



# the Ensign

Volume 19, No. 3 ♦ Summer 2009

The Military Museums



Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex, departs The Military Museums following the Grand Opening Ceremonies on June 6, 2009.

[www.navalmuseum.ab.ca](http://www.navalmuseum.ab.ca)

# The Grand Opening Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009



Capt(N) Bill Wilson, Frank Saies-Jones, Harold Hutchinson, HRH the Countess of Wessex and VAdm J. A. D. Rouleau, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, touring the Naval Museum.

All photos The Military Museums

## The Chairman's Bridge

By Tom Glover

I am pleased to report that the new Naval Museum of Alberta has been off to a fine start since we opened in October last year. Our attendance initially was better than any of our previous records at the old HMCS Tecumseh site. Since the Grand Opening by Sophie the Countess of Wessex on June 6, 2009, our attendance has been steadily increasing.

Over the past several months we have been averaging well over 3,000 guests per month. This figure includes school groups, cadet organisations, naval, air force and regimental groups and members of the general public.

All museum operations are now undergoing fine tuning. Governance issues are being addressed and new staff and volunteers are being trained in the variety of activities in support of museum operations.

Your board and executive committee continue to be active in all aspects of the transition, and are either monitoring the fine tuning that is in progress, or participating in the development and introduction of revised policies and procedures that are needed in the new multiple gallery museum environment.

Preparations are underway for our big fall event featuring the Admirals' Medal presentation to our own Captain(N) Bill 'The Rabbiter' Wilson. On October 21, 2009—the 204<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar—a presentation ceremony is planned for Bill, and the proceedings will feature a companion ceremony to mark the opening of our

new "Canada's Submarine Service" exhibit. His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta Norman Kwong, has agreed to preside at this event.

This fall at our Annual General Meeting in November, we will be featuring a number of new officers on the board and the executive as several of our longtime members of the board are retiring after yeoman service. We are losing our President, Glenn Hardie and our Vice President, Terry Thompson who have both been on the board for a number of years. Terry became a member in 1996 and Glenn followed in 2001.

They have both actively served in a wide variety of capacities through the inception of the idea of a united military museum in the late nineties, to its final, highly successful grand opening in June of this year. I must also mention the service of Bill Buchanan who, as our front running fund raiser for the Convoys and the Battle of the Atlantic exhibit, exceeded all of our expectations in raising close to \$500,000. The efforts of these senior board members who have been very active during their tenure, are appreciated by all of us.

As the calendar begins to close on the end of 2009, we will begin to look forward to the 2010 celebrations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Navy. The contributions of all our members over the past few years has positioned us well to celebrate the highlights of Canadian naval history as we enter our centennial year.

The story of our navy is told in our museum, from its skeletal beginnings just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through two World Wars, the Korean War, the Cold War and numerous other activities both in combat and non-combatative roles. Our modern navy serves, with pride in its past, on the high seas of the twenty-first century. We are proud to tell this story at the new Naval Museum of Alberta, and intend to continue the chronicle of naval history for generations to come.

# In the President's View

By Glenn Hardie

As indicated in our "Chairman's Bridge" column, I have decided to resign my appointment as President of the Naval Museum of Alberta Society effective as of the upcoming Annual General Meeting in November. It has been a great adventure for me, having had the opportunity to be involved with some very fine individuals at the Naval Museum of Alberta for the last eight years, including one year serving as your Vice President, and the last six years as your President. Together we have seen many obstacles overcome and significant goals reached during that time frame, including completion of the D-Day exhibit in 2004, the Trafalgar exhibit in 2005, the Convoys and Battle of the Atlantic exhibit in 2008, and the Naval Museum of Alberta becoming an accredited museum within the Department of National Defence structure.

More importantly, we have completed a successful transition of the Naval Museum to its new home at The Military Museums, a singularly significant milestone in the history of our Society, and one that assures the future sustainability of the Naval Museum in perpetuity as a Calgary landmark and as an outstanding educational and historical resource for generations of our children yet to come. All members of the Society can rightly be very proud of their collective accomplishment in building and developing the finest naval museum in Canada.

One of the major factors in deciding to relocate the Naval Museum of Alberta to the TMM site was our hope of attracting many more visitors to view our artefacts and exhibits, and to better understand the RCN and Maritime Command story. I am advised that in the first seven months of calendar 2009, an unofficial

tally of visitors to the TMM indicates that 26,815 visitors have passed through the TMM doors, representing a 61% increase at TMM over the same period in 2008 (before the Naval Museum held its Official Opening last October), and that this upward trend in visitors is continuing. My recollection is that we didn't have 26,000 visitors in aggregate pass through the Naval Museum at its prior location over the past several years.

I have been fortunate to play a very small part in helping to attain these many achievements, but the credit for all of these successes must go to the volunteers and other members of the executive who played a far more active role than I, in each and every endeavour. In particular, Terry Thompson has done a masterful job in his role as Vice President over the past few years, and Murray Bialek has done an excellent job in his role of Curator and General Manager. Both have been of great assistance to me. I congratulate Terry and Murray on their very fine contributions to the Society, and wish Terry well as he steps down from his post at the upcoming AGM.

Looking back to when I first joined the Board of Directors of the Society in 2001, only Lorne Hanson and Terry Thompson have continued as Directors to the present day. Of course, Laraine Orthlieb, Bill Wilson and Merritt Chisholm have served throughout in their capacity as Honorary Directors, and Jim Cowie has since been named an additional Honorary Director. To each of the Directors and Honorary Directors, and to all active members of the Society who have served in other capacities, each of whom have given willingly of their time and effort over the seven years of my tenure on the executive, I thank you sincerely for your ongoing support, guidance and wisdom

as together we navigated the tricky waters of the accreditation process and the relocation transition.

And to those Directors who will continue to serve on the Board after the upcoming AGM, and especially to the incoming executive appointments, I wish you continuing success in operating and developing the Naval Museum of Alberta. I firmly believe that the Society will continue to be in very good hands moving forward.

