire a postwar big-ship blue water fleet at the expense of the "Sheep Dog Navy… of small ships manned by reservists."[27] Again, the truth is somewhat more complex. NSHQ certainly was hampered by its own lack of a solid base from which to effect a 50-fold expansion (much greater than any of the other allies, the Americans and British each undergoing "only" a 20-fold increase in size), but if the experience was hellish, the road to it was one paved with the good intentions of being too willing to answer the pleas of those other allies (especially the British) to man ships that they themselves could not fill. Caught between the "rock" of looking after things ashore and the "hard place" of ensuring that the ever-increasing fleet of ships at sea were commanded by the best officers available, Rear-Admiral Percy Nelles (CNS since 1934, and the first to have served in the RCN from the start of his career) was forced to staff NSHQ with a mixed bag of lesser-qualified officers, some superannuated reservists of limited experience, and a few key positions on loan from the RN.

At sea, Canadian command proficiency was spotty certainly until at least mid-1943, by which time the critical convoy battles had been fought - and won - mostly under the leadership of the RN. But the load had been shared equitably among the permanent force (or regular navy) and the reservists, with a hard core of professional naval officers in most escort groups (usually in command of a destroyer and acting as the Senior Officer of the

[25] Serge Durflinger, "In Whose Interests? The Royal Canadian Navy and Naval Diplomacy in El Salvador, 1932," in Ann L. Griffiths, Peter T. Haydon and Richard H. Gimblett (eds.), *Canadian Gunboat Diplomacy: The Canadian Navy and Foreign Policy* (Halifax, NS: Dalhousie University Centre for Foreign Policy Studies [CFPS]], 2001), 27-44. *Skeena's* captain, Lieutenant-Commander Victor Brodeur, had joined the nascent Naval Militia in 1908, went on to be the senior naval member of the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington during the Second World War, and retired in 1946 as commanding officer Pacific coast; the landing party officer was Lieutenant K.F. Adams, who commanded a variety of destroyers during the war (as well as the armed merchant cruiser *Prince Henry)* and aircraft carriers after, retiring as flag officer naval divisions in 1956.
[26] See for example, Hal Lawrence, *A Bloody War: One Man's Memories of the Canadian Navy, 1939-45* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979).
[27] Milner, *Canada's Navy,* 138-39.

Escort, or SOE[28]) to shepherd the smaller corvettes and minesweepers commanded by reservists. And once given the opportunity to become proficient, they excelled. The effective combination of new tactics and equipment can be seen in the pursuit of U-774 in March 1944. Over a period of thirty hours, and a distance of eighty miles, she was hunted and attacked by two Canadian destroyers, a frigate, two corvettes and a RN destroyer, undergoing twenty-three separate depth-charge attacks before being forced to the surface exhausted, and then destroyed.[29] A sustained operation of this duration against an invisible enemy reflects teamwork of the highest order. Command and control, suggesting the unifying will of an individual, are not sufficient. It requires the co-operation and co-ordination of a "band of brothers." Effective detection devices would have guaranteed an early kill; unlimited weapons would have permitted saturation assault. Neither was available in those circumstances. Only co-ordination between hunters, and maintenance of pressure, could have permitted multiple attacks and continuous tracking to a kill. It was experience and dedication, aided by devices and weapons that achieved the result. The RCN had come of age.

Achieving this degree of tactical level command competence was not easy. Complicating matters was the mix of Canadian naval "commanders" between professional regulars and wartime reservists, and that the latter came in two categories, the RCNVR, generally highly educated but with little practical sea-going experience, and the RCNR, who had some familiarity at sea from previous merchant service but too frequently found the demands of warfighting to be an unmanageable strain.[30] By the latter half of 1943, with the operational situation changing in the allies' favour just as the reservists were becoming proficient, it was entirely appropriate that greater numbers of them should assume command not just of a new class of frigates but frequently also as SOE, freeing the regular RCN officers to take command of the larger Tribal class destroyers, cruisers and escort carriers that were only then becoming available. Although command of the larger ships was reserved for the career professional officers of the RCN, in truth both regulars and reservists filled practically all other officer and ratings positions interchangeably throughout the fleet. And contrary to the stereotype that the RCN officers were somewhat indifferent to the plight of their ratings (ostensibly because the officers had trained in the class-riddled RN system),[31]

[28] It is important to note that the SOE (the latter day equivalent of a task group commander) invariably was also the captain of the ship in which he was embarked, and had to perform both jobs, usually only with three watchkeeping officers to drive the ship, and no other "staff except for his executive officer. It was an incredible demand, and many found the long convoy escorts physically and emotionally draining, perhaps the best example being Lieutenant-Commander G. Windeyer's experience with Convoy ONS 154, the Christmas convoy of 1942, which lost 14 merchantmen in exchange for only one U-boat; see German, *The Sea is At Our Gate,* 129-30.

[29] German, *The Sea is at Our Gates,* 151-53. Depth charge attacks and distance are from the map of the attacks on p. 152. On the broader theme of increased Canadian tactical proficiency, see Marc Milner, *The U-Boat Hunters: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Offensive Against Germany's Submarines* (University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[30] One of the best accounts of this war happens also to be Canadian: Alan Easton, *50 North: An Atlantic Battleground* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1963). Easton was an especially competent RCNR, and his story ends - if one reads between the lines - with his breakdown. Nicholas Monsarrat based an episode in his epic novel, *The Cruel Sea* (New York: Knopf, 1953) on the experience of another especially articulate reservist, Louis Audette (RCNVR), in which as captain of a corvette he had to decide whether to prosecute a solid U-boat contact located under a group of torpedoed merchant sailors. It was a textbook command decision challenge: drop the charges and kill the men in the water, or let the U-boat go and risk the chance it could claim more victims by sinking other ships? For Audette, after he had made the decision, fate intervened as his ship lost electrical power and he was forced to abort the attack.

