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## Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security: Historical Perspectives

*Edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer*



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Cover: The Mobile Striking Force, an air-portable and airborne brigade group designed as a quick reaction force for northern operations, was an inexpensive solution to the question of how Canada could deal with an enemy lodgement in the Arctic. During training exercises, army personnel from southern Canada learned how to survive and operate in the north. In this image, taken during Exercise Bulldog II in 1954, Inuk Ranger TooToo from Churchill, Manitoba relays information to army personnel in a Penguin. DND photo PC-7066.

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# Calgary Papers *in Military and Strategic Studies*

## Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security Historical Perspectives

Edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer

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## *Arctic Focus: The Royal Canadian Navy in Arctic Waters, 1946-1949*

Elizabeth B. Elliot-Meisel

What the Aegean Sea was to classical antiquity, what the Mediterranean was to the Roman world, what the Atlantic Ocean was to the expanding Europe of Renaissance days, the Arctic Ocean is becoming to the world of aircraft and atomic power.

— H.L. Keenleyside, 1949<sup>1</sup>

**D**uring World War II the United States and Canada cooperated in joint defence projects in the Canadian North. These projects included such ventures as the Northwest Staging Route, the Alaska Highway, the Crimson Project, and operations in the Aleutian Islands. In the postwar period continental security, mainly air defence, focused on the previously ignored Arctic and Arctic Ocean.<sup>2</sup> Less well-known is Canada's Arctic presence, especially that of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), in the immediate postwar years. Wartime development in the Canadian North raised concerns about sovereignty and security, which led Canadians to look to their northern waters.<sup>3</sup> In assessing the postwar world, Canadians were forced to size up the increasing tension between the United States and the USSR and to evaluate the likely impact of this tension on their own nation. In addition, Canadians had to weigh the potential strength of the nascent United Nations; take into account the increasingly close relationship with the United States on the traditional British connection; and determine the size and composition of Canada's contribution to its own and to continental defence. To help in these deliberations, the Post-Hostilities Problems Committees began work in mid-1943. After the war, the Arctic's strategic significance reinforced the wisdom of Canada's wartime look at the North.

The events of and attitudes toward Canada's immediate postwar demobilization and military budget cuts have been analyzed by historians and retired naval personnel, as have the Canadian role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Canada's military contribution to the Korean War.<sup>4</sup> But just what the military in general and the RCN in particular did between 1945 and 1949 is less well-known. That Canadian warships engaged in Arctic cruises during this period is not generally realized. According to

Commander Barry Coombs, USN, “[t]he period which preceded the Korean conflict had a marginal impact on the shaping of the Canadian Navy.”<sup>5</sup> Some might criticize Coombs’ comment as that of an American unappreciative of the difficulty the RCN faced in attempting to carve out a postwar balanced fleet and an Arctic presence. Coombs never mentioned the RCN’s attempt to operate in the North or the intangible tie Canadians have to that region.<sup>6</sup> But even former RCN officers neglect the Arctic. Canadian defence analyst Commander Peter Haydon, RCN (ret), who believed that “the 1945-1955 period forms an interesting window through which to look at the origins of many basic policies that shaped Canada’s Cold War navy,” did not address the Arctic in his chapter of the third volume of Canada’s naval history, *A Nation’s Navy*. Commander Tony German, RCN (ret) only devotes two sentences to the Arctic, and those relate to *Labrador* in the 1950s.<sup>7</sup> Other Canadian authors who do note the North fail to delve deep; few papers or chapters of books on the RCN mention the Northern Cruise of September 1948. And yet it was an important mission, not so much for what it accomplished militarily, which was quite limited, but for what it represented in terms of Canada’s emotional attachment to the North and the difficulty, if not impossibility, of the RCN reflecting that emotional attachment with an active presence.

### *The RCN and Postwar Dreams*

This chapter looks at the RCN in these post-World War II/pre-NATO years, in order to illuminate the multiple theatres in which the RCN hoped to operate, explain the role it proposed to play, assess the feasibility of maintaining a presence in these theatres, and highlight the 1948 Northern Cruise. While an Arctic presence was consistently a goal of the RCN, the reality of budget cuts, personnel shortages, and allied commitments forced it reluctantly to abandon the dream. It did not, however, die without a concerted effort.

Canada has the world’s longest seacoast, over 40,000 miles long, and a history of trans-Atlantic trade. It relied on the Royal Navy (RN) to protect its maritime commerce in the nineteenth century and increasingly on the United States for continental defence when the prospect of war with that nation faded after the War of 1812. When Canada at last got its own navy in 1910 it began the long struggle to develop and maintain a balanced fleet.

George Baer of the US Naval War College maintains that a navy is developed upon “the interaction of purpose, experience, and doctrine.”<sup>8</sup> But in Canada’s case, naval purpose and doctrine have to be balanced against limited finances and manpower, as well as a government and populace traditionally reluctant to support a large military establishment. There are

two competing forces that have traditionally been at odds in Canada. On the one hand, Canadians on the whole have never appreciated the costs of maintaining a truly independent navy that did not need to rely on its allies for sovereignty protection. While the public expects its navy to protect Canadian sovereignty on all three oceans and to rely on its allies only when continental security is threatened, it is unwilling to divert scarce resources to build and operate a navy with such capabilities. On the other hand, Canada has a proud maritime tradition and naval personnel willing and able to protect its sovereignty and to contribute to multinational alliances if the funds are forthcoming.

“For the professional Navy [World War II] had produced the ultimate victory ... [a navy] with smaller versions of the fleet units employed by the large navies.” The RCN had grown from a fleet of six destroyers, four minesweepers, 1500 RCN regulars and 1500 RCN Reserves (RCNR) in 1939, to 400 ships (excluding auxiliary ships) and nearly 100,000 naval personnel. While the very real problems encountered by a force growing so quickly have been documented, by 1943 the RCN hit its stride and a Canadian, Rear Admiral Leonard Murray, was in command of the northwest Atlantic theatre.<sup>9</sup> The RCN objective was to maintain as much of its fleet as possible after the war and avoid the disastrous lesson of unpreparedness that occurred in the inter-war years.

Both the USN and the RCN began postwar planning by 1943, and in 1945 both faced postwar governments committed to heeding the public’s cry for rapid demobilization. Navies in a democracy need public support. In Canada this meant that the RCN had to be convincing in its actions in order to “sell” its postwar agenda of a modern, balanced fleet comprising destroyers, cruisers, and a naval aviation branch with aircraft carriers. New ships built and contributing to the war effort “would offer the RCN an opportunity to win battle honours ... and so greatly enhance the chances of their acceptance by public opinion as part of the postwar Canadian Navy.”<sup>10</sup>

During the war the navy “achieve[d] its own independence and significance,” with particular expertise in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and the defence of shipping. Emerging as the third largest Allied navy by the end of the war, the RCN’s professional sailors did not want to lose their unprecedented blue-water capabilities. The RCN ended the war with 93,000 personnel and 939 ships, two cruisers, fourteen destroyers and a former Axis submarine.<sup>11</sup> Two British escort carriers had Canadian commanders and crews.