## The Curator's Cabin

By Murray Bialek

As usual, there are many events to report on since the last issue of *The Ensign*. They are:

- ◆ Tom Glover, Board Chairman of The Naval Museum of Alberta Society (NMA) laid a wreath on behalf of the museum during the Battle of the Atlantic Church Parade in HMCS *Tecumseh*.
- ◆ A number of NMA representatives attended the official opening of the Air Force Museum within The Military Museums on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.
- ◆ Area Council for Land Forces Western Area (LFWA) held a major meeting in the NMA.
- ◆ Captain Len LeSchack USNR (Ret'd) presented a lecture on the Cold War in the Arctic in the NMA. **(The presentation has been published as the guest editorial in the Summer edition of the NOAC's national publication 'Starshell.' Ed.)**
- ◆ Juno Beach Academy, a Calgary Board of Education Alternative School, held its grade 12 graduating class ceremony in the NMA.

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**W**illiam Norman Holden was born in Edmonton August 7, 1929, but grew up in Calgary where he attended school until he enrolled in teacher training at the Calgary branch of the University of Alberta. He earned a BEd. degree with a major in history. Sixty years ago in September 1949, he began teaching in Banff, but soon moved to teach in Calgary at Rideau Junior High School. While attending his sixth and final summer session he met, and later married Rosemarie Adams of Duchess, Alberta. They have one son Wil, a professor of geography at the University of Calgary. Wil's wife Merian Bravante gave birth to a grandson (Diego) on August 9<sup>th</sup>, two days after Norm's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

His teaching career progressed with Norm in turn becoming Assistant Principal at Parkdale Junior High and at A. E. Cross School. This was followed by serving as a teacher consultant for two years. In September 1968, he, as principal, opened the new John Ware Junior High School. In 1977 he was transferred to Nickle Junior High School where he stayed 14 years until his retirement, ending his 41 year career in teaching.

But what spawned Norm's interest in the navy? In 1942, as soon as he reached the required age of thirteen and one-half, he joined the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps *Undaunted*. About this time a new corps, RCSCC *Undaunted II* was established in the former badminton hall on Rideau Road where in due course, he advanced in rank to cadet Petty Officer. The navy became a part of him and he devoured naval history, acquiring a considerable library of both scholarly and fictional naval history.

When Norm's son Wil reached 10 years of age, he enrolled in the Navy League Cadet Corps *Captain Jackson*. Norm was asked to assist with some committee jobs. He stayed on to become President of the Calgary Branch of The Naval League of Canada and finally, President of the Alberta Division.

In the early 1980s, talk began of a naval museum. Laraine Orthlieb, Frank Saies-Jones and Bill Wilson lead the thrust to establish the museum, fighting to get permission to build on HMCS *Tecumseh* property. The Naval Museum of Alberta was officially opened in the fall of 1988. A great amount of preparatory work was done by volunteers, among whom Paris Sahlen, George Moore and the late Dr. Neil McLean must be named.

Following his retirement from teaching in the summer of 1991, Norm began his new 'volunteer' job on an almost daily basis in the museum office, and conducted numerous evening tours for various groups, but especially Cubs and Scouts. At about this time, Pat Moore, Don Hargrave, Roberta Higgins, Ed Simpson and Mark Wray were regular workers, and Bruce and Don Connolly were beginning to bring their considerable talents to the museum.

Norm has held a number of positions in the museum such as President. He currently acts as the museum's 'Office Manager' and still conducts tours on a regular basis. It's no wonder that he has twice won the 'Volunteer of the Year' award. Bravo Zulu Norm—may you continue for many more years!

- ◆ I attended numerous, diverse meetings on behalf of the NMAS.
- ◆ Alison Mercer, our Assistant Curator, did a fantastic job creating a display cabinet which is in the hallway leading to the NMA.
- ◆ The official opening of The Military Museums on June 6<sup>th</sup> with HRH, Princess Sophie, The Countess of Wessex, was a huge success. Bill Wilson acted as her tour guide with Frank Saies-Jones and Harold Hutchinson as his 'seconds.' To see Bill, Frank, 'Hutch', and the Princess, go to

<http://www.ameershaiikhphotography.com/> and click on "Photo Archives."

- ◆ Even more successful in my opinion, was the 'Open House' the following day, June 7<sup>th</sup>, when thousands of Calgarians visited TMM including, of course, the NMA.
- ◆ From 3-5 July, the NMA once again set up a display booth at Spruce Meadows for the North American tournament (see photos above right). This year's theme was the Cold War. Alison created an outstanding poster board about the RCN's role in Korea which included descriptions of 'train-busting' and troop evacuations. She also created a 'flip-board' entitled "Do you know your navy slang?"

A huge **thank you** goes to the volunteers who manned our booth, namely: Charlie Cobb, Peter Jones, Pat Nichol, Art Jorgenson, Ian Christie, Frank Saies-Jones, Keith Scott, Jack Pidgeon, Pat Moore, Cal Annis and Marguerite Perry (who can be seen in the photo top right).

- ◆ Linda Bialek attended a two day Alberta Museums Association collections management course.
- ◆ Don Connolly and I picked up a large

## The Naval Museum Exhibit at Spruce Meadows July 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009



metal map cabinet from the City of Air-drie.

- ◆ Don Connolly and Gary Hansen continue restoration of an old rum tub.
- ◆ The twin Oerlikon restoration was completed by Don and Gary and the guns are now on display.
- ◆ A Museum Development Funding grant application was sent off to Ottawa.
- ◆ 'Canada's Submarine Service,' our tribute to the late-Wayne Holmes, is on track and we plan to open the exhibit on October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- ◆ Marvel Evelyn is organizing the Admirals' Medal presentation to honour Bill Wilson's outstanding support for Canada's Navy. Invitations are being prepared for this event which will take place October 21<sup>st</sup> with the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, Norman Kwong, as our special guest.
- ◆ The NMA's Volunteer BBQ on July 25<sup>th</sup> was a huge success due to the efforts of Don Connolly and Gary Hansen (see photo spread on p.6. Ed.) "Many hands make light work," and thanks must also go out to Jim and Anne Cowie, Bill Wilson, Laraine Orthlieb, Barbara Murray, Norm

Holden, Kris Singer, Alison Mercer and CPO2 Dawn Forsyth of HMCS Tecumseh who provided the tables and chairs. Over 80 of the museum's volunteers were in attendance.

### ◆ OMMC

I attended the Organization of Military Museums of Canada's week long, 43rd annual Museum Studies Training Program held at Camp Borden this year. Some of the lecture topics included: Canadian Forces Artefact Management System, military history of Borden, military cemeteries, remedial measures for outdoor collections, four accredited DND museum presentations, Canadian Conservation Institute, non-public property, financial accounting and reporting for museums, museum insurance, weapons, sacrifice medal, etc. Museum tours included: Base Morden Museum, Penetanguishene Harbour Museum, Sainte Marie Among the Hurons, Simcoe County Museum and the OPP Museum. One of the most important aspects of this program

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# NMA Volunteer BBQ July 25th



is the personal networking that occurs when one considers there are seventy-eight DND accredited museums, with most being represented at these museum studies programs.