[31] L.C. Audette, "The Lower deck and the Mainguy Report of 1949," in James A. Boutilier (ed.), *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), 235-49.

there stand many examples, such as that of Captain Horatio Nelson Lay (although an improbable name for a Canadian, he was a favourite nephew of Prime Minister Mackenzie King). He was in command of HMS *Nabob,* a Royal Navy escort carrier with a Fleet Air Arm squadron embarked and British merchant service personnel in the engine room, but otherwise crewed by Canadians. Disparities between Canadian and British rates of pay and sub-standard living conditions precipitated one of the very few incidents of mass protest in Canadian wartime experience, but in reporting the incidents to both his uncle and the Admiralty, he was able to leverage concessions to the advantage of all the sailors.[32]

Drawing a distinction between the larger ships from the smaller ones on the North Atlantic run is appropriate, nonetheless, because they did experience a very different, if no less challenging, war from the convoy escorts. Although far closer to "classic" portrayals of war at sea, it was an ironically fleeting experience: for example, the nightly dashes by the Tribal class destroyers across the Channel to engage German coastal forces have proven to be the only surface actions against comparable enemy warships in the experience of the Canadian navy.[33] The fact that Canadian naval commanders are unlikely ever to meet an opposing enemy fleet renders it all the more poignant that the sole memorable Canadian naval phrase should be the dying words of Commander John Stubbs, captain of the Tribal class destroyer *Athabaskan,* warding off another destroyer attempting to rescue survivors from his stricken ship, but in doing so taking a tremendous risk by remaining motionless with German forces still in the area: "Get away, *Haida!* Get Clear!" That stands in contrast to the Royal Navy's Nelsonic phrase, "England expects every man to do his duty," or the US Navy's David Farragut storming Mobile Bay with a "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" If not as rousing, at least the general humanity of the effort shines through.

There remains another stereotype respecting RCN command in the Second World War that needs be addressed for the purposes of this study. As suggested above, it has been popular to portray the Battle of the Atlantic as much as one of RCNs (professional regulars) against RCNVRs (amateur reservists). New scholarly analysis of the wartime operations, however, suggests that, because a number of regular RCN officers assigned to convoy escort duties were at least as dismayed at the apparent lack of attention from NSHQ as were the reservists, this "conflict" is more appropriately viewed as one of fleet versus shore establishment, making it part of a far more universal experience (for example, army field units are just as prone to complain that rear-area headquarters are out of touch with what is transpiring on the battlefield; nor are either of these experiences uniquely Canadian). But where the at-sea RCN officers pursued the issue of their ships' poor technical equipment through a too-cumbersome chain of command, the RCNVR officers did not hesitate to use their peacetime connections (a number of them were high-powered Ottawa-based lawyers) to take matters direct to the minister of the Naval Service.[34] The "equipment crisis" very quickly assumed a political dimension in which the chief of the naval staff, Nelles, became a double victim, first as a scapegoat by the minister (whom the CNS had kept thoroughly briefed on developments) and then undermined by his vice-chief of the naval staff (VCNS), Rear-Admiral George C. Jones, who manipulated the situation to get himself installed as CNS, probably one of the most blatant instances of careerism at the expense of the service.[35]

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[32] Gimblett, "What the Mainguy Report Never Told Us," 90.
[33] See Michael Whitby, "Masters of the Channel Night: The 10th Destroyer Flotilla's Victory off île de Blatz, 9 June 1944," *Canadian Military History* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 5-21.
[34] Richard Oliver Mayne, "A Political Execution: Expediency and the Firing of Vice-Admiral Percy W. Nelles, 1943-44," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* (Winter 1999), 557-92.
[35] Richard Oliver Mayne, "Vice-Admiral George C. Jones: The Political Career of a Naval Officer," in Whitby *et al. The Admirals*.

NSHQ nonetheless did achieve some strategic success. The major re-shuffling of NSHQ in September 1942 that brought in Jones to the enhanced position of VCNS effectively had established the national headquarters as a "general staff" if not actually an admiralty. Although Jones's record was controversial, the creation of the Directorate of Plans at his instigation was an important development in the evolution of Canadian strategic command. In it, he paired a batch of brilliant young RCNVRs (among their rank were several Rhodes scholars) with more senior regular officers who could provide a leavening of practical experience, and he specifically gave them a free reign from their Admiralty counterparts to explore innovative concepts for the future needs of a growing service. Increasingly through the Post-Hostilities Planning Committee they came into contact with the mandarins at the Department of External Affairs and in the Privy Council (the list included Lester Pearson, and Hume Wrong). This next generation of Canadian political leaders recognized the limitations of the pre-war policy of isolationism, and their international activism provided naval commanders the firm political endorsement that Canada required a postwar military force with global reach, which in those days only a navy with a balanced fleet structure of carriers and cruisers could provide.[37]

If the RCN enjoyed one unequivocal success, it was the establishment in March 1943 of the Canadian Northwest Atlantic, the only allied theatre of war ever commanded by a Canadian officer of any service. That headquarters, operating out of Halifax, established also a tradition of RCN-RCAF air-sea cooperation that proved vital in prosecuting the last two years of the Battle of the Atlantic. Although interrupted briefly in the postwar period, it would be re-established in the mid-1950s and continues to the present day. Its commander for the duration of the war was Rear-Admiral Leonard W. Murray, who possessed just the right combination of a close personal touch for the men at sea, and the professional competence to satisfy the overriding British and American requirement that the significant numbers of their forces assigned to him would be effectively employed.[38] The RCN had achieved command parity with its larger allies, although this was hardly appreciated at the time, in great part because it was considered the natural course of events. However, Murray's ever-enlarging span of control (he exercised the theatre command while still maintaining responsibility for the vast Halifax naval base) was a major factor contributing to the VE-Day celebrations in Halifax devolving out of control into an infamous riot.[39] For that reason perhaps more than anything, Murray's overall achievement of command has been under-recognized by Canadians.