What was envisioned for the peacetime RCN can be seen from the 1943 appreciation by Lt. Commander G.F. Todd, RCNVR. The RCN’s policy

planner from 1940-1943 and Secretary to the Canadian Joint Staff Mission in London from 1944-1945, Todd proposed RCN cooperation with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in protecting Canada, Newfoundland, and Labrador's coastal waters "against all attacks except sustained battleship attacks launched by major naval powers." In addition, the RCN would "contribute to the maintenance of Imperial sea communications at least to the extent of providing trade protection forces proportionate to the size of Canada's merchant marine; [and] contribute to the joint defence of the oceans adjacent to North America."<sup>12</sup> This could be done by "a post-war navy of three cruisers, two light fleet carriers, 16 fleet destroyers, 19 frigates and eight Algerine minesweepers."<sup>13</sup>

In his 1944 report, "Post-war Strategic Security of Canada," Todd maintained that any attacks on Canada would be "[s]poradic attacks ... essentially diversionary operations." Threats to Canadian security would come by air or sea, or from forces using islands in close proximity to Canada, such as St. Pierre and Miquelon, Greenland or Iceland, among others. While he supported joint North American defence, Todd believed that Canada was responsible for continental defence "on an appropriate scale." With regard to the Arctic, Todd referred to a two-ocean, not a three-ocean navy. He mentioned the Aleutians as a possible base for invasion, but expected them to be defended by the United States. To defend Canada and contribute to continental defence, Todd believed that Canada needed "adequate naval and air forces, including anti-submarine, anti-surface vessels and anti-aircraft escort ships, with heavy covering ships and striking forces, and ship-borne and shore-based aircraft, and necessary operational and repair naval and air bases."<sup>14</sup>

Reality for the postwar RCN came in the form of a government and nation resolved to downsize. Of Canada's three services, it was the RCN that had the greatest difficulty establishing a postwar role, in part because the government had not determined the country's naval commitments. Not unlike the dilemma facing the USN, the RCN had to redefine itself and its role in the postwar world. In both nations, navies faced military and political leaders who saw the navy of the future as no more than an escort and transport branch, stripping it of its aviation arm and reducing the size and composition of the fleet to no more than "a support service." In fact, Jan Drent, RCN (ret.) suggests that "[i]t is arguable that these vociferous power struggles [between the USAF and USN] could have raised questions in the minds of Canadian politicians and reinforced doubts." There were also threats in both nations of service unification and cost-cutting measures.<sup>15</sup>



In an effort to provide justification for “a ‘big ship’ navy, not an escort force,” the RCN and USN had to prove their worth and outline their postwar roles and missions. This was made all the more difficult by both governments, which had yet to formalize their postwar foreign policy. Canada was unsure of the place it would occupy in the world. Without clear direction from the government, military planning is at best difficult, and it is certainly risky, as capital expenditures are not only extremely expensive but also necessitate long-term planning. “Flexibility was the keynote of naval policy,” but it was a challenge for the RCN to define the type and extent of the navy and its desire for an Arctic presence, in light of its other commitments, the Liberal government’s traditional “anti-militarism,” and the current government’s determination, led by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, to fund little more than, in the words of Minister of National Defence, Douglas Abbott, “a good workable little fleet.”<sup>16</sup>

Convinced of its unique and essential value to Canadian defence, stubbornly committed to preserving a robust fleet manned by professional sailors, and determined to carve out an indispensable postwar role, the RCN looked North. Arguably, the Arctic provided the navy with an important theatre and function in the postwar era, one that was instrumental to not only Canadian but also continental defence. In addition, it would buttress the naval case against Ottawa’s proposed drastic budget cuts that could severely curtail, if not eliminate, an RCN Arctic presence, thus undermining both defence and the politically-sensitive issue of sovereignty assertion. But the RCN was unable to sustain its case. Retrenchment in the services was severe and by 1947 only a skeleton fleet was left. Manpower had fallen and the RCN “officer corps [was] down to a core of RN-trained professionals.” Mackenzie King initially opposed an aircraft carrier, considering it “overly grandiose” for Canada. He also believed that the USN and the RN could be counted on to defend Canada’s maritime interests. Although he finally came around to supporting the acquisition of a single carrier for Canada, as long as it could operate in northern waters, his anti-military attitude permitted little in the way of a robust, balanced fleet.

In assessing the postwar world the Post-Hostilities Problems Working Committee’s (PHP) 1944 report, “Post-war Canadian Defence Relationship with the United States,” concluded that the North American continent was “vulnerable” to attack by air from the north. It maintained that the Soviet-American relationship was of “special concern to Canada” and that while Canada “must accept full responsibility for defence measures within Canadian territory,” as well as for Newfoundland and Labrador, “it [was]

clear that defence planning for Canada and the United States should be coordinated." To this end, Canada needed to "maintain larger armed forces than before the war."<sup>17</sup>

The Canadian military did not dispute the PHP's findings or its recommendations. In late 1947, the American and Canadian governments endorsed the Permanent Joint Board on Defense's (PJBD) 35th Recommendation (1946) for military cooperation and collaboration. But there were also those within the Canadian government who sought to assert a greater Canadian presence in the North in order to solidify sovereignty claims. They feared that joint defence arrangements with the United States could hinder that end. The military was aware of its limitations and, efforts to increase its presence and knowledge of the North notwithstanding, was convinced that bilateral military cooperation was necessary for the defence of North America. During the war, Major-General Maurice Pope noted that "[t]o the American[s] the defence of the United States is continental defence, which includes [Canada] ... [and, in the event of war, it] would look to [Canada] to make common cause ... [without] delay."<sup>18</sup> In the postwar period, the military supported Pope's recommendation for continued bilateral cooperation and argued that "exclusive claims to sovereignty must be fitted into the overall requirements of continental security and defence."<sup>19</sup>

In "this trying period, between a war that is over and a peace that is not yet secure," the world struggled for stability as the new balance of power took shape.<sup>20</sup> The Canadian government's view of the USSR as a menace to world stability was reached independently of the United States, but its conclusion was similar to that of its southern neighbour. The Canadians subscribed to George Kennan's view that while "the Russians were not planning a direct attack ... a Russian misunderstanding or miscalculation" might lead to war and to his advocacy of containment. Yet even though the Soviets were engaged in developing their Arctic regions, the government wanted to ensure that Canadian northern development "would not be provocative" and that there would be "as much civilian 'cover' for defense projects as possible." Canada determined that collaboration with the United States was in its best interest; it did not enter cooperative agreements because of pressure from the south. Overall, "there was no substantial difference between the viewpoint of the Canadian and United States representatives as to the objective of the Soviet Union and as to the effect on Soviet foreign policy of joint North American defense measures."<sup>21</sup> As postwar planning continued, in fact, the Americans noted that "[w]here the Canadians diverge from us, or oppose us, is chiefly in matters of execution, method and timing."<sup>22</sup>

### *The RCN and Postwar Realities*

The new arena for the postwar RCN was the Arctic. Previously, Canadian military commitments in the Arctic had been solely to protect Canadian sovereignty. A prewar presence had been maintained by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Eastern Arctic Patrol. After the war, the RCN had no "definite tactical doctrine for Northern operations," but like the US military, the other Canadian services, and even the Canadian public and government, it "was swept up in the 'polar passion.'" This passion, however, had a catalyst and a price tag. According to Rear Admiral A.H.G. Storrs, RCN (ret), American military interest in the North spurred Canada into action, directly contributing to the decision for the RCN cruise into Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay.<sup>23</sup>