#### ◆ RECENT DONATIONS (Short List)

Items recently received by your museum include: uniforms, cap tallies (German), rum tub, WWII medical handbook, demolition & port clearance notebook, ships' badges, WWII mine clearance handbook, rum tot jigger (HMCS Preserver), naval prayer book, photos, medals, portholes, navy recruiting items, water-colour of HMCS Calgary, pom-pom shell, HMCS Cayuga booklet (1947), and numerous books.

#### ◆ ARTEFACT DONORS

On behalf of the museum, I would like to thank a number of individuals who recently made artefact donations: Don Morrison, Rick Carrington, Peter Scott, Fred Mannix, Mildred Searle, Jane McKenzie, Hans Garde-Hansen, Ian Christie, Verne Brewer, Jack Pidgeon, Ron Miller, Bill Wilson, W. H. Willson, W. C. Sellens, Ruth Usselman, Audrey Schultz, Bob Hansell, Susan Hausberg, Robert Buchanan and William McDonald.

#### ◆ VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED!

- (1) If you can give 4 to 5 hours per month, we need you to act as a host or watchkeeper greeting Naval Museum visitors.
- (2) A volunteer with some computer skills who can give 8 to 10 hours per week to help in the museum office.
- (3) A volunteer with sewing skills.

#### ◆ MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**September 24 and 25, CASH CASINO, 4040 Blackfoot Trail SE. Come and support the museum.**

**November 17, 2009, 7:00 pm the NMAS AGM at The Military Museums.**

## 'Lunch with Cliff' Series...

### No. 1 - 'The Admiral's Dog'



In the summer of 1956, I was a young Lieutenant, newly qualified communications specialist appointed as Flag Lieutenant to Rear Admiral H. F. Pullen, Flag Officer Pacific Coast. Little did I know that the duties of Flag Lieutenant extended to dogs too.

The Admiral, his wife Helen and four of their six children made the move from Ottawa to Esquimalt. The older two were young adults by then. The youngest was Willie, who was about age five at the time.

Perhaps Willie had been promised a dog on making the move, but in any event he got a puppy. It was a lively Cairn terrier, ginger in colour named *Tylo*, who lived with the family in the Admiral's residence at Duntz Head in Esquimalt Dockyard. They were ably served by a navy staff made up of PO Oliver, a PO1 Steward, an AB Steward, a PO2 Cook, a LS Driver/Barge Cox'n., and an AB Stoker for the barge, who also doubled in general duties. Then, as now, there is no fence around the property and you can guess the rest. Even though the Admiral had his own household staff, I was called into service a number of times.

Willie would do what young boys do. He'd take the dog out to play or for a walk. Often this included taking *Tylo* off leash or setting the leash down, and of course *Tylo* would do what active, young terriers do ... he'd be gone! Nor would *Tylo* heed anyone who called. Willie would go home and report, "*Tylo* got away."

The Admiral's household staff was the first line of recall, and would deploy about the dockyard looking for the terrier. When that failed, PO Oliver would call from the Admiral's residence to me in my office, which was just outside of the Admiral's in the FOPC HQ building. I would then drop everything, grab the leash I kept on hand for such purposes, and head off to see what I could do. After one such escapade, I came back to my office to find an ink sketch cartoon framed and on my desk. It's what you see here. The sketch was dashed off by Engineer Captain(N) John Osborne who was the Command Technical Officer to the Admiral. He had an office nearby and had occasion to observe my version of 'go fetch.' Note the new piece of naval stores pictured in the sketch.

To my knowledge *Tylo* had no impact on Canada's military strategic affairs, but he certainly kept some of us occupied in ways we never anticipated on joining!



As told by Cliff Stewart to Greg McKenzie. Cliff served in the RCN from 1947-74. Over the years he was Flag Lieutenant to Admirals Pullen and Rayner as FOPC, and Flag Lieutenant-Commander/Fleet Communications Officer to Commodores Sterling, Landymore and Welland when they held the appointment of Senior Canadian Officer Afloat Atlantic (CANCOM-FLT). Greg McKenzie was a Naval Reservist from 1967 to 1999.

# The Rabbit's Hutch



By Bill Wilson

## ❖ TWIN 20mm Mk. XII OERLIKON MOUNTINGS

Members will recall the article in the Winter *Ensign* which described the delivery of the two 20mm twin Oerlikon mountings from Hamilton, and the agreement that had been reached between Parks Canada and the NMAS. The plan was that the two mountings which had been exposed to the Southern Ontario elements for approximately thirty years, would be cleaned up and restored to the extent possible by our volunteers, and one mounting, and the Society's 'surplus' moored mine, would be returned to **Haida**.

Subsequently, in discussions with the Parks Project Manager, Ms. Alice Willems, it was concluded that after restoration, the two mountings would remain in our museum, as the future climatic damage to the mounting to be returned, would virtually destroy a very valuable historic artefact.

When the mountings were originally received in early February, arrangements were made with Mr. Arthur Hazle to have them stored temporarily while we determined the extent of the work required, and the expected delay waiting for improved weather for the necessary outside sandblasting. On Don Connolly's return from his Texas vacation in the first week of April, the restoration moved into high gear. Arrangements were made for the mountings to be delivered by Mr. Hazle to the workshop at the museum, and Don, assisted primarily by Gary Hansen, began stripping the four guns from the mountings and then completely dismantling both the guns and the mountings. Once that was completed, restoration began in earnest. Each part (literally hundreds and hundreds) had to

have rust and corrosion removed, then cleaned and polished, followed by priming and painting. The amount of work required to restore complex weapons system such as these, is really unbelievable. For instance, the Oerlikon Corporation was contacted in Switzerland for information, as was Mr. John Lambert, the internationally recognized authority on

WWII weapons used by the Commonwealth, and discussions are continuing.

When the outside weather improved, Mr. Hazle was contacted and his crew arrived to remove the mountings and magazines for sandblasting. We estimated that it would take several days to clean them up, and we were astounded when Arthur called the following noon to say the work had been completed and the mounting and parts were about to be delivered.