Having finally realized, in the dying days of the Second World War, a balanced fleet

Alec Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation in the Royal Canadian Navy, 1939-1945," in Gerald Jordan (ed.), *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth* Century: *Essays in Honour of Arthur Marder* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 11.

[37] This subject is due to receive proper treatment in Alec Douglas, Roger Sarty and Michael Whitby, *A Blue Water Navy: Book 2 of Vol 11 of the Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War* (publication pending, 2005).

[38] Murray has lately come under the scrutiny of several prominent Canadian naval historians, making him perhaps the most studied of any senior Canadian naval officer. See for example: Wilfred G. Lund, "Rear Admiral Leonard Warren Murray, CB, CBE, RCN: A Study of Command and Leadership in the Battle of the Atlantic," in Yves Tremblay, éd., *Canadian Military History Since the 1 T° Century* (Ottawa: NDHQ/DHH [2001]), 297-308; Marc Milner, "Rear-Admiral Leonard Warren Murray: Canada's Most Important Operational Commander," in Whitby *et al, The Admirals,* and Roger Sarty, "Rear-Admiral L.W. Murray and the Battle of the Atlantic: The Professional Who Led Canada's Citizen Sailors," in Bernd Horn and Stephen Harris, eds., *Warrior Chiefs: Perspectives on Senior Canadian Military Leaders* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2001), 165-90.

[39] R.H. Caldwell, "The VE Day Riots in Halifax, 7-8 May 1945," in *The Northern Mariner /Le marin du nord,* X No. 1, (January 2000), 3-20.

structure, the strategic objective of the commanders of the Canadian navy to this day has been to retain that versatility. That struggle more than anything else has shaped the command style of the modern navy. It has on occasion been rewarded with great success, but it has too often been achieved at great cost. In the immediate postwar period, it almost led to the physical collapse of the RCN.

Within six months of VJ Day, de-mobilization had reduced the RCN to a shadow of its wartime peak: a fleet carrier, a cruiser, a pair of destroyers, and a frigate, manned by just over 3500 all ranks (down from a wartime high of nearly 450 ships and 100,000 personnel). But with an authorized 10,000-man peacetime personnel ceiling, senior commanders found themselves in the unlikely position of having to achieve it by expanding again immediately after the recent conflict. To ensure the survival of the blue water fleet, they had to continue the wartime pace of training new recruits. At the same time, the desire to keep as many ships in commission as possible within that ceiling precipitated what would amount to a near-perpetual manning shortage: having become convinced of the need to maintain an efficient shore establishment, NSHQ nonetheless took the unusual step of establishing the sea-shore ratio at 50:50 in contrast to the more normal 40:60 of the British and American services (the others' lower ratio allows a slight "excess" for greater flexibility of personnel management, especially for coursing and compassionate cases, and in the event of sudden drops in the retention rate; without it, there is no redundancy in the system, and there are exactly the number of persons to fill all positions at any time - and they must all be serving). Maintaining that sea-shore ratio in turn created great challenges for commanders ashore and especially of the ships, as they tried to balance the needs for their sailors' career development and family considerations against the necessity to have all billets filled for major deployments. Contrary to popular belief, the senior navy leadership was quite aware of the challenges, but they were confident that a number of reforms they instituted would be sufficient to meet them, and that the needs of the service demanded such a pace. To their dismay, the RCN was plagued by a series of disciplinary incidents through the postwar years, culminating in those investigated by the Mainguy Commission of Inquiry in 1949. *The Mainguy Report* did little more than state the obvious to Canadian naval commanders (although it did perpetuate the debate of the RCN's un-Canadian-ness), but it was sufficient to shock Canadian politicians as to the fiscal plight of the RCN. That, and the outbreak of the Korean War the following year provided the stabilizing impulses that would guide the expansion of the RCN through the onset of the Cold War.

To meet the Korean commitment, typically three destroyers were in-theatre at a time, but given the distances from either Canadian coast, a staggered rotation of yearlong deployments was adopted. Korea was an important influence on Canadian command styles on a number of fundamental levels. To begin, it re-confirmed the tactical competence of the destroyer navy and the versatility inherent in that class of ships (by now, the RCN was equipped primarily with the powerful Tribal class).[40] As well, the yearlong cruises brought a measure of stability to the fleet not seen since pre-war times, in establishing continuity in ship's companies that since 1939 had been changed almost every time they entered port. But perhaps most critically, while the experience of their ships being divided amongst American and British task groups committed Canadian commanders to interoperability with those allies, it also convinced them that, however operationally sound such measures were, the political impact of the Canadian navy had been diminished; thereafter, it has been "practically an article of faith" for Canadian naval commanders that warships on foreign

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[40] See the sections by Michael Whitby in Directorate of History and Heritage, *Canada and the Korean War* (Montréal: Art Global, 2002), 21-36 and 117-28.

deployments should be kept together as a recognizable national naval task group.[41]