The USN had a history of Arctic involvement which continued after the war. In March 1946, Operation "Frostbite" sent the aircraft carrier *Midway*, three destroyers and a tanker into Davis Strait. The carrier held take-off and landing exercises with planes and helicopters in snow and freezing temperatures. Operations in the Labrador Sea were intended to test "the feasibility of carrier operations in the Arctic." Later that same year, Operation "Nanook," a joint USN/Marine exercise in Canada's territorial waters of Viscount Melville and Lancaster Sounds, included a landing near Dundas Harbor on North Devon Island. The Americans were careful to obtain permission, and although Canada declined the offer to participate, a Canadian observer was aboard.<sup>24</sup>

In 1947 the USN was back in the Arctic when it supplied materials for the first of five Joint Arctic Weather Stations (JAWS) in Canadian territory. The Canadians were again invited to participate but declined. Although the RCN at this point still had one carrier, two cruisers, eighteen frigates and destroyers, and nine minesweepers, it had no submarines or icebreakers, and was suffering severe manpower difficulties.<sup>25</sup> The Americans, for their part, not only sent surface ships into the Arctic waters but also experimented with submarines. USS *Atule* had attempted to submerge in Baffin Bay in 1946, but was forced to abandon the mission when its periscope was damaged. In 1947 the Navy Electronics Laboratory in San Diego, which employed some Canadian scientists, experimented with submarines maneuvering through ice packs while on the surface and, later that year, transited under the ice of the Chukchi Sea. But, even with successful trials and enthusiasm on the part of its participants and sponsors, the USN did not see the immediate promise of submarines. "[T]here was no thought at the time of military operations

in Arctic areas."<sup>26</sup> Tight budgets also precluded anything more than supply missions to the weather stations in 1947.<sup>27</sup>

American interest in the North was not only maritime. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to chronicle the other American projects in the Canadian North, "U.S. requests to fly over, march over, or sail through Canadian territory seemed to be coming thick and fast, especially through military channels." An overriding Canadian concern, regardless of the service making the request, was to protect Canadian sovereignty and independence. For their part, the Americans made it clear in the 36th Recommendation of the PJBD, and in President Truman's 11 February 1947 speech to the Canadian parliament, that they were committed to respecting that sovereignty. "It was totally unrealistic for Ottawa to consider denying the United States access to the Arctic when the U.S. thought of Canada's arctic frontier as a continental front line and when the two countries had been so closely tied together in continental defence matters since 1940." Canada believed that collaboration was in the national interest, and permission granted to the United States was not motivated by American pressure. But lessons had been learned during the war. The military wanted to be certain that, unlike in World War II, it was made "more fully aware" of the American assessment of North American "defence requirements" in order to better evaluate American demands on Canadian land and facilities. This would be facilitated by a postwar role for the PJBD.<sup>28</sup>

### *Planning an Arctic Cruise*

For its part, the Canadian military also wanted a larger role in the North. RCN interests included "Arctic oceanography, the re-supply of northern stations, and anti-submarine activity in Northern waters." Sovereignty assertion was not a priority, but the navy wanted to be able to operate in its own backyard and to be recognized as the owner of the real estate. In 1946, the year of the Midway transit, the Canadian Army approached the RCN with a plan for joint exercises in the Arctic. The army's plan was not enthusiastically received by the RCN. Commander Storrs believed that "[t]he exercise proposed [by the Army] is extremely ambitious and the light-hearted approach to the Naval angle seems to indicate a somewhat superficial consideration of the problems involved." He did not see the need to freeze in a ship during the winter and felt that more preliminary work needed to be carried out before committing the RCN to such an exercise.<sup>29</sup>

Captain H.N. Lay, Director of Naval Plans and Intelligence from December 1945 to April 1948, wrote in October 1946 "that the idea of a

purely Canadian Arctic Expedition is an excellent one. As the Army paper mentions, we know that U.S.S.R. are [sic] taking a considerable amount of interest in the Arctic regions, and we have some reason to suspect that a Russian submarine has been operating in the Davis Strait." He observed that the United States was actively interested in the Arctic and that the Americans believed there was an "urgent [need for] ... the collection of information of a topographical, hydrographical and climatic nature, together with information as to how equipment and personnel stand up to Arctic conditions."<sup>30</sup>

Lay also noted that he had already held two meetings to ascertain the state of Arctic research and what the army had thus far completed. He also interviewed individuals with Arctic experience and discussed the requirements for ships that could be used in such an expedition. The vessels needed to be strengthened to operate in ice-infested waters and to withstand being "frozen in" during the winter. Since Canada did not have the necessary ships for the joint exercise, one option considered was to call on the USN. This was rejected, however, because, according to Lay, "this would almost certainly mean that the USN would wish to be the dominant partner in the expedition, and ... if Canada is able to do it herself, she should do so." Thus, the RCN needed to ice-strengthen one of its own ships.<sup>31</sup>

At the Naval Staff meeting one week later, members noted the wide range of objectives and experiments that could be completed during such an exercise, but the expense in funds and time to refit a ship, they concluded, was not worth the expense. Other venues already existed or were planned that could provide much of the same information. The Naval Staff preferred an Arctic cruise – sending ships north "during the season of open navigation to study navigational and operational conditions." The Naval Board concurred.<sup>32</sup>

In April 1947, the Naval Staff discussed such a northern voyage. The members noted that there was interest in the Canadian Arctic at this point in time, but they did not identify who was interested. The Staff supported the idea of a cruise into Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait, as it "would be of benefit to the Canadian defence programme," but they did not say how. As there were to be no USN expeditions like Operation "Nanook" in 1947, joining the Americans was not an option. But the "Naval Staff was of the firm opinion that it would be preferable to undertake a northern cruise under Canadian auspices." The chief difficulty was "the recent drastic curtailment in fuel supplies available to the RCN." The pros and cons of the cruise were discussed and the Naval Staff recommended that plans be prepared for 1947. The RCAF

and the Canadian Army would be contacted about sending liaison officers. The Naval Board approved both the cruise and the approach.<sup>33</sup>

In May 1947 Captain Lay noted that expeditions into the Canadian Arctic had been mounted by the RN, USN, RCMP, Hudson's Bay Co., and other Canadian government departments, such as Mines and Resources. While the USN had operated in Baffin Bay and transited west to Melville Sound in 1945-1946, the RCN could only look at this with envy, as it had not been in these waters. As the North grew in importance, Lay felt that the RCN needed to become familiar with the challenges posed by these waters. He proposed a cruise into Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait, waters that the RCN had never transited. The agenda was to include "familiarization" with the waters, radio testing "within the auroral belt," bathythermographic readings, hydrographic soundings, and magnetic observations. Later projects included work on L/F LORAN stations, oceanographic temperature and salinity readings, and RCAF "tracking and other exercises."<sup>34</sup> The cruise needed to be conducted when the strait and bay were ice free, between mid-August and mid-September, since the hulls of the destroyers could not withstand the ice.