The mountings have now restored, re-assembled, and are now on display at the new museum. The photos below give



TOP: Work underway.

RIGHT: One of the finished mountings displaying the excellent workmanship resulting from many hours on the part of Don Connolly and his dedicated team of restoration experts.





some indication of the transformation. We should also mention that Jack Pidgeon, Gord Rowan and Andy Madsen did a lot of scraping, as well as Cal Annis and Tom Conrick.

❖ **QUEEN VICTORIA RUM TUB**

All members are no doubt familiar with the long relationship that the navy has had with 'Nelson's Blood.' The fact that the traditional daily 'Up Spirits' (stand fast the Holy Ghost) has been discontinued (regretted by many matelots), the tradition of 'Splicing the Mainbrace' remains. Our existing display tells the story.

Members will recall that the museum received a 'cruiser' size rum tub from Fred Mannix which has been part of our rum display in the museum since that date. While 'cruiser' rum tubs are extremely rare, Mr. Mannix has now located a 'battleship' rum tub which, of course, in our view would be virtually impossible to obtain. Not only is a 'battleship' tub rare, this one was last utilized in the days of Queen Victoria, a fact that has been authenticated by the British antique shop in London.

While not exactly delicate in the sense of being fragile, due to its age it has to be treated with great care. Our veteran volunteers Don and Gary have begun the process of stabilizing the twenty-three staves, removing the bands and lettering, and beginning the process of carefully sanding off the various coats of varnish and polishing the brass parts.

The adjacent photograph shows the restoration to this point in time. When completed, the tub will be placed in a glass covered case and added to our rum display. Whereas we utilize the 'cruiser' tub on special occasions, the case for the Queen Victoria tub will be permanently locked.

❖ **WORLD WAR ONE 12" SHELL**

In early 2005 we had the opportunity to visit the Glenbow Museum's ware-



**ABOVE LEFT**– Don Connolly stands behind the World War One 12-inch shell received from the Glenbow Museum. **ABOVE RIGHT** – Don and Gary Hansen stand behind the rare battleship-size, Queen Victoria rum tub as it undergoes restoration.

house in southeast Calgary, as they had advised us they had some 'military' artefacts they were considering putting up for disposal. While the articles were primarily clothing, purely by accident we recognized a solitary naval 12-inch shell amongst a collection of large bore army projectiles. Following negotiations, the Glenbow kindly agreed to release the shell to our museum.

We did not arrange for the shell to be picked up at that time due to the new building's ongoing construction, and our volunteers were devoting all their time and energy to completing our displays. There was no point in moving this big shell to the old museum and then having to move it again at some future date. To make a long story short, a few weeks ago we contacted Ms. Cathy Heggs, Collection Technician at the Glenbow, to arrange pick-up, and with a truck supplied by Major Tremblay, Commanding Officer of the Area Support Unit, the shell was retrieved and transported to the TMM

where it has been located in the 'gun battery' alongside the ammunition cabinet.

These 12-inch, 850 lb. shells were supplied to one of the 'dreadnought' class battleships of the 1900-1915 era that men of the RNCVR served in during World War One.

While the shell has not been 'tiddlied' up as yet, its size can be appreciated on examining the photograph above. (The other 'artefact' behind the gun is our own, Don Connolly.)

And finally this issue, the large Canadian flag flying from the gaff at TMM (right) was supplied by Fred Mannix.



# A NAVAL SAFARI

## The hunt for and destruction of the German cruiser *Königsberg*

Frank Saies-Jones

**N**o war in history has ever been recorded in as much detail as World War One. The great land battles fought in France and Belgium, the clash of dreadnoughts at Jutland, the defeat of U-boats on the high seas, the debacle of Gallipoli, and the defeat of czarist Russia and the ensuing revolution. These, and many other events culminating in the defeat and collapse of Germany in 1918, have been chronicled over the years in both print and film. For some inexplicable reason however, exploits of the allied forces in Africa during four years of war, seem to have been overlooked by everyone including military historians, and many books on the First Great War don't even mention the African campaigns.

At the outbreak of WWI in 1914, German colonies in Africa consisted of Togoland (now known as Ghana and Benin), the Cameroons, German Southwest Africa and German East Africa (now known as Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi). Four allied operations mounted against these colonies were successful, and the book *The Great War in Africa 1914-1918* by Byron Farwell (Norton, 1986), gives an impressive account of these campaigns.

This story is about the hunt for, and destruction of,

the German light cruiser SMS *Königsberg* by the Royal Navy monitors *Severn* and *Mersey*. These two monitors were part of a fleet of twenty-seven British ships that made up a "sea-safari" off the coast of German East Africa in search of the German cruiser, in the hope of bringing her to action.

The *Königsberg* was a sister ship of the cruiser SMS *Nürnberg* which, later in the war, sank Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock's flagship HMS *Monmouth*, during the Battle of Coronel. *Königsberg* was built in 1905 and was 3,400 tons displacement. With a top speed of 24 knots, she was faster than most comparable British light cruisers, and her armament consisted of two torpedo tubes, two 88mm and ten 105mm guns. She was commanded by Fregattenkapitän (Commander) Max Loof, and her first officer was Korvettenkapitän (Lieutenant-Commander) George Koch. As Germany's major warship in the Indian Ocean, the *Königsberg* was based in the harbour of Dar es Salaam, and with the imminent possibility of hostilities breaking out, Commander Loof put to sea on September 31, 1914. He soon

found that he was not alone, for within hours he was joined by three British warships, HMS *Astarea* of 4,400 tons, mounting two 6-inch and eight 4.7-inch guns, HMS *Hyacinth* of 5,700 tons, mounting eleven 152mm and eight 76mm guns, and HMS *Pegasus* of 2,170 tons, mounting two torpedo tubes and eight 4.7-inch guns. The four vessels, sailing in sight of each other, were steaming at 12 knots when, taking advantage of a sudden squall, the *Königsberg*, increasing to her full speed of 24 knots, managed to elude her unwelcome escorts.

With the declaration of war on August 4, 1914, the German cruisers *Emden* and *Königsberg* were ordered by Berlin to intercept and sink allied shipping in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and to supply themselves as necessary with coal and provisions from captured enemy merchant ships. (See "Indian Ocean Rendezvous," Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 2008, *Ensign*, pp.6-9.) On August 6<sup>th</sup>, the second day of the war, Loof encountered the SS *Zieten*, a German vessel bound for Germany from Ceylon, from whom he took 80 tons of coal. On the same

day he captured the British ship SS *The City of Winchester*, the first British merchant ship to be taken in WWI.