Elsewhere, the Cold War was producing other powerful influences upon Canadian command styles. The utility of having invested in a versatile balanced fleet was confirmed when the government turned to the RCN to deploy the carrier *Magnificent* with its embarked air arm to meet Canada's initial NATO commitment until an overseas Brigade and Air Division could be formed. Maintaining that balanced fleet in top form was a continuous challenge. The personnel issues described above were complicated yet more by the general expansion of the fleet to nearly fifty major warships,[42] including the introduction of the Canadian-designed class of St Laurent destroyer-escorts (less powerful than true destroyers, they performed more of a frigate function; the remaining numbers were made up by conversion of the wartime Tribal class destroyers and a number of the Prestonian class of frigates). But for all those challenges, there also lay opportunity in the expansion. Finally, the RCN had sufficient mass and the ashore establishment that it could undertake a credible level of training for junior officers and ratings in Canada instead of Britain.[43] This act of patriation precipitated a major cultural change in the RCN that accelerated through the 1950s and subsequent decades, as the navy struggled to keep abreast of evolving Canadian social norms. Application of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* after 1982 had a relatively small influence upon the Canadian navy, other than procedural changes in the practice of military justice, tending instead to reinforce the compassionate instincts of most naval commanders. A greater problem has been accommodation of the French fact of the Canadian nation into the make-up of the navy, hindered mostly by the smallness of the service, which made separate courses in French difficult to sustain within a tight budget.[44] But the designation in 1968 of HMCS *Ottawa* (and later her sister ship *Skeena)* as a "French Language Unit,"[45] and then the establishment of Naval Reserve Headquarters and a major

[41] Jean Morin and Richard Gimblett, *Operation Friction: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1997), 179.

This general theme is given a thorough critical examination in Wilfred G.D. Lund, "The Rise and Fall of the Royal Canadian Navy, 1945-1964: A Critical Study of the Senior Leadership, Policy and Manpower Management" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Victoria, 1999).

[43] Great changes in officer education were apparent in Canada after the war. The Royal Canadian Naval College had reopened in 1942 as HMCS *Royal Roads,* to supply officers to the permanent navy. It was modelled on HMS *Britannia,* and sent cadets to sea after two years. It was not until 1957 that the RCN adopted the same four-year college path for officers as the other two services. In 1954, the navy also opened HMCS *Venture,* in Esquimalt, a two-year course for officers not aspiring to a degree, in essence, the equivalent of a Short-Service Commission for officers with a sense of adventure, but no intention of making the service a career. It was particularly valuable in providing naval aviators. In addition to this, Canada followed a program of commissioning on merit from the lower deck, meeting and exceeding the level set (but never reached) in Britain. By 1960, one third of the officers were Commissioned from the Ranks (CFR). While in many ways a positive development, this expansion of the officer enlistment base had its downside, in perpetuating the low percentage of university educated officers in the RCN and its successor Sea Element of the Canadian Forces, which was noted as a significant impediment to their effectiveness in higher command in Hon. Douglas Young, Minister of National Defence, *Report to the Prime Minister on the Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces,* 25 March 1997 (and especially in the supporting papers by Professors David Bercuson, Jack Granatstein, Albert Legault and Desmond Morton).

[44] Unlike the army, with its francophone regiments, the RCN was almost entirely anglophone, since English was the international language of the sea. In 1951, only 2.2 per cent of the officers and 11 per cent of other ranks were francophone, and 80 per cent of francophone recruits failed culturally biased RCN entrance exams (compared to 52 per cent of others). See Serge Bernier and Jean Pariseau, *French Canadians and Bilingualism in the Canadian Armed Forces. Vol I: 1763-1969, The Fear of a Parallel Army;* and *Vol II: 1969-1987, Official Languages: National Defence's Response to the Federal Policy* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1986 and 1994).

[45] Serge Bernier, "HMCS *Ottawa III:* The Navy's First French-Language Unit, 1968-1973," in Hadley *et al, A Nation's Navy,* 310-22.

training school in Quebec City, have improved circumstances to the point where today francophones constitute a significant proportion of flag rank officers. The navy also has made great progress in ensuring equitable employment of women (which has improved greatly with separate bunking and lavatory facilities in newer classes of vessels), who are now entering command positions in the course of normal career progression.[46] And although the low numbers of visible minorities in the navy demonstrate it does not reflect the diversity of Canadian society (but arguably no less than the other services), recent operational experience demonstrates that naval commanders have internalized the multicultural reality of our society (see discussion below). Overall, the maintenance of a deep-seated foundation of professional values inherited from the RN, with an overlay of Canadian social values, and to a lesser extent Canadian naval experiences, has resulted in an operational culture that is distinctively Canadian.

Another major part of this cultural change was the shift from the British to the American model as the standard for a successful world-class navy, a process that arguably began earlier in the navy than either the army or the air force. It began during the Second World War, strategically with the Ogdensburg Agreement and the "Plan Black" for the coordinated defence of North America that emerged from it, and operationally through liaison with American forces in the Canadian Northwest Atlantic theatre. It received further impetus with the adoption of USN communications procedures in 1947, and then the incorporation of mostly American sensors and weapons systems, as well as bunking and messing arrangements, in the St Laurent class (the hesitation in the shift was marked by the fact that the hull itself and engineering plant were essentially adaptations of a British design). But it was solidified by the failure of the NATO standardization process to keep abreast of American strides in technological development, especially communications. Through the 1960s and into the 1970s, it became apparent to Canadian commanders sooner than for most other navies that the USN would be setting the allied standard for what eventually would become known as "interoperability". For the Canadian navy, more than any other navy, because of the shared responsibility for the defence of North America interoperability was not a choice but a necessity. If that has become a "rule" to define Canadian naval communications capability, it has an interesting corollary in that because of that unique shared responsibility Canada has enjoyed special access to USN equipment, codes, and procedures.[47]