Three routes were proposed. Fuel requirements were a major consideration and tables outlined distance, tons of fuel, and days of travel. Fuel was more expensive in Churchill than in Halifax (\$5.25/barrel versus \$3.12), so the planners needed to keep the amount needed in Churchill to a minimum. The cost of the Churchill fuel was to be deducted "by an equivalent amount" from the year's quota. Lay suggested the tanker CNAV *Dundalk* be utilized between Halifax and Churchill for refuelling. Since navigational problems off the Labrador coast included "inadequate charts, large magnetic variation and frequency of fog and poor visibility," a gyro compass or radar was necessary for *Dundalk* to operate in the western end of Hudson Strait and the northern part of Hudson Bay. Lay proposed that *Dundalk* travel with a ship that had a gyro compass, but eventually approval was given for *Dundalk* to be outfitted with its own at a cost close to \$1000.<sup>35</sup>

Ironically, at the same time that planning was taking place for the Northern cruise, the Canadian government placed even more restrictions on the military. For the RCN, government-dictated cuts required further reductions in recruiting, ships, and fuel allowances.<sup>36</sup> This was at a time when the RCN was already struggling with a "critical shortage of manpower." There were "more trained men going out than coming in, and [there was] the difficulty of tr[ainin]g the new entries with existing facilities."<sup>37</sup> These reductions and problems were contributing factors to the cancellation of the cruise of 1947.<sup>38</sup>

Even with government-mandated reductions, the RCN was committed to training its personnel in efficient ASW which, it was convinced, necessitated a submarine. Discussed in mid-1947, proposals for submarines included



Map 5. From C.S. Beals, *Science, History and Hudson Bay* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968).



loans from the USN and the RN, but no submarine was purchased at this time.<sup>39</sup>

### *Northern Cruise, 1948*

As plans for the cruise were resurrected for 1948, the issue of fuel shortages remained. Care had to be taken to allocate fuel to last the entire year and thus avoid "drastic curtailment of activity during the latter part of the year." The ships eventually employed for the cruise were the newly "arcticized" aircraft carrier HMCS *Magnificent*, under the command of Commodore G.R. Miles, with 19 Carrier Air Group aboard; tribal destroyer HMCS *Haida*, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander A.F. Pickard; and HMCS *Nootka*, under the command of Commander A.H.G. Storrs.<sup>40</sup> The voyage took place 2-28 September 1948. These were the first Canadian warships to enter Canada's Arctic waters.

*Magnificent*, *Haida*, and *Nootka* sailed from Halifax and proceeded north to Wakeham Bay, Labrador. Sufficient leeway was left on the route from Halifax to Wakeham Bay to enable senior officers to react to conditions encountered. *Magnificent* only travelled as far north as Wakeham Bay, where it topped off the destroyers with fuel. *Magnificent* did not venture into Hudson Bay, although Lay had recommended it. Lay believed such a voyage would save fuel costs, which were incurred both by shipping oil to Churchill and by using *Dundalk*. It also would have provided more RCAF training time.<sup>41</sup> But only the destroyers entered Hudson Bay and proceeded to Churchill.

A ship of impressive size, *Magnificent* did much to publicize the voyage. But its inclusion also had a military purpose. It was to give the Air Force an opportunity:

to familiarize RCAF crews with Naval operations, to carry out shadowing exercises with the Carrier Force and to carry out patrols ... From a Naval stand point it was to enable their fighter aircraft to deal with enemy attacks from the air, make fighter interceptions and to familiarize the Task Force personnel with RCAF tactics.<sup>42</sup>

While the Director of the Naval Air Division advised against the carrier participating in the cruise, the Chief of Naval Staff held firm.<sup>43</sup>

Two RCAF search-and-rescue planes from 103 SAR (Search and Rescue) Flight, Greenwood, Nova Scotia, took part in joint tactical exercises: a Canso and a Lancaster (the Canso being the slower of the two). Fog was relatively constant, but simulated war conditions were employed, with Task Force



interceptions, shadowing, homing, and patrols carried out in the Strait of Belle Isle. Unfortunately, naval aircraft shadowing and interception exercises with *Magnificent* were only possible on 4 September, due to “weather and other causes.” The Lancaster was able to practice radar and homing exercises and patrols with the destroyers on other days. Officials put a positive spin on the practice flights. “[T]he cooperation exercises with the Task Force were quite successful, ... ET communication was excellent, and ... a good time was had by all.” The word from *Magnificent* was that “Joint exercises now completed. Thank you for your ready co-operation. The exercises have been of great value to *Magnificent*.”<sup>44</sup>

On the voyage to and from Churchill, the two destroyers carried out radio, L/F LORAN and hydrographic observations, and temperature and salinity tests. The four day visit to Churchill, 11-15 September, was called Operation “Seadog.” *Nootka* and *Haida* were open to the public for tours; an evening with the Governor General was planned; sailors toured Churchill; and parties were arranged for the officers.<sup>45</sup> Departing Churchill, the ships docked at Port Burwell, after a two-day stop at Coral Harbour on Southampton Island. Refuelling at Port Burwell from *Dundalk*, which had been sent from Halifax for just this purpose, was successful and the ships then sailed for home.

Prior to the voyage there had been RCN interest in not only working with the RCAF but also the Department of Mines and Resources. In 1947 the Naval Staff, recognizing that survey work was needed, suggested that the RCN could help Mines and Resources by conducting surveys when its ships were in northern waters. The Naval Board, however, rejected the idea, believing such surveys were the responsibility of the civilian department. But officials at Mines and Resources were persistent. In 1948, Deputy Minister Hugh Keenleyside contacted the Department of Defence when the RCN’s northern cruise was scheduled. He stated that sea and air navigation would benefit from better magnetic information in that area of the world and offered the services of Dominion Astronomer Dr. C.S. Beals to carry out the appropriate observations. Deputy Minister Mills replied that the Department of Defence had already contacted a Dominion Observatory astronomer.<sup>46</sup>

It has been claimed that “[i]t is a sound rule that the amount of work an expedition accomplishes is in inverse proportion to the amount of publicity it gets.”<sup>47</sup> And it can be claimed with some justification that although there was value in the scientific observations, readings and limited air exercises, “the accomplishment [of the Northern Cruise] was minimal” and “[c]ompared to the rigours of winter patrols in the Northern Atlantic, these voyages were pleasure cruises.”<sup>48</sup> But, it can also be argued that the real value of the

cruise was the national pride of seeing the Canadian flag in the Arctic, and RCN pride in its ability to transit these northern waters for the first time. The expedition involved 300 sailors during its twenty-seven-day trip, and the destroyers went to 62 degrees N, the farthest north any RCN ship had yet reached. These were the first RCN ships in Hudson Bay, and although they encountered fog, snow and icebergs, the cruise was successfully navigated.

There was no lack of publicity. The RCN made sure there were photographs of the cruise, and newspapers carried both RCN photos and statements from the commanders.<sup>49</sup> In addition, the RCN had observers from the United States, UK, and other Canadian services on board. Observers aboard *Haida* were the UK's Senior Naval Advisor to the British High Commissioner in Canada, Capt. Sir Robert Stirling-Hamilton; US Naval Attaché to Canada, Capt. Benjamin Scott Custer; a representative of the Defence Research Board, Lieutenant William Bailey, RCN (R); geophysicist A.A. Onhausser from the Dominion Observatory; three representatives of the Canadian Army; and three servicemen from the RCAF.