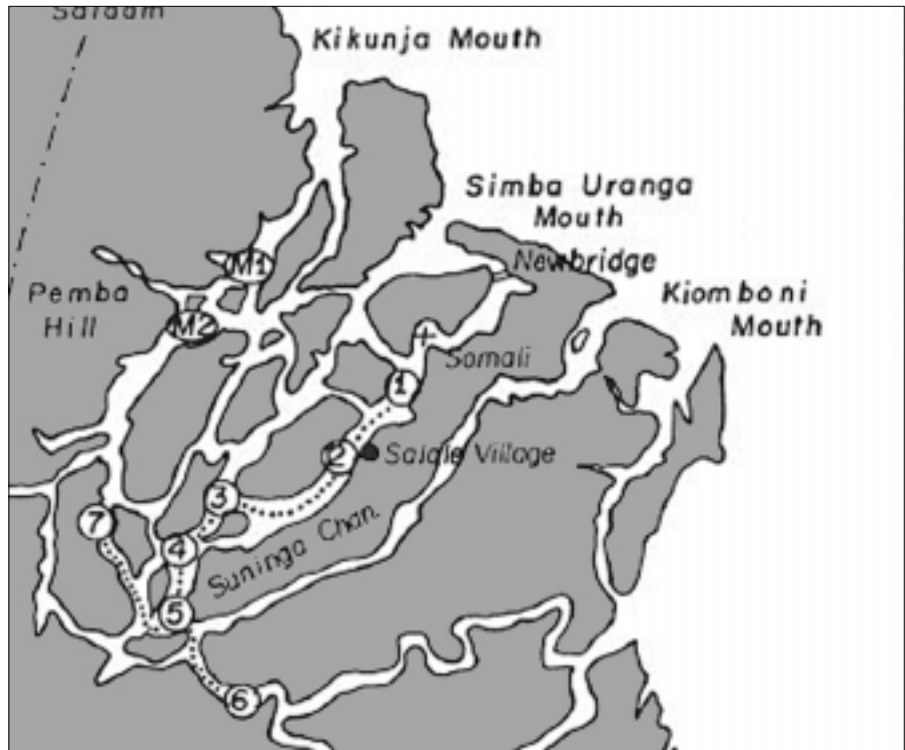
News of the outbreak of war did not reach Dar es Salaam until the evening of August 6<sup>th</sup>, and the senior officer there



HMS *Königsberg* in 1915.

LCdr. Georg Zimmer, at once set about making ready the SS **Somalia**, a 2,500 ton ship, as a supply vessel to the **Königsberg**. When Cdr. Loof was down to only 14 tons of coal and dangerously low on fresh water, he was able to rendezvous with her off the coast of Somalia and obtain 850 tons of good coal, full tanks of fresh water, and mail from home. Reports of the **Königsberg** being at large in the Indian Ocean resulted in merchant ships seeking shelter in friendly ports, and the resultant lack of prizes prompted Loof to arrange a second meeting with **Somalia** in the delta of the Rufiji River where he could once more top up his bunkers and carry out much needed engine repairs in safety. In former years, the Germans had charted the many channels which formed the delta of the Rufiji, situated approximately 100 miles south of Dar es Salaam. They had discovered four deep water inlets at the mouth of the river capable of floating the **Königsberg** which the British were not aware of, and this was thought to be the safest spot in all of East Africa for the German ship to hide.

Repairs had almost been completed when, on September 19<sup>th</sup>, Loof received word that a British warship had arrived in Zanzibar. This was the small cruiser HMS **Pegasus** commanded by Captain A. J. Inglis, RN, and she had been left on her own in Zanzibar to carry out minor engine repairs. Quickly raising steam, Loof sailed for that island, and on arriving early the next morning, cleared for action, ran up battle ensigns, and opened fire while still four miles from the harbour mouth. **Pegasus** replied without effect as the German ship, six times her size, swept into the anchorage with all guns blazing. Within twenty minutes, having scored 200 hits, the **Königsberg** retired leaving the British ship on fire, her forward turret smashed, thirty-one of her crew dead or dying, and fifty-five others badly wounded. Not one German sailor sustained a scratch. On her way out to sea the German ship fired three shells at the picket boat **Helmut** guarding the harbour entrance which, having received three hits, prompt-



The Rufiji River delta (please disregard the circled numbers).

ly exploded and sank, forcing her crew to swim for their lives to the nearby shore.

Within hours of his victory, problems with the boiler forced Loof to once again take refuge in the Rufiji delta. Steaming well inland to a place by the name of Salale, his ship was camouflaged by attaching trees and bushes to her mast and funnels, and the damaged machinery was dismantled and carried overland by thousands of African natives to Dar es Salaam for repair. At the same time, landing parties were placed on shore with machine and field guns to cover the mouth of the river, signalling stations were set up along the river banks, and lookouts were placed atop palm trees to watch for British warships. The **Somalia** brought in supplies and the repaired parts were carried back overland from Dar es Salaam within a period of ten days, but before repairs were completed, the British discovered the **Königsberg's** hiding place.

On learning of the sinking of the **Pegasus**, the Admiralty ordered that no effort was to be spared in finding and destroying the **Königsberg**, and Admiral King-Hall ordered the cruiser HMS **Chatham**, commanded by Captain S. R. Drury-Lowe, RN, to begin a

search of harbours, bays and inlets, along the 1,700 miles of the East Africa coast. The best educated guess as to **Königsberg's** whereabouts however, was that she would be found somewhere in the Rufiji Delta. When a German tug, the 500 ton **Adjutant**, was intercepted by the **Chatham** in the act of carrying supplies to Loof, and later when the German ship **President** was caught at the mouth of the Lukuledi River with documents indicating that she had dispatched coal in lighters to Salale on the Rufiji six weeks earlier, the British knew they had hit the jackpot.