Meanwhile, technology was proving to be a major factor unto itself. The advent of nuclear-powered submarines, jet fighters, and missile systems marked the onset of a period that Norman Friedman has aptly characterized as a revolution in naval technology. Such developments increased the pace of naval warfare, meaning commanders had to process greater amounts of information at quicker rates in order to make decisions. The close relationship formed between the RCN and the defence research community led to a progression of innovations - such as variable depth sonar (VDS), the high frequency SQS-505 hull-mounted sonar, hydrofoil experimentation, the marriage of helicopters to destroyers, as well as improved command and control (C2) systems - that were key factors

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[46] See for example, "A Commanding Presence: tvlarta Mulkins is first woman to helm a Canadian warship," *Toronto Star*, 13 July 2004.
[47] For a further discussion of this issue, see Richard H. Gimblett, "Canada-US [Naval] Interoperability: Towards a Home Port Division of the United States Navy?," in Ann L. Griffiths, ed., *The Canadian Forces and Interoperability: Panacea or Perdition?* (CFPS, 2002), 101-108, in which the author argues that failure to maintain functional communications interoperability with the Americans at the task group command level will necessarily lead to operational integration with the USN.
[48] Norman Friedman, *The Postwar Naval Revolution* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986), 9-10.

in allowing Canadian commanders to deal with the speed of naval warfare.[49] Essentially, these technologies allowed detection and engagement of Soviet submarines and surface units at much greater distances than in the past. Overall, these technologies gave commanders more time to assess situations, but they still had limitations. Referring specifically to C2 systems, as early as 1962, Canadian engineers working on the general purpose frigate program toyed with the idea of developing a completely automated command and control system that would effectively replace commanding officers with computers, and in so doing "remove the human element of command."[50] While supporting more automation, senior staff officers remained leery of this proposal. In their view, all technologies had a "point of critical mass" and as such they were unwilling to create situations where "computer error" could lead to international crisis or even nuclear confrontation.[51]

Such "Doctor Strangelove" scenarios soon were proven to be possible, as the Cuban missile crisis pushed the world to the nuclear brink in October 1962. This episode proved to be a very mixed experience for Canadian naval commanders. On the positive side, the deployment of the east coast fleet to undertake barrier ASW operations was a major operational success that was critical to resolution of the international crisis. On the negative side, however, it precipitated a crisis in Canadian civil-military relations that would come to haunt the RCN, for although the fleet had sailed in accordance with established CANUS agreements, Rear-Admiral Ken Dyer (the Halifax commander) ordered it to do so against the explicit wishes of Prime Minister Diefenbaker.[52] Among those who remembered the navy's actions was Paul Hellyer, and when he became minister of National Defence in a new Liberal government within the year, the navy was a special object of his unification reforms. RCN commanders actually produced some of the most novel responses to Hellyer's determination to cut the defence budget and "to do things differently," but he would have none of them, and the "revolt of the admirals" initiated two decades of decline for the Canadian navy.[53]

The navy's pitch to Hellyer for the acquisition of an amphibious carrier and guided missile destroyers for firepower support to forces ashore was intended as much to address the specific needs of the minister's new pet task of UN peacekeeping, as to retain the balance in the fleet structure the navy knew would be required for a wider range of operations. Senior naval commanders were stunned, however, as the government soon moved on to other priorities, and the cancellation of the general purpose frigate and the scrapping of the carrier *Bonaventure* left the navy as a dedicated ASW force (and a

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[49] Shawn Cafferky, "Un-Charted Waters: The Development of the Helicopter Carrying Destroyer in the Post-war RCN, 1943-1964," Carleton University, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, 1996, 344-349; D. Bassington, "The Canadian Development of VDS," *The Canadian Warfare Bulletin* (Commemorative Edition, 1985), 45; John R Longard, *Knots, Volts, and Decibels* (Ottawa: Defence Research Establishment, 1993), particularly chapters 8 and 9.

[50] DHH, 95/102, Senior Officer's Briefing - General Purpose Frigates.

[51] The novel by Mark Rascovich, *The Bedford Incident* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), later made into a popular movie, while not specifically driven by "computer error" certainly had "human error" as its major plot device. It vividly captures the spirit of the Cold War at sea, and the pressures - and repercussions - of tactical command decision-making. Closer to our own time, and in real life, in the 1980s the US Navy experienced two devastating incidents in the Persian Gulf region, directly attributable to faulty command decision-making: the frigate *Stark* being hit unawares by an Iraqi Exocet missile; and the cruiser *Vincennes* erroneously shooting down an Iranian Airbus.

[52] Both issues are given full treatment in Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993).

[53] Peter T. Haydon, "Mr. Hellyer and the Admirals: The Naval Crisis of 1964-66" (unpublished paper presented to the MARCOM Historical Conference, Halifax, 2002 - publication pending as a Dalhousie University CFPS Maritime Occasional Paper).

weakened one at that).[54] The ASW role had been adopted as the RCN's NATO commitment, but was proving to be a very mixed blessing. Initially, in the early 1950s, it had provided a compelling rationale to sustain the Cold War expansion of the RCN, for which its adoption has been described as "the most important event in Canadian naval history";[55] ultimately, however, it was too restrictive as a "niche" role, especially to a Trudeau government that assessed strategic ASW (the offensive prosecution of Soviet ballistic-missile firing submarines as opposed to defensive convoy escort) as inherently destabilizing.