### *Post-Cruise Realities*

While there is no doubt that the RCN was proud of the Northern cruise, it was concurrently evaluating its role in other theatres; its relationship with allies and potential enemies; and the reality of even more budget cuts. In 1947 Commander Storrs predicted that future wars would necessitate a navy that utilized submarines and aircraft. Mines would also be a factor, while surface ships would not be the source of major attacks. Storrs concluded that the RCN's role would be similar to that of World War II plus "direct defence of coastal and overseas sea communications."<sup>50</sup> This necessitated ships of "greater speed, better sea keeping qualities, and ... of such construction as to promote rapid production in an emergency. The ultimate development may well be a form of modified Hunt class Destroyer." Since Canada's naval budget was limited, Storrs believed that the RCN must concentrate on "anti-air, anti-submarine and anti-mining forces." He advised a fleet with "the nuclear operational forces suitable for the kind of war in which Canada will be engaged."<sup>51</sup>

While "Canada had the rudiments of a maritime strategy that considered the Arctic's geostrategic location," such a broad range of commitments placed a strain on the RCN's limited resources. Thus, while the cruise did take place in late 1948, an Arctic presence was not sustainable. Consideration for acquiring an icebreaker and continuing northern cruises "during ice-free periods" was made by the Naval Board, but in 1948 the RCN remained at a

crossroads.<sup>52</sup> To grow, it needed a mandate and for the mandate to be funded it needed to fit the government's foreign policy objectives. There were increases in both manpower and equipment that year, and the government's 1949 White Paper noted the RCN's responsibility for protecting Canadian coastal waters, but it also committed the Navy to protect allied Atlantic shipping lanes. Consequently, while the navy's responsibilities included the Arctic coast, and the naval icebreaker *Labrador* was approved, subsequent NATO commitments and tight budgets eventually closed the curtain on an Arctic presence.<sup>53</sup>

HMCS *Labrador* reflected a traditional problem facing Canada: American interest in Canadian territory was perceived as a threat to sovereignty and it elicited a response.<sup>54</sup> But the wisdom and ability of such action is questionable. Jan Drent, RCN, contends that *Labrador* "was the result of a political determination to underline Canadian sovereignty ... [a] decision to use a warship for an essentially peacetime role."<sup>55</sup> Its 1958 transfer to the Department of Transport was highly controversial both within the RCN and the government. There was debate as to whether a naval ship in the Arctic was a better symbol of Canadian sovereignty than a Department of Transport vessel.<sup>56</sup> Although important as a research and escort ship, *Labrador* was unable to find a niche in the RCN of the 1950s. After only seven years in naval service, four of them in the High Arctic, *Labrador* was turned over to the Department of Transport.<sup>57</sup>

Lt. William Hessler, USN, maintains that military policy needs to acknowledge and address the "interplay of geography and technology." The former is a constant and "dictates the main contours of any nation's strategy," while the latter "is the prime arbiter of weapons and their tactical use." But surely another crucial factor in formulating military policy is budgetary reality. This is most certainly true for Canada. Ultimately, NATO commitments, which were affordable, utilized the new Canadian-built St. Laurent class ships and highlighted RCN expertise in ASW and sea lane defence. These became the driving forces in RCN equipment acquisitions, and personnel and training plans. "Adherence to [NATO] ... marked the end of what little independence Canada had retained in post-war naval planning." With limited men and finances, this was really the RCN's only option. World War II had "defined the role for the modern Canadian navy within an alliance;" to choose NATO responsibilities (an alliance role) over Arctic patrols (an unilateral role) made sense. A decision to commit forces against a known enemy, as opposed to asserting sovereignty against perceived threats to sovereignty by an ally, was understandable. Faced with government skepticism over

the need for a blue-water navy, the RCN realized “that the survival of the fleet was a function of continental defence” and NATO responsibilities. Joel Sokolsky has gone so far as to claim that “[t]he commitment to NATO saved the RCN from oblivion in the nuclear age by providing it with a sound strategic role.”<sup>58</sup>

This postwar naval role concurrently supported the government’s foreign policy, proving and providing Canadian commitment to an active involvement in western security and justifying a Canadian voice in such matters. Without a clear naval threat to continental security in Arctic waters, Canadians were unwilling to fund a navy capable of maintaining a Northern presence. The end of the Cold War has only reinforced this attitude. Canadians have the same strong emotional attachment to the North that existed in 1948 and they still condemn an American presence in the disputed Northwest Passage. But Canadians also continue to support bilateral defence arrangements which provide continental security and relieve them of the expense of fielding a force to protect the North. Thus, in terms of accommodating the conflicting realities of being responsible for three oceans but living with a government and public reluctant to provide the funds necessary to carry out this mandate, the present Canadian Navy is not so very different from what it was fifty years ago.

## Notes

Reprinted from *The Northern Mariner* IX/2 (April 1999): 23-39.

- 1 H.L. Keenleyside, “Recent Developments in the Canadian North,” Department of Mines and Resources, statement based on lecture at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, 14 May 1949, in *Statements and Speeches* (Ottawa, 1940-1964), 1.
- 2 Blair Bolles, “Arctic Diplomacy,” *Foreign Policy Reports* XXIV/6 (June 1948), 58.
- 3 Shelagh Grant, *Sovereignty or Security* (Vancouver, 1988), 239; and Matthew D. Evenden, “Harold Innis, the Arctic Survey, and the Politics of Social Science during the Second World War,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXXIX/1 (March 1998), 37.
- 4 Peter Haydon, “Sailors, Admirals, and Politicians: The Search for Identity

after the War,” in *A Nation’s Navy* eds. M.Hadley, R. Huebert and F.W. Crickard (Montréal, 1996); Jan Drent, “A Good, Workable Little Fleet: Canadian Naval Policy 1945-1950,” in *A Nation’s Navy*; R.J. Diubaldo and S.J. Scheinberg, *A Study of Canadian-American Defence Policy (1945-1975) – Northern Issues and Strategic Resources* (Ottawa, 1978); D. Middlemiss and J. Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants* (Toronto, 1989); S. Mathwin Davis, “The St. Laurent Decision: Genesis of a Canadian Fleet,” in *The RCN in Transition* ed. W.A.B. Douglas (Vancouver, 1988); Joel Sokolsky, “Canada and the Cold War at Sea, 1945-68,” in *RCN in Transition*; and D. Middlemiss, “Economic Considerations in the Development of the Canadian Navy since 1945,” in *RCN in Transition*. On NATO, see Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North At-*