Having located the **Königsberg**, the British were now faced with the problem of bringing her to action. Having no charts of the delta, all they could do was blockade the many inlets to the river while they found some way of locating the precise position of their enemy. For this purpose the Royal Navy employed the help of two individuals. The first was an Afrikaner by the name of Peter Pretorius, a well known elephant hunter reputed to have thorough knowledge of the Rufiji area. The second was a young aviator by the name of Dennis Cutler, located in Durban and the owner of

his own aircraft. Admiral King-Hall purchased the aircraft, and Mr. Cutler (having been commissioned into the navy as a sub-lieutenant), along with Mr. Pretorius and the plane, were transported by a cruiser to the delta of the Rufiji. On his first flight over the delta, the radiator of SLt. Cutler's float plane failed and he was forced to set down on the sea from which he was later rescued. The radiator could not be repaired, but someone having remembered seeing a Model "T" Ford in Mombassa, the warship HMS **Fox** was sent 200 miles north to procure its radiator which was eventually fitted to the aircraft. Both Pretorius and Cutler were to assist the navy in the final destruction of the **Königsberg**, but it was an unknown British sailor who, from the top of a coconut palm tree, was the first person to spot the top mast of either her or **Somalia**. The **Chatham** fired a few shells at the enemy but they fell short. Not only had they to move closer to the target, but they also required an observer to direct their fire. The blockading ships were now joined by HM Ships **Dartmouth** and **Weymouth**, both 26knot cruisers of the same class as **Chatham**, and HMS **Pyramus**, a light cruiser from New Zealand. The navy also brought in troops from Zanzibar and landed them under the protective fire of HMS **Fox**.

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1914, SLt. Cutler's aircraft crashed in the Rufiji while flying over the **Königsberg** and he was made a prisoner of the Germans. The enemy also recaptured the tug **Adjutant** which had run around in the delta, and it was once more rearmed and taken into the service of the Fatherland. The loss of Cutler's plane caused Adm. King-Hall to petition the admiralty to provide a replacement, and on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915, not one, but two RFC pilots together with sixteen mechanics and two Sopwith aircraft, arrived in the delta. An attempt was first made to use these aircraft to bomb the enemy ships, but with a load of bombs they could not fly above 500 ft. and became a target for the German riflemen. It was also found that the humid climate of East Africa caused their propel-

lers to warp, and the glue would not hold them together. Replacement aircraft were then dispatched, and on April 25<sup>th</sup>, one of these replacements with a pilot and observer, managed to climb to 1,200 ft. despite encountering heavy rifle fire all the way, and the German cruiser was photographed with the aid of a common box camera. One of the 'new' aircraft was shot down on May 5<sup>th</sup>, but both pilot and observer were rescued by the British.

Meanwhile, on board the **Königsberg** supplies were running low and the German Admiralty made plans to send relief to the stranded cruiser by way of a ship named the **Kronborg**. She was a 3,600 ton merchant vessel which the Germans disguised as a Dutch freighter for the purpose of running the British blockade in the North Sea. She was commanded by Lt. Carl Christiansen who spoke fluent Danish, and she carried 1,000 shells for **Königsberg's** 105mm guns, thousands of rounds of ammunition for the 47mm field guns, 1,800 rifles together with 3-million rounds of ammunition, two 60mm guns, six machine guns, tons of dynamite, medicines, food, clothing, machine tools and 2,800 tons of coal. Leaving Germany on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1915, she rounded the north of Scotland, sailed south in the Atlantic rounding the Cape well clear of land, and after steaming between Madagascar and the mainland, anchored in the lagoon on Aldabra Island on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Breaking radio silence, Lt. Christiansen arranged a rendezvous with Loof in the open sea, 400 miles northeast of the Rufiji delta. The allies having broken the German naval code, the signal was intercepted by a French cruiser which in turn relayed it to Adm. King-Hall in **Hyacinth**.

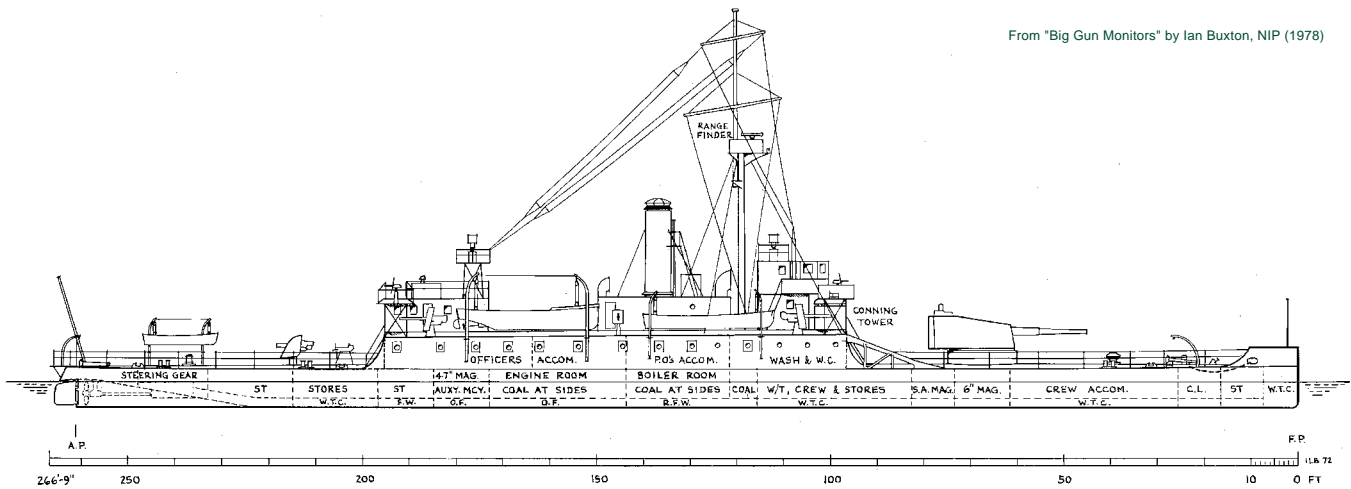
Faced with a superior British force laying in wait for him, Loof was unable to break out of the river and ordered Lt. Christiansen to Manza Bay, a sheltered anchorage near Tanga. This signal too was intercepted, and on arriving at Manza Bay on April 14<sup>th</sup>, the **Kronborg** met up with HMS **Hyacinth** which immediately engaged her, setting the German ship on fire and driving

her ashore where Lt. Christensen let go both anchors and scuttled her. The crew abandoned the ship in two boats, the first of which was blown out of the water by the British, but the second arrived on shore after being hit by a shell wounding Christensen in the leg. Later that day boarding parties were sent by the **Hyacinth** to complete the destruction of the enemy ship, but were driven off by machine gun fire from the shore, forcing the British to abandon the task, recall their boats and leave the area. This abortive exercise on the part of the RN was severely criticized by the army at a later date, as German divers were able to salvage most of the rifles, guns and ammunition from the wreck, and although the ammunition was badly damaged by the sea, within months each round was opened, the brass cleaned, powder dried and rounds made serviceable—a salvage job talked about in Africa for many years afterward. Frustrated at being unable to bring **Königsberg** to action, the British Admiralty ordered her destroyed at any cost.