Instinctively, Canadian naval commanders fell back to the traditional practice of getting more out of their existing fleet, and they increasingly turned to technology to assist them. Nearly two dozen aging wartime-vintage destroyers and frigates were scrapped along with the carrier, replaced by only four state-of-the-art DDH-280s (styled as "Sisters of the Space Age"); the conversion of the helicopter-carrying destroyers was limited to the original St Laurent class, with the slightly newer Restigouche class instead getting fitted to carry the ASROC rocket-thrown anti-submarine torpedo; and a decade later, as a critical part of the DELEX (destroyer life extension) program in the early 1980s, all of those older ships were fitted with the ADLIPS (Automated Data-Link Plotting System).

ADLIPS was very much a stopgap command and control system (CCS), as a "poor-man's" complement to the digital-display CCS-280 (the latter had sit-down consoles for individual operators, while the former grouped officers standing around an oversized horizontal radar display overlaid with computer graphics). But with the associated inter-ship Link-11 now fitted to all ships, ADLIPS helped the bulk of the Canadian navy keep pace with the rapid developments in computerized C2 systems through the 1980s. Even as the older ships increasingly fell behind in their actual ability to prosecute submarines (especially on the west coast, which had no helicopter-carrying destroyers), they at least were able to hold their own in NATO and allied exercises, keeping accurate digitized "plots" of the developing scenarios and exchanging computer-to-computer messages simulating weapons engagements.

Tight budgets kept all of this activity narrowly focused on the assigned NATO ASW mission, but ironically enough that was to prove the salvation of the fleet. With the disbandment of NSHQ at the time of unification, the navy had been relegated to the coasts, with the "Commander of Maritime Command (MARCOM)" establishing his headquarters in Halifax.[56] Eventually recognizing this was away from the centre of activity, tentatively in the 1970s and then more boldly through the 1980s, the navy re-organized a naval staff within National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) under the mantle of the chief of maritime doctrine and operations (CMDO). The first product of their new fleet plan, the Canadian patrol frigate (CPF), was optimized for ASW, but the CPF concept of operations took into account the fact that the nature of ASW had so fundamentally changed that the new CPFs required the restoration of a general-purpose versatility to the fleet. The detection distances becoming possible with passive towed array sonar (TAS) demanded that open-ocean ASW be waged with widely dispersed formations of ships literally hundreds of miles apart. On a basic technical-procedural level, the exchange of contact information required over-the-

[54] On the broader issues related to the decision to scrap *Bonaventure,* see James A. Boutilier, "Get Big or Get Out: The Canadian and Australian Decisions to Abandon Aircraft Carriers," in T.R. Frame, J.V.P. Goldrick and P.D. James (eds.), *Reflections on the RAN* (Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press. 1991), 382-408

[53] Milner, *Canada's Navy,* 175.

[54] The guiding principles that established National Defence Headquarters (as described in the Pennefather Report of 1972), envisioned the former service chiefs as operational level commanders with no reason for serving in a strategic level national headquarters; their strategic level force generation and employment responsibilities were to be assigned respectively to the appropriate associate deputy ministers and the deputy chiefs of defence staff.

horizon communications beyond the capability of the standard line-of-sight UHF Link-11, but the alternative longer-range HF Link was not only too unreliable for high data-rate flows but also too easily intercepted. The solution developed by the USN was satellite communications (SATCOM), at UHF and higher frequencies (all line-of-sight into space and returned on a narrow undetectable "footprint"). Stipulating SATCOM as a standard fit on the CPF meant not only privileged Canadian access to this revolutionary communications development, but also that every ship was a potential command and control platform; described by one historian as "the [modern] equivalent of a First World War vintage light cruiser,"[57] once again the Canadian navy had compensated for smallness with innovation in getting the most out of limited naval resources. On a more conceptual level, the widely dispersed formations of lonely towed array stations fostered a host of new procedural developments, ranging from the novel staff thinking that led to the acquisition of the anti-ship Harpoon missile as a "defensive" weapon to protect the isolated ships,[58] to genesis of the "delivery boy" replenishment routine that saw vulnerable naval tankers lumbering independently from station to station (previously the tanker was considered a high value unit requiring the very close protection and warships would come to it for refueling in the "gas station" routine; this new procedure demanded the Canadian tankers also be fitted with SATCOM and ADLIPS[59]).

Brought together, these technical developments had significant implications for the nature of command in the Canadian navy. Previous notions of command and control optimized for close-in ASW no longer were appropriate. At the ship level, individual commanders discovered a new independence, requiring greater emphasis on their initiative and technical competence. Operational level commanders found their tactical horizons broadened significantly beyond the immediacy of close-in convoy escort. At about the same time, the USN was finding the management of modern naval warfare increasingly complicated, and adopted the concept of sub-dividing responsibility for each of the anti-air, anti-submarine, anti-surface and strike duties among "Subordinate Warfare Commanders" who would "command by negation" under the general guidance of the principal commander (that is, juniors are authorized to operate within a pre-planned broad scope of action unless over-ridden by senior commanders). Intriguingly, Canadians dominated the team developing this "Concept of Maritime Operations" (CONMAROPS) in the headquarters of the supreme allied commander Atlantic (SACLANT), and their work became critical to the re-introduction of the Task Group Concept as the basis for the fleet's tactical employment.[60] Since the scrapping of the carrier, Canadian warships had become accustomed to being attached to larger allied formations and split up piecemeal for tactical employment; in the mid-1980s they began to participate in major NATO exercises once again as a distinctive