- lantic Treaty 1947-49* (Toronto, 1979); James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied* (Toronto, 1980); and Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out* (New York, 1986). On Korea, see Denis Stairs, *Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States* (Toronto, 1974).
- 5 Commander Barry L. Coombs, USN, *United States Naval Cooperation with Canada* (unpublished manuscript, US Naval War College, 1995), 20.
  - 6 Although beyond the scope of this essay, the immediate postwar years were, in fact, important in shaping the postwar RCN. These years laid the groundwork for a more Canadian, and less British navy in terms of establishing a Canadian naval identity; see Commander A.B. German, RCN (ret), "Canada's Navy 1910 to 1985," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* XV (December 1985/January 1986), 26. The RCN increasingly replaced RN technology with USN technological and technical equipment and weaponry in the postwar years. See John D. Harbron, "Royal Canadian Navy at Peace 1945-1955: The Uncertain Heritage," *Queen's Quarterly* LXXIII (Fall 1966), 315-320.
  - 7 Haydon, "Sailors," 222; and German, "Canada's Navy," 27.
  - 8 George Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The US Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, 1994), 1.
  - 9 Marc Milner, "The Second World War: Canada's Formative Naval Experience," in *Canada's Maritime Tradition* eds. Peter Haydon and Katherine Orr (Halifax, 1996), 26; German, "Canada's Navy," 17-18; Marc Milner, *North Atlantic Run: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Battle for the Convoys* (Toronto, 1985); J.A. Boutillier, ed., *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver, 1982); and RCN in *Transition*.
  - 10 Baer, *One Hundred Years*, 2; James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto, 1972), 81; National Archives of Canada (NAC – now Library and Archives Canada), Record Group (RG) 24 DI, vol. 3844, NS1017-10-34, Lt. Commander G.F. Todd, "Canada's Post-war Navy," 17 November 1943, cited in W.A.B. Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation in the Royal Canadian Navy, 1939-1945," in *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century, 1940-1945* ed. Gerald Jordan (New York, 1977), 224; and Davis, "St. Laurent Decision," 189.
  - 11 W.A.B. Douglas, "Alliance Warfare 1939-45: Canada's Maritime Forces," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire* LIV (1982), 159; Davis, "St. Laurent Decision," 188; Brian Cuthbertson, *Canadian Military Independence in the Age of the Superpowers* (Toronto, 1977), 118, 122; and Ken Macpherson and John Burgess, *The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces 1910-1993* (St. Catharines, ON, 1994), 158.
  - 12 NAC, RG 25 1989-90/029, Box 10, file 7-AB(s), pt. I, Lt. Commander G.F. Todd, "Some Naval Aspects of Post-Hostilities Problems," 28 October 1943. Canadian political scientist Joel Sokolsky was "surprised" by this comment, as battleships were not used to bombard North America during the war. Sokolsky, telephone conversation with author, 28 May 1998.
  - 13 Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation," 224. Davis, "St. Laurent Decision," 189, states that the plans called for four cruisers.
  - 14 NAC, RG 2/18, series B-2, vol. 19, file W-22-8, vol. 6, Lt. Cdr. G.F. Todd, "Post-war Strategic Security of Canada," paper presented to Post-Hostilities Problems Working Committee, 27 April 1944.
  - 15 Eayrs, *Peacemaking and Deterrence*, 56; Lt.-Col. D.J. Goodspeed, *The Armed Forces of Canada, 1867-1967* (Ottawa, 1967), 230; Baer, *One Hundred Years*, 276; and Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea: A Hundred Years of the United States Navy, 1775-1991* (New York, 1991), 476-477. For the RCN, see Commander

- A.B. German, *The Sea is at Our Gates* (Toronto, 1990), 204; Drent, "Good, Workable Little Fleet," 210-211; and Michael Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington, DC, 1988), 3-4.
- 16 German, *Sea at Our Gates*, 204; Michael Isenberg, *Shield of the Republic: The United States Navy in an Era of Cold War and Violent Peace*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1993), 46, 116; Eayrs, *Peacemaking and Deterrence*, 75-77, 86; Goodspeed, *Armed Forces*, 230; Jack Pickersgill, *The Mackenzie King Record* (4 vols., Toronto, 1960-1970), IV, 6; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 22 October 1945. In late 1945 the postwar fleet proposed was "two cruisers, probably two light fleet carriers, ten to twelve destroyers, auxiliary ships, and 10,000 personnel." Naval Minister Angus MacDonald was a firm supporter of the Navy and its desire for a balanced fleet but he resigned in 1945 and his successor, D.C. Abbott, was more in line with Mackenzie King's military wariness and hence was not as supportive of the Naval Staffs desires. M. Hennessy, "Who Minds the Pacific: Canadian Naval Policy and Canada's Other Coast 1943-1950" (paper presented at Canadian Historical Association Conference, Calgary, Alberta, 1994), 9 and 18-19. Abbott became Minister of Finance in 1947 and cut military spending even further. Minister of Defence Brooke Claxton (December 1946-June 1954) weighed naval requests against not only budgets but political considerations like public opinion. Claxton believed that if World War III were to occur, the RCNs duties would be the same as they were in World War II. Eayrs, *Peacemaking and Deterrence*, 100.
- 17 Marc Milner, "A Canadian Perspective on Canadian and American Naval Relations Since 1945," in *Fifty Years of Canada-United States Defense Cooperation: The Road from Ogdensburg* ed. J. Sokolsky and J. Jockel (Lewiston, NY, 1992), 150; Harbron, "Navy at Peace," 316; Drent, "Good, Workable Little Fleet," 210; Paul Kennedy, "Naval Mastery: The Canadian Context," in *RCN in Transition*, 30; and Pickersgill, *Record*, IV, 9.
- 18 NAC, RG 25, Acc. 89-90/029, box 34, file 52-C(s), pt. I, "Post-war Canadian Defence Relation-ship with the United States: General Considerations," 24 October 1944.
- 19 Keenleyside, "Recent Developments," 6; Grant, *Sovereignty or Security*, 191; O.M. Solandt, "Defence Research in Canada," 18 January 1947, in Department of External Affairs, Statements and Speeches (Ottawa, 1947), 3; NAC, RG 25, 89-90/029, box 34, pt. I, Major-General Maurice Pope to "J," Canadian Embassy in Washington, 4 April 1944; Canada, Department of National Defence to Cabinet Defence Committee, "Sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic in Relation to Joint Defence Undertakings," n.d., in Donald Page (ed.), *Documents of Canadian External Relations*, 1946 (Ottawa, 1977), XII, 1558. See also Shelagh Grant, "Northern Nationalists: Visions of a New North, 1940-1950," in *For Purposes of Dominion: Essays in Honour of Morris Zaslow* ed. K. Coates and W. Morrison (North York, ON, 1989), 64.
- 20 Harry S. Truman addressing the Canadian Parliament in United States, Department of State, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy Basic Documents, 1941-1949* (rev. ed., Washington, DC, 1985), 464.
- 21 Middlemiss and Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence*, 17; NAC, RG 25 89-90/029, box 34, file 52-C(s), pt. 3, US version of "Canadian-United States Defence Conversations Held in Ottawa," 16-17 December 1946. See also Canadian assessment of meeting: "Memorandum for the Prime Minister: Defence Discussions with the United States," 23 December 1946. In 1946 this American assessment of the Canadian position was correct. For an interesting