It was all very well for 'their lordships' in London to order the ships of the greatest navy in the world to perform such a task, but unless their ships in deep water could get within range of the enemy, hiding in the unchartered and shallow waters of the river Rufiji, whose banks were lined with concealed riflemen, machine guns and artillery, the task was next to impossible. It was up to Adm. King-Hall to solve the unique problem.

## ENTER THE MONITORS

In order to get within range of the **Königsberg** it was necessary to enter the shallow Rufiji in a vessel with sufficient firepower to engage the enemy. The only vessel fitting this description was a monitor, so-called by its resemblance to the ship of that name (the first 'ironclad') used by the Union navy during the American Civil War. A monitor is little more than a floating gun platform, and it just happened there were three being built by the British in 1914 for the Brazilian Navy. Completed



*Severn, Humber and Mersey.* The drawing shows the Brazilian river monitors as taken over by the RN. At the end of 1914, *Severn* and *Mersey's* turret was replaced by a single 6-inch gun, while all three ships had a single 6-inch fitted on the quarterdeck. The waterline shows that corresponding to service in the deep condition, not the designed draft, which emphasizes the low freeboard. The propellers operated in a tunnel between the rudder skegs, as their diameter was greater than the draft.

at the outbreak of the war, the Admiralty confiscated them before they could be delivered to Brazil and named them **Humber**, **Severn** and **Mersey**. All three vessels were 265 ft. in length and 49 ft. in width, and with a freeboard of only 3 ft. 3 in., they drew no more than 6-1/2 ft. when fully loaded. With a displacement of 1,260 tons, they were armed with two 6-inch and two 4.7-inch guns, carried 187 tons of coal and had a top speed of 12 knots. Manned mostly by RNVN and RNR officers and men, they were extremely slow, and in almost uncontrollable in an open sea when the wind was at a right angle to the hull. Nevertheless, they were invaluable as bombardment vessels in support of the army due to their ability to work in very shallow waters.

In 1915, it was decided to employ these vessels in support of the Gallipoli campaign. With their crews transferred to the depot ship **Trent** for passage, the three monitors were taken in tow, each by two tugs, and pulled at 6-1/2 knots from the UK, through the Strait of Gibraltar to the island of Malta, where they arrived too late to be used in the Dardanelles. Their arrival in Malta however, coincided with events taking place in German East Africa, and someone in the Admiralty decided they were the answer to the problem of bringing the **Königsberg** to action. As a result, on April

28<sup>th</sup>, 1915, the **Severn** and **Mersey** were again taken in tow by tugs, hauled through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, and sent south to join Adm. King-Hall's blockading force, a total distance of 5,000 nautical miles. Each vessel was then reinforced by the mounting of five semiautomatic 3-pdrs. and eight machine guns, and in order to protect the crew from small arms fire, sandbags, hammocks and mattresses were placed around gun mounts, compasses and steering positions. On June 10<sup>th</sup> they were escorted by HMS **Weymouth** to the Rufiji delta coast prepared to do battle, and on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, having earlier hacked out a 200 yard land-

ing strip in the jungle to accommodate the more than five aircraft now at his disposal, Admiral King-Hall was ready to make his move.

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, with galley fires extinguished, each member of the crew of the two vessels was issued four beef sandwiches, and in anticipation of a hot day, baskets of oranges and bottles of fresh water were placed on board. The two monitors then began making their way up river at 0400, with **Severn** in the lead. Other British warships off the coast took up positions to render as much assistance as they could. Despite British attempts to surprise the

"Big Gun Monitors" by Ian Buxton, NIP (1978)



Intended for operations up the Danube should the Gallipoli Expedition be successful, the three ex-Brazilian river monitors are seen here at Malta in April 1915, immediately before *Severn* and *Mersey* were rerouted to German East Africa for the *Königsberg* operation. From left to right are the depot ship *Trent*, and the monitors *Mersey*, *Severn* and *Humber*.

enemy, German intelligence learned of the monitors' presence and Captain Loof landed his 47mm guns to help in the guarding of the river mouth by the Delta Defence Force under the command of Cdr. Werner Schonfeld. Despite Cdr. Schonfeld's pleas, Loof refused to give up his 105mm guns for the same purpose, a fatal mistake on his part for, if he had done so, it is almost certain the two monitors would have been prevented from entering the river.

The British ships soon came under fire from both banks of the river, but were able to defend themselves by using their 3-pdrs. and machine guns. Two hours later, having reached a point estimated to be about 10,800 yds. from their target, they anchored and waited for an aircraft flown by Flt. Lt. J. Cull and his observer SLt. F. Arnold, to arrive. With the aircraft overhead to spot the fall of shot, **Severn** opened fire with her 6-inch gun at 0648. **Severn's** opening rounds fell short by about 200 yds., and so too did the **Königsberg's**, but the Germans quickly found the range and both monitors came under heavy fire. **Mersey**, anchored 400 yds. astern of **Severn**, bore the brunt of fire and by 0730 had been hit twice and her 6-inch gun knocked out of action. Weighing anchor, she shifted position in order to use her stern gun, and no sooner had she done so than an enemy salvo landed exactly on the spot where she had been sitting.