[57] Milner, *Canada's Navy,* 290; Hansen, "Kingsmill's Cruisers," 52 makes the same point.
[58] Practically every other navy in the world that acquired Harpoon did so because it is an extremely potent long-range offensive weapon. Ironically enough, it has never been used in combat by any navy in that sense (not even the USN), because the stringent rules of engagement (ROE) that apply in the limited wars that have followed the end of the Cold War require visual sighting of targets and follow-through of weapons.
[59] The Canadian navy is distinguished from most other western navies in the employment of its tankers: where others consider them auxiliaries crewed by civilians augmented by a team of naval communicators, Canada's tankers are a full part of the regular navy, commanded, crewed and employed as any other major warship (another example of getting more from limited resources). Styled an operational support ship (OSS, in contrast to the more common AOR or auxiliary oiler replenishment), in recent years Canadian tankers have seen interesting tactical employment roving the waters of the Persian Gulf; it also has led Canadian naval commanders to foster the concept of using this class of ship as an afloat joint headquarters (see discussion below).
[60] A more thorough discussion of the renaissance of the task group concept in the 1980s is Peter T. Haydon, "The Evolution of the Canadian Naval Task Group," in Griffiths *et al, Canadian Gunboat Diplomacy,* 95-129.

national grouping. With their new technical anti-submarine and command and control capabilities, increasingly the Canadian task group commander was assigned the major warfare area responsibility as ASW Commander.[6]

Paradoxically, all of this "new thinking" found the navy in the late 1980s at its lowest operational point in the postwar period. Although the new CPFs were building and the DDH-280s were planned to undergo a complementary tribal update and modernization program (TRUMP), none of the new or improved ships would be available as operationally effective units until the mid-1990s. Until then, the "rust-bucket fleet" of aging destroyers would have to do. It was at that point that Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990, giving Canadian naval commanders an ideal opportunity to practice operational innovation. Most observers - in and out of the navy - were stunned when the acting chief of the defence staff (Vice-Admiral Chuck Thomas, a former commander of Maritime Command, and the highest ranking sailor in the Canadian Forces) identified Canada's response to the crisis as a naval task group, and not the expected follow-on peacekeeping force. On the face of it, the anticipated anti-air and anti-surface operations in the constricted waters of the Persian Gulf presumed a completely different war in an entirely different theatre from which the navy had planned. But three of the older ships were quickly upgraded with self-defence weapons and complete communications packages retro-fitted from the new programs, and on arrival in the Gulf the task group commander appreciated that, while the precise operations may have been very different from open ocean ASW, the command and control concepts demanded many of the elements that were becoming common practice in the Canadian navy.[62] When US Navy commanders looked for a subordinate warfare commander to oversee the Coalition Logistics Force (CLF), they turned naturally to the Canadian task group commander - who became the only non-US officer to hold such a high warfare coordinator's position in that conflict.[63] The true novelty of the situation lay in the fact it was exercised within an *ad hoc* coalition structure as opposed to a formal alliance, a point underscored by Captain(N) "Dusty" Miller's re-definition of C2 to mean "cooperation and coordination."[64]

At the same time, another Canadian naval commander found himself going ashore to establish the first deployed CF joint theatre headquarters. Although not a purely naval event, Headquarters Canadian Forces Middle East (HQ CANFORME) in Bahrain offers an interesting study in the naval command style. Commodore Ken Summers was convinced that, with a modest infusion of additional specialist army and air force officers to his task group flagship staff, he could have run the joint HQ at sea, not in the admittedly cramped destroyer flagship, but from the more spacious tanker *Protecteur* (which had been outfitted as an alternate command ship in the event of damage to the destroyer).[65] His model was a scaled-down version of the USS *Blue Ridge,* the command ship for the naval component of the US Central Command (NAVCENT). Summers lost that "battle" to a stronger force of mostly army staff officers in NDHQ, who could not fathom an HQ of such small size (fewer than three dozen all-ranks - the land-based HQ CANFORME eventually comprised over 450

[6] Eric Grove, with Graham Thompson, *Battle for the Fiords: NATO's Forward Maritime Strategy in Action* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991), is an account of the NATO Exercise Teamwork 1988, including a good description of the part played by the Canadian Task Group.
[62] The naval contribution to the Gulf War is in Morin and Gimblett, *Operation Friction.*
[63] Richard Gimblett, "MIF or MNF? The Dilemma of the 'Lesser' Navies in the Gulf War Coalition," in Hadley, et *al., A Nation 'sNavy,* 190-204. One of the few instances of a Canadian naval commander telling his own story at full-length is Miller and Hobson, *The Persian Excursion, op. cit.*
[64] Gimblett, "MIF or MNF?", 193.
[65] Morin and Gimblett, *Operation Friction,* 113-125ff.

persons). The important distinction between the naval and army philosophies can be seen in Summers' vision of an HQ focused on coordinating operations, whereas the CF (i.e., army) vision was of one that could exercise administrative oversight as well, and, therefore also needed to include its own support services and force protection (the naval officer considered most of those administrative and security functions to be subsumed within the structure of the ship, needing only slight task group commander review and coordination). Recently, the navy's vision for an afloat joint headquarters has been revived in the concept of operations for the joint support ship.