- summary of the various Canadian opinions in the government between mid-1944 and 1946, see Diubaldo and Scheinberg, *Canadian-American Defence Policy*, 1-4.
- 22 *Foreign Affairs of the United States* (FRUS), Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Commonwealth Affairs (Avery Peterson) to Secretary of State Acheson, 19 November 1952, IV, part 2, 2054.
  - 23 R.B. Byers and Michael Slack, eds., *The Polaris Papers 4: Strategy and the Arctic* (Toronto, 1986), 6; Captain J.J. Goodspeed, *A History of the Defence Research Board of Canada* (Ottawa, 179); Kenneth Eyre, "Forty Years of Military Activity in the Canadian North, 1947-87," *Arctic* XL/4 (December 1987), 295; Bolles, "Arctic Diplomacy," 58; and A.H.G. Storrs to W.A.B. Douglas, 21 October 1991. I would like to thank Dr. Douglas for providing a copy of this letter.
  - 24 Donald W. Mitchell, *A History of the Modern American Navy* (New York, 1946), 310; Lt. E.B. Salsig, USN, "Operation Frostbite – A Strategic Success," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXII (September 1946), 1199-1204; Isenberg, Shield, 118; NAC, RG 2 Series B-2, vol. 56, file A-25-1, J. Graham Parsons, Secretary, US Section of PJB to R.M. Macdonnell, Secretary, Canadian Section of PJB, 14 and 22 May 1946; and NAC, RG 24, vol. 8153, file 1660-18, vol. I, F.L. Houghton to Admiral Jones, 3 June 1947.
  - 25 NAC, RG 24, vol. 8153, file 1660-18, vol. I, Commodore F.L. Houghton, RCN to Rear Admiral J. Cary Jones, USN, 3 June 1947; and Sokolsky, "Cold War at Sea," 212.
  - 26 Dr. Waldo Lyon of NEL quoted in William Leary and Leonard LeSchack, *Project Cold fleet: Secret Mission to a Soviet Ice Station* (Annapolis, 1996), 47. It would take the advent of nuclear-powered submarines, which did not have batteries that needed recharging approximately every thirty hours, and inertial navigational systems, which replaced the inaccurate gyroscopic compasses, to make Arctic waters a theatre for submarines.
  - 27 NAC, RG 24 vol. 8153 1660-18, v. I, Rear Admiral Jones, USN to Commodore Houghton, RCN, 12 March 1947.
  - 28 David Bercuson, "Continental Defense and Arctic Sovereignty, 1943-50," in *The Cold War and Defence* ed. K. Neilson and R. Haycock (New York, 1990), 158, 160 and 163; Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation," 224; Permanent Joint Board on Defense, 36th Recommendation; Canadian approval: 16 January 1947; American approval: 4 February 1947; President Harry S. Truman to Canadian Parliament, II February 1947 in *Canadian-American Summit Diplomacy, 1923-1973* ed. R.F. Swanson (Toronto, 1975), 118-119; Pickersgill, *Record*, III, 24; Middlemiss and Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence*, 17; and NAC, RG25 89-90/029, box 34, file 52-C(s), pt. 1, Major-General Maurice Popes response to Major-General Guy Henry, US Army, "Continental Defense Value of Canadian Northwest [and] Canada-United States Post-War Collaboration," 28 July 1945.
  - 29 Goodspeed, *History of Research Board*, 177; and Directorate of History (hereafter DHist – now Directorate of History and Heritage), Director of Naval Plans and Intelligence file, Cdr. A.H.G. Storrs to DNPI, "Memorandum," 10 October 1946.
  - 30 DHist, ACNS file, Capt. H.N. Lay to ACNS, "Proposed Joint Exercise in the Arctic – 1947-48," 21 October 1946.
  - 31 Ibid.
  - 32 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 28 October 1946. At the Naval Staff Meeting sovereignty assertion or recognition of other nations in Arctic waters was not noted. Objectives included scientific information; communication testing; meteorological and radar observation; navigational

- methods; establishing and maintaining air bases on ice; ship to ice unloading of heavy equipment; service clothing, vehicle and equipment trials; and studying Arctic transit and living conditions. See also Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Board, Naval Board, Minutes, 6 November 1946.
- 33 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 21 April 1947; and Informal Discussion of Naval Board, 29 April 1947.
- 34 DHist, ACNS file, Capt. H.N. Lay to ACNS, "Operation 'Iceworm,'" 23 May 1947. See also Flag Officer Atlantic Coast file, Naval Secretary to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, "Northern Cruise Operation Plan," 7 May 1948; and ACNS file, "Northern Cruise Draft Operation Plan," 2 June 1947.
- 35 DHist, ACNS file, Capt. H.N. Lay to ACNS, "Operation 'Iceworm,'" 23 May 1947; and Flag Officer Atlantic Coast file, Naval Secretary to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, "Northern Cruise Operation Plan," 7 May 1948. Later plans continued to include fuel consumption information; see, for example, ACNS File, Annex B to Appendix 1 of proposed plan, 2 June 1947. See also VCNS file, Memorandum by Director of Weapons and Tactics, Capt. D.L. Raymone, "Proposed fitting of gyrocompass in CNAV Dundalk," 8 July 1948; Flag Officer Atlantic Coast file, Naval Secretary to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, "Northern Cruise Operation Plan," 7 May 1948; and Northern Cruise Planning and Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 20 July 1948.
- 36 Recruitment was to be "3/4 of their authorized complements" and the reduction of the fleet to "1 [aircraft] carrier, 1 trg [training] cruiser, and 6 DDs [destroyers] in commission, and [the] Reserve Fleet will have to be reduced to half auxiliary vessels and yard craft reduced by one third, SCOTIAN and GIVENCHY paid off, and the Electrical Trg Centre and Mechanical TRG EST. at NADEN closed down;" DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol. II [summary of meetings], Naval Secretary memo on "Employment of the Canadian Naval Forces," 31 January 1947. Major reductions in fuel allowances for 1947-1948 also necessitated very careful planning of naval exercises and cruises. *Ibid.*, 21 February 1947. See also Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 17 March 1947.
- 37 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol. II [summary of meetings], "Plan C. Naval Plan for Fiscal Year 1948-49," 26 September 1947. This state of affairs was "mainly caused by unsatisfactory conditions of service: including (a) poor accommodation in Barrcks [sic] and civilian housing at naval ports; (b) rising costs of living and fixed rates of pay; and (c) cancellation of travelling concessions." See also NSHQ Memo to Commands, 23 January 1948.
- 38 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol. II [summary of meetings], "Signal 211319Z, NSHQ to COAC," 21 June 1947.
- 39 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol II [summary of meetings], Memo DWT A/S (Bremner) to DWT on "Anti-Submarine Training in the RCN," 14 May 1947; and Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol. II [summary of meetings], Memo DWT (Raymond) to ACNS, DNPI, 15 May 1947.
- 40 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, vol. II [summary of meetings], Navy Secretary memo re: RCN (R) Training - Summer 1948 [with Reference to DNPI (Lay) to VCN, 24 January 1948], 29 January 1948; and Lt. Commander Nathaniel F. Caldwell, *Arctic Leverage*