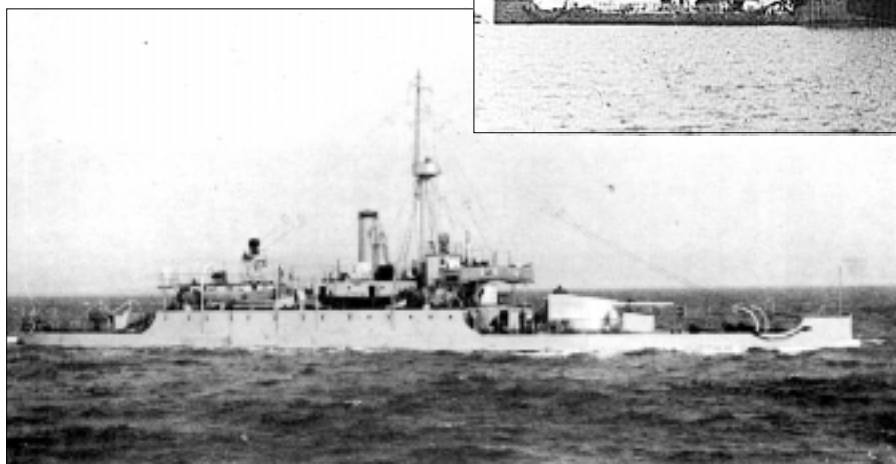
It was at 0751 that the first British shell from the **Severn** found its mark, quickly followed by two more killing three of the enemy, but the **Königsberg**, taking a pound-

ing, was also straddling the **Severn**, and it was only a matter of time before she too was hit. Deciding to shift his position in the river, Captain J. Fullerton, DSO, RN of the **Severn**, was about to do so when one of his officers caught sight of a German spotting position located on a platform in a tree on an island in the river. This observation post was quickly wiped out by 3-pdr. and 6-inch shells, and when another observation point on a nearby hill was also made ineffective by the monitors shifting their positions, the Germans were forced to fire blindly at the British ships. Despite anti-aircraft fire directed at the British planes, they continued to spot the fall of shot, and by mid-afternoon, at which time the monitors had fired 635 shells and scored four hits on the **Königsberg**, both **Severn** and **Mersey** ceased fire, and at 1545 made for the river's mouth under fire once again from the shore as they made for the open sea. Having run the gauntlet, they were safely under the protection of the cruisers' guns by 1630 to the cheers of their crews who manned the rails.

Meanwhile in **Königsberg**, the fore and aft bunkers were filling with water where one of **Severn's** shells had entered her hull. All hands were employed burying her four dead and landing her thirty-five wounded.

All combustible materials, along with spare parts and important papers, were put ashore. New spotter positions were erected and connected to the ship by telephone, and Captain Loof waited for the return of the monitors. He did not have long to wait. The British planes, having reported the **Königsberg** damaged but still afloat, Adm. King-Hall once more had the monitors towed to the mouth of the river and, under their own steam, set out to run the gauntlet of fire from the river banks. **Mersey** was the first to take a hit, but aided by the fire from the cruisers offshore, both monitors fought back and by 1225, were in position to engage the enemy. **Mersey** resumed her former position while **Severn** continued upstream for another 1,000 yds. Pilot Cull and Observer Arnold having arrived overhead **Severn** opened fire, and with her eighth salvo found the enemy. In the next ten minutes, seven more hits were made but **Königsberg** still continued to fight.

At 1249 the aircraft reported being hit and, having crash landed within 150 yds. of **Mersey**, the two airmen were picked up by her motor boat. At 1316 there were a series of explosions heard from **Königsberg**, a large mushroom cloud of smoke was seen above the trees, and the enemy guns fell silent.



TOP – HMS *Severn*.

BOTTOM – HMS *Mersey*.



**LEFT** – The *Königsberg* as she appeared in 1924 with photo taken at low spring tides.

**BELOW** – The wreck following the engagement with the monitors.



"Big Gun Monitors" by Ian Buxton, NIP (1978)



With no proper drydocks in East Africa, one way of getting at the monitors' underwater hull was simply to beach and wait for low tide. Shown here at Zanzibar in August 1915, following the *Königsberg* operation, HMS *Severn* has had some leaks repaired and is getting repainted. The tunnel in which the propellers run and the hinged flap to assist astern manoeuvring can be seen. Two of the 3-pounder guns can be seen at boat deck level, with a machine gun positioned above the starboard one.

*Mersey*, having been ordered further upstream to within 7,000 yds. of the German ship, and with a second aircraft now aloft to spot her fire, renewed the action with twenty-eight more well directed salvos, all of which hit the cruiser setting her on fire from stem to stern. Certain that *Königsberg* was no longer a threat, Cdr. Fullerton was able to report by wireless to Admiral King-Hall that *Königsberg* had been destroyed.

On board the German ship, Loof, who had been badly wounded, gave the order to abandon ship. Casualties were heavy, and detonators placed in her torpedo tubes were exploded, even before all the dead and dying had been carried ashore. At 1430 the two monitors sailed down the river to the open sea while blazing away at the enemy shore defences. They received little or no fire in return, but *Mersey* was hit once again, the shell landing on her quarterdeck. On reaching the open sea they were greeted by *Weymouth* flying the signal: "well done monitors."

The blockade and battle in the Rufiji delta lasted 255 days and tied down twenty-seven British warships which consumed 38,000 tons of coal. Captain Loof recovered from his wounds and returned to Germany where he was decorated with the Iron Cross First Class. Nearly half the *Königsberg's* crew were awarded the Iron Cross Second Class.

Commanders Fullerton of the *Severn*

and Wilson of the *Mersey*, together with the two pilots of the aircraft, were awarded the DSO, and a prize court later awarded the sum of £1,920 be distributed among the officers and men of the two ships.

The Germans later carried out salvage operations on the *Königsberg*, removing her 105mm guns which had not been damaged, much to the disgust of the British army who blamed the navy for not having finished the job, as the German land forces later used them in the fighting which followed on land. The wreck of the *Königsberg* lay in the Rufiji River for the next forty-seven years before being demolished in 1962 to improve river navigation.

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ISSN 1483-7080

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Cascade  
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Publishing

George A. Moore, President  
1871 Primrose Crescent, Kamloops, BC V1S 0A5  
Phone 250-314-1284 • Fax 250-314-1286 • Cellular 778-220-2868  
[cascadecreek@shaw.ca](mailto:cascadecreek@shaw.ca)

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### The Naval Museum of Alberta

Murray Bialek  
Curator and General Manager  
4520 Crowchild Trail SW, Calgary, AB T2T 5J4  
Phone: 403-242-0002 ~ or ~ 403-974-2807  
Email: [curator@navalmuseum.ab.ca](mailto:curator@navalmuseum.ab.ca)

[www.navalmuseum.ab.ca](http://www.navalmuseum.ab.ca)

### 'The Ensign' Editor

LCdr (Ret'd) George A. Moore  
1871 Primrose Crescent, Kamloops, BC V1S 0A5  
Phone: 250-314-1284 • Fax: 250-314-1286  
Cellular: 778-220-2868  
Email: [cascadecreek@shaw.ca](mailto:cascadecreek@shaw.ca)

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