Canadian naval command roles were to be repeated with increasing success at several instances through the 1990s. Canadian naval officers commanded multinational embargo operations such as those around Haiti in 1993-94, twice in command of the standing naval force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT) operations in the Adriatic off the former Yugoslavia, as well as the national joint contribution to East Timor in 1999-2000.[67] The culmination came with Canadian command of "coalition of the willing" anti-terrorist forces in the Arabian Sea elevated to full Task Force status as CTF 151 in the winter and spring of 2003.[68]

Operation Apollo and the global war on terrorism brought new command challenges for Canadian commanders. At the ship level, they ranged from: the assembling of "specialist" boarding teams from the normal ship's company (these have been compared to USN Seals or Royal Marines, proof yet again of the navy's innovative capacity to get more from less); to longer times at sea with relatively little "action" to break the monotony for the majority of the crew not part of a boarding team; to the decreasing number of friendly ports to visit, what with new anti-terrorism force protection measures beginning from the premise that every port (even home) is potentially hostile; to individual frigate commanders occasionally taking on the "Arabian Sea Combat Coordinator" role after the stand down of Task Force 151 in June 2003. At the operational task group level, there has been the progressive shift and expansion of roles, from protection of USN amphibious ready groups, through Al-Qaeda Leadership Interdiction, the continuing enforcement of the UN embargo against Iraq, and the protection of high value units transiting the Strait of Hormuz, all of these requiring the coordination of a variety of national and coalition assets. At the strategic level, there has been the close-run management of a fleet of limited resources at wartime mobilization and nearing the brink of exhaustion.

For all that, Operation Apollo also stands as the realization of what can be termed a "Canadian command style". Throughout the navy's century of existence, successive generations of senior naval commanders have built versatile fleets able to perform a range of functions commensurate with the nation's role as a middle power. Based around classical

It is noteworthy that the Joint Force Commander for Operation Deliverance (Somalia, 1992-93), Colonel Serge Labbé, circumvented the crippling personnel ceiling imposed on him by adopting a Summers-like model, going so far as to bring in naval logistics officers to be the logistic watch keepers in the JTFHQ aboard the tanker *Preserver,* because they were the only ones trained to provide broad-based logistical service, thereby reducing the size of staff (in this specific instance from 9 to 3). See Captain(N) R.W. Allen, "Combined and Joint Operations in Somalia," in Peter Haydon and Ann Griffiths, *Multinational Naval Forces* (Dalhousie CFPS, 1996), 211-213 and ***passim.***

[67] On Operation Forward Action (Haiti), see Sean Maloney, "Maple Leaf Over the Caribbean," 175-17; on Operation Sharp Guard (Adriatic), see Commodore G.R. Maddison, "Operations in the Adriatic," in Haydon and Griffiths, *Multinational Naval Forces,* 197-202. Commodore David Morse exercised the second STANAVFORLANT command in 1998-99.

[68] Richard Gimblett, *Operation Apollo: The Golden Age of the Canadian Navy in the War Against Terrorism* (Ottawa: Magic Light, 2004) is a full account of Canadian command of Coalition forces in the Arabian Sea from October 2001 through December 2003.

notions of cruiser employment but embodied in more cost-effective destroyer and frigate designs, these fleets were not only planned to perform both littoral and blue water operations during peace, but also to serve as a foundation upon which the navy could expand in times of crisis.[69] They are far more capable than most like-sized vessels of other navies, as Canadians came to accept the electronic standards of their US neighbour, ally, and frequent partner in developing their electronics suites. Canadian commanders' historical attention to command and control capabilities made them comfortable in the role of organizing the activities of large numbers of ships. Their cultural background, from a bilingual country with a tradition of multiculturalism, reduced their "otherness," while their long years cooperating with other navies, including easy relationships with the RN and the USN, membership status in NATO, the Commonwealth and the UN made them tactful, diplomatic, and above all not strangers to coalition partners. The compatibility of their communications suites, and their long practice at working with the USN, gave them a lead position in alliance and coalition forces. Their own attention to strict rules of engagement made them sensitive to the ROEs of other participants. Above all, however, Canada has a reputation as having no diplomatic, political or territorial "axe to grind," which minimized suspicion on the part of other participants.

Since the Second World War, the Canadian navy has become increasingly independent of its parent Royal Navy, and closer to its geographical neighbour, the US Navy. As a small fleet, its greater attention to crew welfare is still distinctively better than larger navies, as are its relations between officers and ratings. As Canada has accompanied the US in the computer revolution, so the Canadian navy has remained technically closer to the USN than to the RN. Unlike the USN, Canada is conscious of its membership in the NATO alliance, the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other multilateral organizations. Rather than expecting others to adhere to its standards, it strives to maintain communications, both technical and social, with all other nations. This leaves it well placed, with its close relations with the USN, its historical relations with the RN - and its obligation to neither - to serve as a communications exchange between the navies of the world. In a commercial environment likened to a Global Village, the patchwork of coalition navies requires a medium of communication and co-ordination, a role for which Canadian naval commanders are well positioned.

The command styles practiced in the Canadian navy are a direct result of our nation's accepted role as a middle power of modest resources but committed to an active international involvement generally in partnership with a global power. Although the terminology may have changed over the century of the navy's existence, the fundamentals remain remarkably the same. The navy generally has been at the forefront of technological change, but it has had to manage this within a context of restricted budgets and manpower ceilings. The over-riding concern has been how to maintain a degree of independence from the dominant world power (formerly Britain, and now the United States), and yet achieve an operationally useful level of interoperability with those forces while maintaining a distinctive Canadian identity. The challenges to command are no easier in 2004 than they were a century ago - and hence the styles adopted to manage them have developed in an appropriately sophisticated fashion.

[69] Richard Gimblett, "A Century of Canadian Maritime Force Development: A Re-interpretative History," in Ed Tummers, ed., *Maritime Security in the Twenty-First Century* (CFPS, Maritime Security Occasional Paper No. 11, 2000), 13-26.