- (New York, 1990), 42. Initially, the Flag Officer Atlantic Coast had wanted Captain H.F. Pullen, RCN to command Nootka, but Pullen was unavailable. "It would appear rather unfair to Commander Storrs to have him make his first voyage in Command of HMCS Nootka in these poorly charted waters." But Storrs was obviously up for the task. DHist, VCNS file Flag Officer Atlantic Coast to Naval Secretary, 19 May 1948.
- 41 DHist, Flag Officer Atlantic Coast file, Naval Secretary to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, "Northern Cruise," 16 July 1948; and Director of Naval Plans and Intelligence file, Lay to VCNS, 25 February 1948.
- 42 NAC, RG 24 vol 8153, v.2, E. Publicover, OC Detachment, "RCN-RCAF Combined Operations," n.d.
- 43 DHist, VCNS file, "Memorandum to VCNS," 27 February 1948, handwritten note in margin. The Director of the Naval Air Division, Capt. G. A. Rotherham, was against Magnificent going into the northern waters because of aircrew personnel scheduling problems and ice conditions in Hudson Bay which might make flying "hazardous if high speed was a requirement owing to lack of wind and speed had to be reduced owing to the presence of ice."
- 44 NAC, RG 24, vol. 1853 1660-18, vol. 2, Commodore G.R. Miles, Commanding Officer, HMCS Magnificent to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, "Northern Cruise," 7 December 1948; vol. 8153, v. 2, E. Publicover, OC Detachment, "RCN-RCAF Combined Operations," n.d.; vol. 8153, v. 2, E. Publicover, "RCN-RCAF Combined Operations, Appendix A, Daily Diary 103 SAR Detachment," n.d.; and vol. 8153, v. 2, "Narrative of Exercises," appendix A, 7 October 1948.
- 45 DHist, VCNS file, Major P.E. Q. MacKinnon, Fort Churchill, "Operation Seadog" [Memorandum], 9 September 1948.
- 46 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 21 April 1947, and "Informal Discussion of Naval Board," 29 April 1947; NAC, RG 24, vol. 8153, 1660-18, v. 1, Keenleyside to W. Gordon Mills, Deputy Minister of National Defence, 22 June 1948; and Mills to Keenleyside, 28 June 1948.
- 47 NAC, RG 25, vol. 2668, file 9058-40, M.J. Dunbar to Keenleyside, "Northern Study Program," 7 April 1943.
- 48 Eyre, "Forty Years," 295.
- 49 DHist, Director of Naval Plans and Operations file, Commander R.J.J. Bridge, RCN, Superintendent of Photography to DNPO, 20 August 1948. Commander Pickard said that "A great deal of navigational knowledge was gained ... northern areas were inadequately charted because of the short navigational seasons." DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board file, press reports, *Globe and Mail*, 29 September 1948. A picture provided by the RCN had the caption from Commander Storrs, who claimed "It was high time the Royal Canadian Navy saw something of the Far North."
- 50 DHist, VCNS file, Major P.E.Q. MacKinnon, Fort Churchill, "Operation Seadog" [Memorandum], 9 September 1948. During the voyage, there was an RCAF rescue of an USN plane with five persons in northern Manitoba. All were survivors of the largest Canadian air rescue in history, called Operation "Attache," 12-25 September. Two of the passengers were Captain Stirling-Hamilton and Captain Custer, the two senior naval officers on the Northern cruise. Their plane went down en route from Churchill to The Pas in northern Manitoba. DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board file, Naval Staff Meeting, 25 February 1948. The final Naval message from Custer to Nootka and Haida after his rescue:

- "Thank you for your [congratulatory message]. I will always travel by RCN in future when possible. It saves walking." "Naval Message," 27 September 1948.
- 51 DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Memo from Cdr. Storrs to ACNS, 17 Jan 1947. This report was largely reproduced by Lay (without attribution to Storrs) in his memo, "Planning the Post-War Navy," which was sent to DCNS on 14 March 1947.
- 52 Caldwell, Arctic Leverage, 42; DHist, Northern Cruise Planning Discussions, Naval Staff and Naval Board, Naval Staff Meeting, Minutes, 25 Feb 1948; and NAC, RG 2, Series B-2, vol. 56, file A-25-I, "Memorandum for the Cabinet: Navy; Provision of Ice-breaker," 6 March 1948.
- 53 Mathwin Davis' very brief discussion of the icebreaker highlights not the implications of an Arctic focus, but rather its indication of the RCNs "return to naval shipbuilding and ... a changed approach," that of utilizing US designs. Davis, "St. Laurent Decision," 197.
- 54 Sokolsky and Jockel, *Fifty Years*, 151.
- 55 Drent, "Good, Workable Little Fleet," 220. Interestingly, Jack Pickersgill maintained that the icebreaker *Labrador* "was entirely Prime Minister St. Laurent's initiative;" that the RCN wanted anew ship; and that St. Laurent insisted that it be an icebreaker, one capable of High Arctic operations. Pickersgill, interview by author, 23 October 1991.
- 56 Kenneth Eyre, "Forty Years," 295, called *Labrador* "yet another symbolic gesture of sovereignty through presence." Captain Thomas Pullen, RCN denounced the ship's transfer [DHist, Pullen Diary, 19 August 1957]. He felt "No ship has done more for Canada than *Labrador*. No ship is better known to people in Canada or abroad than *Labrador*." [Ibid., 11 October 1957]. But Navy brass insisted that it could better spend scarce resources elsewhere. Storrs to Douglas, 21 October 1991; NAC, RG 24, vol. 11,185, ACS 8700-AW50, Naval Secretary to Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, 27 February 1958; John Leeming, "HMCS Labrador and the Canadian Arctic," in *RCN in Transition*, 307. While German, *Sea at Our Gates*, 258, commented on the difference between merchant and military servicemen, government officials, like military men, were also divided. Gordon Robertson, former Deputy Minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and Chairman of the ACND, felt the military ship "was a far more convincing and impressive demonstration" of Canada's arctic presence. [Interview with author, 13 January 1992]. But R.A.J. Phillips, former civil servant responsible for the Arctic Sovereignty portfolio in the 1950s, and Jack Pickersgill contended that the government was not convinced that sovereignty was better protected by a military ship than a civilian one. Interviews with author, Phillips, 22 October 1991, Pickersgill, 23 October 1991.
- 57 It is interesting to note that Drent, "Good, Workable Little Fleet," 220, characterized the decision to build Labrador "as an instrument of sovereignty ... [a] key development." And yet only four paragraphs of the fifteen-page text and one sentence in the conclusion deal with it, and the ship is never mentioned by name. In fact, the Arctic receives only seven paragraphs in the entire chapter. In some ways, Drent reflects that larger picture, noting for the reader an issue close to the Canadian heart – sovereignty in the North – but giving it only passing reference, as it is just not that large in the broader picture of Canadian priorities and commitments. For the government, Canadian sovereignty assertion is just that – rhetoric. It has not been consistently supported by concrete commitments to equipment, funding or personnel, largely because the

Canadian public remains unwilling to see scarce national resources appropriated to the Arctic. Sovereignty in the Arctic is an area and issue that remains dormant until and unless there is a perceived challenge to Canadian sovereignty claims.

- 58 Lt. William H. Hessler, USN, "Geography, Technology, and Military Policy," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* LXXIII/4 (April 1947), 382 (emphasis in text); Goodspeed, "Armed Forces," 231;

Milner, "The Second World War," 31; Drent, "Good, Workable Little Fleet," 207; G.M. Dillon, *Canadian Naval Policy since World War II: A Decision-Making Analysis* (Halifax, 1972), 46; Haydon, "Sailors," 224; Joel Sokolsky, "A One Ocean Fleet: The Atlantic and Canadian Naval Policy," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* XXXIV (December 1990), 303; and Milner, "A Canadian Perspective," 150-151.

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**ABSTRACT:** Climate change is transforming the Arctic. Questions abound about what this will mean for the Canadian Forces, for Canada's sovereignty position, for northern peoples, and for stability and security in the circumpolar world. Fortunately, Canadians have encountered and debated similar issues in the past. This volume, featuring chapters by established and emerging scholars, offers essential historical analysis on Canadian Arctic security and sovereignty policies and practices since the Second World War. The "lessons learned" lay a solid foundation for future research and historiographical debate in this dynamic field, and should inform Canadian thinking on what is necessary to protect national interests in the twenty-first-century Arctic.

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